RUNNERS, TAKE YOUR MARK!

Young Athlete Center

Children's HOSPITAL · ST. LOUIS
BJC HealthCare

Washington University in St.Louis
Physicians

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned runner, read on for some helpful tips for the week leading up to the starting line.
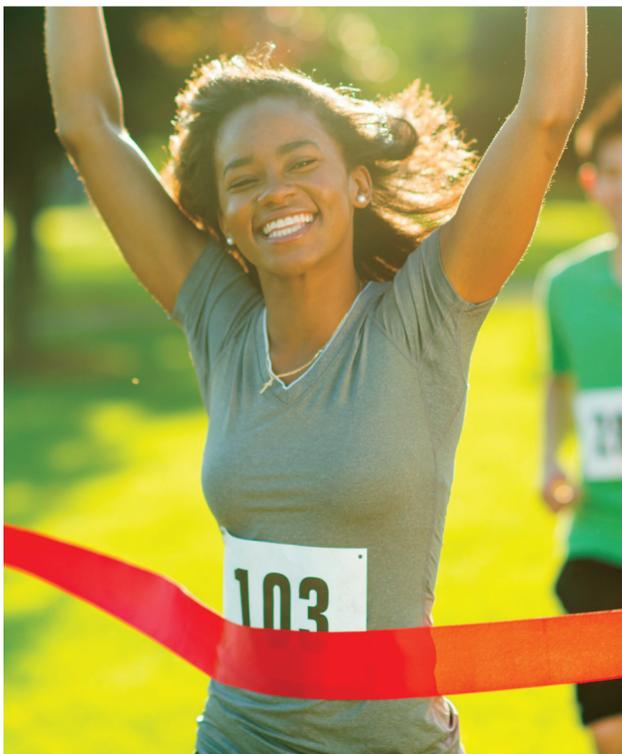
- **Begin to decrease mileage:** Don't burn yourself out before the big day! Remember that during the final week before race day, it's a good idea to take shorter runs, rest two days before, and just do a slight jog the day before the race.

- **Check out the route:** Set aside some time to drive, walk, or jog the course for the upcoming race. This takes out the surprise of a big hill near the end that you might not have been expecting.

- **No new gear:** You may be tempted to go out and buy a brand new pair of shoes for your race, but this is a bad idea! New shoes are often stiff and could cause blisters, which can lead to a miserable run. It's best to use tried and true gear that you are used to training in.

- **Create a playlist:** Listening to music while running can be incredibly motivating. Get a great playlist together before the race so you're not preoccupied with it during the run.

- **Get good, quality sleep:** Pre-race jitters can often hinder sleep. Your body works best on at least 8 hours of sleep, so try to make it a goal to achieve this two consecutive nights leading up to race day.

- **Hydrate:** Hydration is vital on race day, but it's just as important during the days leading up to it. Remember to drink when you're thirsty, and aim to get about 4 to 8 ounces of water per hour.

Your FINAL race preparation should get you right up to the starting line.

Don't forget your final preparations for race day in the 24 hours before the race.

- **Don't stress:** It's natural to feel anxious before a race, but remember that there are people of all ages and abilities who share a passion for running. Bring friends or family to cheer you on for extra motivation!

- **Eat breakfast:** Plan to eat about 2 hours before the race – something high in carbohydrates and low in fat. Eating carb-rich foods prior to endurance exercise appears to enhance performance (more so than protein-rich or fat-rich foods). Examples include a banana, bagel with peanut butter, sports bar, granola or oatmeal. Avoid dairy.

- **Check the weather:** Check your local forecast to ensure you're properly dressed for weather conditions on race day.

- **Warm up:** Do a light jog for 5 to 10 minutes before the race and gently stretch your legs and hips.

- **Pace yourself:** Don't start too fast – focus on your race pace or even a slightly slower pace when the starting gun sounds.

- **Enjoy the race:** Scientific evidence proves that regular exercise – and running in particular – has lasting health benefits!

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