



Race Preparation

Things you need to know before your first race that are not to do with training

In the days before a race, particularly a long one, make sure you eat well and drink more water than normal. On the last day, it's probably better not to eat curry or anything that may upset your digestion, but don't take the idea of 'carb loading' to extremes. A good meal of something easily digestible, such as pasta, chicken, jacket potato etc. is fine. No alcohol would be ideal, but in the real world, one drink won't affect your performance and may help you to relax.

Put ready everything you will need the day before:

- Number, race pack & Timing chip (if you have them), and pins to attach the number to your shirt.
- Club shirt/vest – take alternatives if you have them, and layers depending on the temperature.
- Sun cream and hat if appropriate
- Waterproofs, fleece, trousers etc for after the race. A bin bag with a hole for your head makes a good disposable cover-up if the weather is bad while you wait at the start.
- Drinks and snacks for before, during and after the race, as appropriate. You may not know what works for you until you have done a race or two, but more experienced runners can advise. There will be water stations on most races, and certainly 10k and above, but many runners prefer to carry their own water or hydration drink. On longer races you might want to carry gel sachets, jelly babies etc. Practice what eating and drinking routine works for you on your training runs
- Tissues (toilet roll, just in case!) and
- Wet wipes/towel if it's rainy, muddy, and/or you want to go to the pub afterwards!

Make sure you know where the registration and start are. Plan your journey. You will need to allow time for:

- travelling (plus as much spare as makes you comfortable that you won't be late),

plus



- registration,
- getting from the car to the start,
- trips to the loo, which will involve queuing

Get an early night if you can. Sleep is the best preparation, whatever training you have done beforehand.

Assuming it is a morning race, get up in plenty of time to:

- Drink juice, tea, coffee, as normal
- Eat some breakfast – what you have is up to you, but for longer races things like porridge, banana, yoghurt, wholemeal toast, peanut butter, honey will keep your fuel stores topped up. 2 hours before the start is ideal.

Continue to drink small amounts of water/hydration drink until the start of the race.

At the start don't stand too near the front of the pack of runners. You will probably start off too fast, and may get in the way of faster runners. It's better to overtake people if you find you are faster than they are when everyone settles into their race pace.

Be careful if there is a narrow path near the start where you could be held up by slower runners, or could get in the way of faster ones. Also, be careful to avoid falling over in the jostle at the start or through running too close behind others, especially over rough terrain.