



Melissa Moon's Top Tips

TOP TIP ONE

THE IMPORTANCE OF RUNNING/WALKING SHOES

The one truly essential item is you're SHOES! A poor or inappropriate shoe will soon take a toll and the following is a guide when choosing the right shoe:

A good shoe will give enough shock absorption, motion control, flexibility and durability and this will lessen the chance of injury, muscle or joint soreness and make running more pleasurable.

Running is a complex biomechanical process in which you strike the ground first of the outside of your heel, then your foot rolls downward and inward as it hits the ground. Finally the heel lifts from the ground and you push off from the ball of your foot to move forward.

The rotation of the foot inward and downward as it hits the ground is called ***pronation***.

Problems however occur when you ***overpronate*** – the feet roll too far inward and this can lead to lower leg and knee injuries.

Some people ***underpronate*** and the roll inwards is little and the feet are said to be rigid and don't absorb shock well.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FOOT TYPE

The arch of your foot determines how your feet and legs will function when you run:

Flat Feet: Usually ***overpronate*** like myself

High Arch: Prone to ***underpronation***

Normal Arch: Normal gait



MATCHING FOOT TYPE TO SHOE TYPE

A specialist retailer such as Shoe Clinic will fit you with the right shoe, as a general rule **overpronators** should wear a shoe with good motion control and a firm rather than soft midsole and firm heel counter to minimize rear foot motion.

Underpronators need well cushioned shoes which allows the foot to roll inwards to absorb shock. Cushioned shoes tend to be less supportive and work with the foot rather than trying to control it!

TOP TIP TWO

WHERE DO YOU GET THE ENERGY TO RUN?

The simple answer is from the food you eat, the best diet incorporates all the major nutrients – fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates. The carbs should form the backbone of your diet, what petrol is to your car, food is to your body and all sports people, either recreational or at world class level require a diet high in carbohydrates.

POWERED BY POTATOES

Potatoes are the perfect carb, they are broken down into glycogen and stored in the muscles for energy and will give you a steady supply of energy for both your training and racing and daily activities.

Potatoes play a huge role in my success as a runner, they are a nutritional goldmine with impressive qualities of vitamin C and B and if left with the skin on provide fibre and antioxidants.

With my gluten intolerance they have provided me with an energy option that is safe and non-allergenic. Quite simply I think they are **Spudtacular!**, so much so they decided to name a potato after me called the **Moonlight!**

PRE TRAINING RUN

Eat easily digested carbs 1-2 hours before training that will provide a short term energy boost. Bananas, cereal/power bars and fruit have low fibre,



not fatty and there is less likelihood of an upset stomach while exercising. But remember it takes time to build the energy stores of glycogen in the muscles so complex carbs should be included on a regular basis during the week.

FLUIDS

Every time you run you lose some fluid, either through sweating or through water vapour released as you breathe. Water is not only the cheapest, most readily available and easily digested sports drink but it's the most effective. Get into the habit of drinking fluids every time you eat and rehydrate after each training session.

TOP TIP THREE

SPEED SESSION

Incorporating a speed session once a week will teach you to co-ordinate faster rates of breathing with an increased stride rate. It will get the body used to running fast which mimics the demands of a race and if you are aiming for a personal best time for AMI Round the Bays this session will be of great help.

For those wanting to complete the distance a speed session will add variety and fun to your training and will get you fitter, faster in a shorter space of time.

An example of a fun speed session is called '**speed play**' and is random short periods of fast running built into a 30 minute run. The random faster rates can last between 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Landmarks such as trees or lampposts and different terrain such as grass or short hills are another means of altering your speed.

For example a session could involve the following:

10 minute jog / **Run hard for 5 lampposts** / 5 minute Jog / **Run hard for 2 minutes** / 2 minute jog / **Sprint for 3 lampposts** / Jog for 1 minute / **Run hard for 1 minute** / Jog 5 minutes.



HILLS

Hills which are unavoidable in Wellington will instil the powers of concentration and discipline. To cope with the added stress, mind strategies can be developed to help you endure.

Hills teach you to control breathing which becomes more rapid and to co-ordinate that with leg turn over.

REST AND RECOVERY

When you exercise there is a depletion of nutritional sources as well as water and micro tears in the muscle tissue.

This causes the body to whirl into a fury of adaption and so it is not in our work outs that we become better athletes/or fitter people but in the time between them on our rest and recovery days.

Neglecting sufficient rest and not replacing can lead to illness/injury.

You will recover at a faster rate if you hydrate and eat within the first 30 minutes to 1 hour after exercise. Nutrients are absorbed and replaced at a faster rate.

A quick way to start the refuelling process is to consume water and eat an easily digested food such as a banana/muesli bar, or sandwich.

Change into something warm and dry, if you let the muscles get cold you will miss out on the bodies healing metabolic activity.

STRETCH AND GET A MASSAGE

Post exercise soreness is caused by micro trauma in fibres and muscle tears which leak fluid and put pressure on the nerve endings. Muscles also shorten and go out of alignment during exercise.

Massage lengthens and restores the muscles to the original size and shape which helps with optimal movement.

Massage will increase blood flow and supplies oxygen and nutrients to tissue, and clears metabolic waste to promote tissue healing which will enable you to train better.



TOP TIP FOUR

THE MIND

The mind is something I have paid an enormous amount of attention to in my 20 years of athletics. I have developed and refined strategies to cope in challenging situations to give me the edge over my competitors.

If the mind is strong the body remains strong, if the mind is consumed by negative self-defeating thoughts at critical times under pressure the body will become weak and the race is lost or performance hindered.

Using visualisation, self-talk, rehearsing the race plan, being composed, confident are words and actions that empower and ready the mind in sport.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION:

EMPIRE STATE BUILDING RUN UP – 86 Floors/ 1576 Stairs

I broke this race up into 3 manageable stages and in the days leading up to the race I spent time thinking (visualising) how I was going to run these stages. My mind was so prepared before the race had even started to get to the 86th floor in the fastest possible time.

Stage One:

Not to start too fast, the adrenaline is pumping which will naturally make you go faster than you normally would. A controlled start is paramount, too fast, too soon and lactic acid will accumulate and by floor 20 you can hardly lift your legs. Form and rhythm are predominated thoughts till floor 10.

From 10 till 68 it is all about locking into a zone of concentration to keep pushing the pace through the hurt. Being aware of technique to conserve energy needed for the last 20 floors and being aware of how competitors are sounding, if they are struggling it's a time to push the pace and unsettle them mentally.

The final stage and you enter a new stair well at floor 68, this takes you to the finish. A critical time to make your move and lift the body to the next level of effort through Self-talk. The mind has to be filled with strong thoughts and mine are my Maori Mantra – Kia Toa, Kia Kaha, Kia Manawanui – Be Brave, Be Strong, Be Persevering.



AMI ROUND THE BAYS

Use landmarks around the course to break the 6.5km up into your own stages. An example of this might be the following:

Stage One: Start to the Freyberg Pool

Settle into the run, concentrate on footing as you navigate yourself around the hundreds of other runners/walkers.

Get your breathing under control and keep your arms relaxed.

Do not start too fast, consciously run in a conservative manner and this will provide you with energy for the next stage.

Relaxed and Rhythmic thoughts.

Stage Two: Freyberg Pool to Balena Bay (water stop)

Focus on a couple of people to pass who have started too fast and now will be fading by this stage. Use this as motivation. Take a sip of water or cool yourself down with it and refocus for the 3rd stage which will be the hardest.

Stage Three: Balena Bay – End of Evans Bay parade

This stage will require self- talk as you start to tire, keep your thoughts strong and get into your own zone by finding some strong words to keep repeating. You will have to work hard to keep that concentration and stop those negative thoughts entering your mind.

Stage Four: Last 150 Metres from corner of Kilbirnie Park to the finish

This is where you should be running on a high. Soak up the energy from the crowd and pick up the pace for the last 150 metres. Remind yourself how proud you are going to feel in a matter of seconds on finishing.



EVENT CHECKLIST

DAY BEFORE

- ☐ Keep food plain and carbohydrate based, this will give you your energy for the next day. Baked Potato/pasta/rice.
- ☐ Do not eat anything unusual or rich in sauce, stick to the easily digested safe foods.
- ☐ Sip on water throughout the day to keep well hydrated.
- ☐ Pin your number on your running gear and put chip on shoe.
- ☐ Pack your event bag for after the race: Change of clothes, towel, sunscreen, water and snack for after the run/walk.
- ☐ Money for massage, snack, bus/taxi.

DAY OF EVENT

- ☐ Sip on water as soon as you wake up as you will be slightly dehydrated from a night's sleep.
- ☐ 1½-2 hours before event have a light breakfast. Toast and jam, banana and cereal. Easily digested foods.
- ☐ Depending on weather conditions keep warm, polyprops are warm and light and can be tied around the waste.
- ☐ Visualise how you are going to break the 6.5km into your manageable stages and start feeding yourself positive thoughts.
- ☐ Do not start too fast! Settle into the run!
- ☐ Soak up the amazing atmosphere of 14,000 other Wellingtonians.

POST EVENT

- ☐ Eat or drink within 30 minutes of finishing, bananas and water are handed out on finishing.
- ☐ Stretch and get a massage to aid recovery.
- ☐ Take a photo to remind yourself of your wonderful achievement.