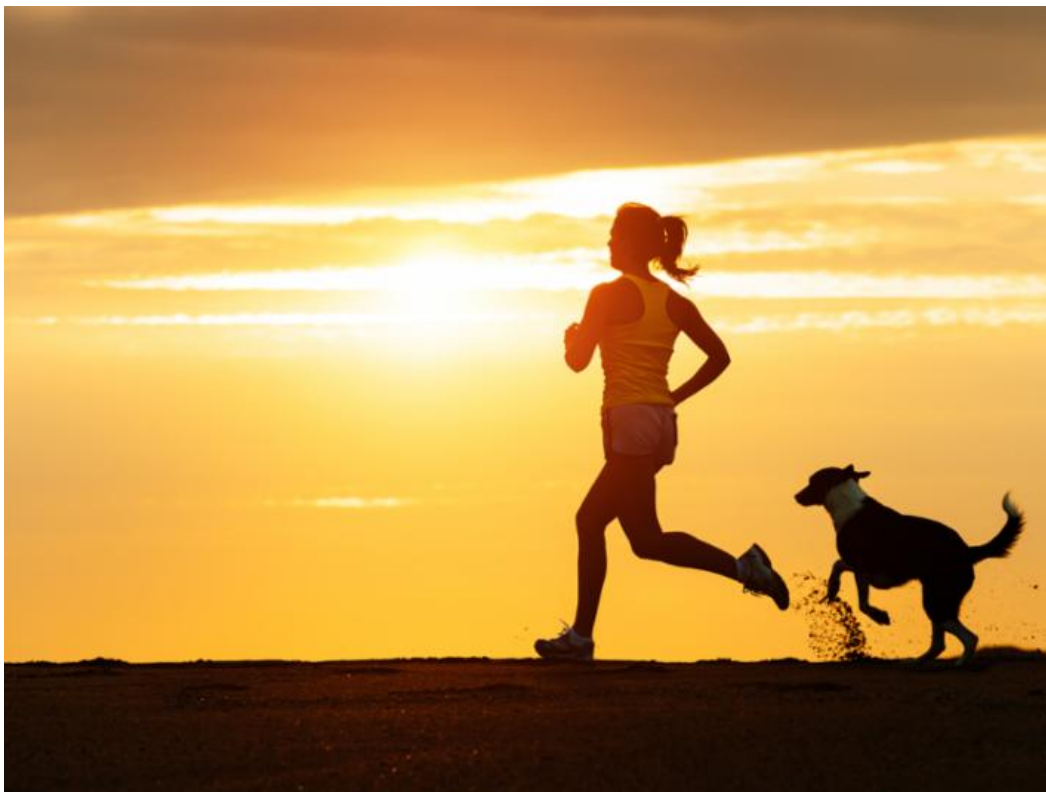




A Marathon, Not a Sprint

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While I was trying to find a new way of thinking about how we're going to get through the next few months, I decided to research how people prepare for physical marathons. As many of you know, I am probably one of the last people who would ever run a physical marathon. I am more of an exercycle kind of girl. But the ideas and discipline I found while reading articles about marathoners really inspired me, so I'm sharing a conglomerate of those ideas with you. When the pandemic started, probably none of us thought we would be looking at the six-

month point not knowing how much longer all of these precautions and quarantines and limited social interaction will continue.

Taken loosely from “The Marathon Handbook”

1. Design a Training Plan

The idea here is figuring out the long game. What kinds of things can you set up for the time that you’re going to be in isolation or restricted contact? Make a list as if you were actually doing it as a project, with goals that you can achieve and time frames in which to achieve them. Work goals, as well as family, social, creative, community and health goals keep us focused and proactive. Making a vision board might help too.

2. Get the Right Gear

To me, this partly means that maybe it’s good to do the things that we might not do in COVID mode. Get up, take your shower, brush your teeth, shave or put on some make up (or both)— and, even though you may not need to, get into fancy shoes or your uniform. Make the effort to transition your habits back to the way life was. For example, I colored my hair myself. Does it look as good as my salon did it? No way, but did it make me feel a little bit more like the real me? You bet it did.

More literally, if, for example, you’ve begun a walking or running routine instead of going to the gym, invest in the right shoes and clothing so you’ll be supported in your efforts.

3. Know Your Race

Think about what you need to do for yourself and what the obstacles to accomplishing that will be. Whereas runners talk about figuring out what hills are on the route and where to take a bathroom break, this marathon requires that you think about what you need to actually get through it. Supply-wise, time-wise, schedule-wise etc. Know the obstacles you will face to get through this marathon.

4. Know your Pace

I like this a lot. We all went gangbusters in the beginning of this COVID odyssey. It was easy to do all those hard things because we thought we’d only be doing them for a few weeks or maybe a month. It was a

project! Now, not so much. . . Set yourself up so that you have a pace. Honestly, I haven't done my 10,000 steps a day since the pandemic started. That was my pace. I need to reestablish that even if it means walking around my living room between appointments. I need to re-pace myself to the life that I will have again when this is over, otherwise that adjustment will be really hard.

Having said that, remember the gains we may have made during forced down-time. We got off the personal lifestyle treadmill for a bit and perhaps found a new rhythm. It's all about balance.

5. Taper

In running terms, this means giving your body a little break before you go for the big push of a marathon. In my continued metaphor here (that I'm probably beating to death), I think that might mean taking a mini vacation to a cabin in the woods or just getting yourself to the beach to sit for a couple of days before we head into the winter. Give yourself that rest, before what may be the harder part.

6. What to Eat

Yes, well, perhaps all of us marathoners of COVID have been carb loading. For me it's been bagels. Perhaps a childhood comfort food for you too? I've heard it referred to as the "COVID 15" (pounds of weight gain). It's time to plan to get back to our healthy way and healthy body mass. It's time to start thinking about preparing meals and not only basing our food on comfort but on nutrition as well. I know we are not all doing totally one extreme or the other, but I have tipped more toward comfort than was my norm, and an adjustment is a good idea.

7. The Mental Prep

No matter what we do, or how much we think we are ready, there's going to be a season change, the start of school, a return to work, whatever it is new and perhaps disquieting adjustments. And all of this will be under the cloud of COVID for a while. Spend some time dealing with "the devil in the details." Make sure, with all the preceding steps, that you have the things that you need to make you as safe and as comfortable and as productive as you can be.

Think of these details— make a list— and work on getting that built up before winter sets in, or before whatever big change is going to occur in the next few months of your life.

We can tell ourselves that 2021 is a new start in many ways. It may not be easy, but we can hold a picture of peace, balance and well-being for ourselves and our society.

Thanks to Thomas Watson, an ultra runner, for his framework.

Your ideas from last newsletter. Thank you!

As promised, here are a few of your comments on dealing with COVID and the blues it causes. Thank you to those who responded regarding strategies for getting through in a good frame of mind.

“Resources that make people laugh: movies, stand-up acts, COVID jokes.”

“I find it’s always better to avoid the self-pity party by focusing on others. I am home alone these days; that is the most difficult part.”

“In this time I have learned the value of reaching out more than ever. People really appreciate check-ins – especially elders who have already been isolated, those who may have lost jobs or who are among our black and brown friends who are dealing with the extra heavy burden of the fallout of racism amidst the pandemic. In moving beyond our own circumstances and into the heart of compassion, we send much-needed vibrations into the world, which in turn uplifts our own spirits.”

“For anti-blues, I have been experimenting with a meditation app called Insight Timer. I have also been listening to books on CHIRP app. Fun choices offered every day. I was in on my phone when I walk alone around my house. I have a daily walking partner who lives by a cliff overlooking the ocean. My garden flowers and succulents keep me entertained.”

“I am entertaining in my backyard— up to seven people, 5 to 6 is better, so easy. I just provide chairs, spaced in a circle so that we can all see and hear each other, and try to have only one conversation going at a time; they bring food/drink if they want. A bonus is getting to know people better, e.g. I know them just through dancing, and find out their other interests. Really a good time. I agree exercise is all

important. I've recently found a gym with an outdoor pool which is a delight."

"Helps to think about and be thankful for what I have, my five senses allow me to enjoy life. See, hear, taste and touch."

"Getting on my bike and taking a short ride helps when I start angsting about the state of the nation and the world. Also try to reflect on the many blessings I have."

All of these are super helpful. I find that people tend to go to their strong suit and work from there. I feel like I've been writing all of my newsletters about COVID. But we are all going through this together, and sharing and learning from each other is how we keep things in the most positive light.

Lastly, as food for thought, I'm doing a garage cleanup. I've hired a painter who will sweep out all the cobwebs, wash the floor, and paint the walls so that I can have safe, small gatherings with the door open and a couple of space heaters. It probably won't be wonderful, but it will fulfill the need to get together face-to-face (mask-to-mask) and hey, that's life with COVID.

Namaste,

Wendy