

# 10 TIPS

To *Inspire* Your Running Life

**“The 5k-a-day Method”**

by Patrick Reed



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*\*Disclaimer: The information in this book is purely opinion and is not offered as medical advice.  
Be sure to check with your physician before attempting any rigorous physical activity.*

for Lucy and Anja, with love.

May the simple act of running  
fill you with joy all of your days!



***“A runner must run with dreams in his heart.”***

Emil Zatopek

PART 1

*take your mark...*

"Every day is a good day when you run." -Kevin Nelson

# Introduction

“ Success rests in having the courage and endurance and, above all, the will to become the person you are, however peculiar that may be. Then you will be able to say, 'I have found my hero and he is me.' ”

- Dr. George Sheehan

***R*unning a little bit each day - just 3.1 miles - can change your life. It changed mine. After two decades of training - first as a competitive high school and college athlete, then as a national caliber marathoner - I have finally found a way to keep my running enjoyable, productive and, ultimately, inspiring. After years of agonizing about my workouts - often multiple training runs a day - I have found a simple recipe for my running. My resolution to run at least 5 kilometers a day (3.1 miles), every day for a year, has proven as effective as it was easy to devise. And I urge you - if you are looking for inspiration in your running and in your life - to try it, too.**

This 5km a day training plan, believe it or not, brought me to a strong finish in my first ultra-marathon. And that ultra was a highlight of my life. Rolling along the high alpine rim ascending towards Fluella Pass outside of Davos, Switzerland, I competed in the famed SwissAlpine Marathon. There, 33 miles into my 78 kilometer race, I experienced what Dr. George Sheehan calls 'seeing'.

“ My running becomes my offering. A dozen years of training and discipline, hours upon hours of perfecting the art and purifying the artist, came to this: I was a child before his Father, offering what I did best. Asking that my Father be pleased. That I be accepted. And I found myself, this little child, with tears streaming down my face, running the river road back to town. ”

- *Running and Being*

For a few minutes - out of 463 minutes run that day - I raised my arms in exultation in the knowledge that I would finish the course strong, and go further than I ever had before.

This great personal achievement came to fruition in greatest part due to the 5k a day training plan. In the following brief pages of this book, I will plug this new approach to training, and pepper my pitch with inspirational ideas, techniques and even tricks to help you to accomplish your first year-long running streak.

So, take a look and gain inspiration from a simple running plan and by ten insights of a life-long runner and coach. The task before you is to try to run every day for one year - just 3.1 miles a day. Any speed, any effort level will do. Just get the miles done. And do not be overwhelmed by my alpine tales. Instead, establish your own new fitness goals and accomplish some dream deferred of your own. Let's get started!



# tip #1 - run every day



# run

SwissAlpine Ultra



(touch image above to play video)

*On the 200th day of what became a 4 year running streak, I ran a 20 mile alpine race. A year later, after some 500+ days of running every day, I completed a marathon at the same venue - the SwissAlpine Ultra-Marathon. The marathon course was the most grueling of the 15+ marathons I have run. In fact, the first 8 miles the course gains nearly 1600 meters in altitude. That's a mile up! That is also calculated as a 12.5% grade for that first third of the race.*

*...every day...*

Thankfully, what goes up also comes down. The second half of the marathon plunged down several mountainsides into farm country and rolling meadows aside bubbling Swiss brooks. I finished that race, but in pushing too quickly on the first climbs, I set myself up to fall apart in the final miles. I completed the course and learned from my mistake. I thought I would not return to those mountains.

However, to my joy, a year later on the 900th day of that same running streak, I completed the 'big' event at Davos, the 78k Ultra - "the biggest mountain ultramarathon in the world."

Many ask what was my training regimen?? In truth, it couldn't be more simple - or surprising. The secret to this ultra success was nearly a thousand consecutive days of running. These daily efforts were not long, excruciating plugs - with the anxiety that goes along with all of those compulsory runs. Instead, they were

an easy recipe of at least 5 kilometers a day (and usually no more than 5k) every day without fail.

Thus, my first tip for you is to begin a streak of your own - 5km a day, everyday, at any pace. Most often this should take the form of jogging. Just get the mileage done.

Here are three reasons why the 5km a day training regimen worked for me in these long endurance races and why it can work for you in your fitness goals:

1. The 5k a day training plan is itself a goal. In this training plan, the daily run is itself the accomplishment of the goal. As each day you connect that day's run with all of those in the streak, you gain emotional confidence in addition to physical strength. If you are like me, you crave a training structure which sets you up for success. This method does just that - give me 30 minutes,

the regimen says, and I will give you self-confidence and a true sense of accomplishment.

2. Secondly, this plan is doable! Even an deadbeat can get off of the couch, put down the bag of bar-b-q chips and limp through 3.1 miles. The daily distance is not so daunting as to cause anxiety or to deplete you physically. Yet at the same time, the distance ensures that you are on your feet working your heart and lungs for close to the 30-minute golden threshold for maximum cardio-vascular strengthening. Because the plan is not overwhelming but rather quite realistic, the runner is able to gain a new sense of self, a renewed knowledge about his potential.

3. Finally, the 'less is more' mantra plays here and works. Doing just a small amount of work each day - day after day - pays huge dividends. Many plans depend upon extreme, hard efforts followed by extreme periods of rest. This plan only asks that

you exercise a daily perseverance which cumulatively gives you a deep base of strength. Imagine that a year of the 5k a day method results in 182+ hours of running each year. That's 7.6 days of continuous running if you did it all at once! A little a day - just 30 minutes - will have you in great shape before you know it.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

To wrap up this first chapter, a little bit of running each and every day accomplishes more than just the sum of its parts and is a very significant training concept. I am convinced - from my own experience and based on that of the many high school athletes I have coached - that running every day can help to build base, stave off injury, establish mental discipline and toughness, and much more.

Okay, enough talk; get up, get out the door and hit that first 5k. Then, come back tomorrow for tip #2!

# tip #2 - forget the watch



#2

## forget the watch

**Stop worrying about your pace! Let go of the need to run fast and to clock yourself. The principle here is that the most important thing is to finish each day's run. The pace is not critical. The crucial element, so often overlooked in many of today's training programs, is the importance of day-in, day-out consistency of effort. Daily, a little... This suffices.**

For years, I was obsessed with practically sprinting every workout. As a high-schooler, I clocked my morning run every day. I would be a second off as I rounded the first turn at the top of my hill and gun it up a notch. A mile into the run, I had my first useful split... and I measured myself against every other first mile from every other morning. On and on it went, until I had a log of my 'easy a.m. runs' which were seconds and tenths of seconds apart. Ironically, these were only base-building runs intended to rack up 20 or so extra miles a week...

Unfortunately, my infatuation with competition only increased during daily team runs. As with many competitive teams, every practice deteriorated into a race. None of us could tell whether or not to believe our coach when he urged us to "back it off." After all, coaches want *everything* out of their runners, right?

Well, not *this* coach. I want the best from you in the form of a joyful and inspired runner.

Thus, tip #2 is to let go of the uber-competitiveness - the desire to measure yourself by how you fare against anyone else or against the watch in your daily efforts. Instead, enjoy your daily run!

As for the watch, its greatest asset *is* its objectiveness. It doesn't know the distance or the speed. Let it simply remind you of your magical running hour. When its alarm chimes, consider taking it off, setting it next to your dress shoes - to be taken up again after you have run the day's course.

As for me these days, I use my iPhone as my watch. I always run with my phone because I am always listening to podcasts and audible books. I will set my phone's timer for 15, 30 or 60 minutes at the start of my run and turn around when the alarm sounds. I don't bother resetting the timer for the trip home because it does not matter to me how fast I cover the distance. Rather, I just want to cover the distance.

I know that some readers are thinking wistfully of their \$400 Garmin GPS watches - and their Polar heart rate watches. I am not advocating that you disregard those [expensive toys] tools. It is all well and good to monitor your heart rate and to have speed and effort calculated for you. I *am*

arguing that you aspire to move beyond comparing yourself to your previous bests and to your competitive peers at every workout. In short, if you want to run with excellence, consider running simply, free of the constraints of competition. I'll bet you will find it refreshing and freeing.

(Note: I wrote the following 'essay' for this book, but decided to post it on the Run5kaday Blog. The article took off in popularity and quickly became my most read piece. I thought it would be fitting to include it in this chapter about gear, for which it was originally written, as it identifies the highest echelon of runner she who has moved far beyond the stuff of running.)

## “The 4 stages of runners”

### 1. The Wheezer

**The most neanderthal of distance runners is the least developed cardiovascularly - and perhaps more importantly, mentally - but with a benefit in the area of lacking hubris and occupying a good dose of naivete.**

**The wheezer wheezes, of course, and complains constantly. Usually, complaints center around a lack of capacity to get oxygen. The 5km a day plan is great for these uninitiated fellows because the effort rarely diminishes to the unending upward sloping trail with endless bends, a fate**

# tip #3 - run the easy parts hard



# run

***A*nother key training principle of inspired running is taking advantage of how you are feeling on a given day and adapting your workout accordingly. The general idea is that you roll with how you are feeling. You stride out when you are feeling great, and you back off when the jets are weary.**

**No doubt you know the misery of trying to complete a challenging workout on a day when the stars must be misaligned. Every stride is a chore, every breath painful, and running lacks any joy-factor. Maybe you experience**

# “Run the easy parts hard... and the hard parts easy!”

this often, and perhaps this is more the norm than otherwise.

Ah... but then there are those *other* days - the blessed ones! These days, every step is a wonder, you float across intersections, around turns, through glades and across bridges. All is well and you are truly loving running.

And so the tip here is to listen to your body. On the tough days, back off from your effort and slog through. Accomplish the base-line of your day's goal. You need feel no guilt about cruise-controlling through the intervals or refraining from being carried off the track after having left it all out there. The difficult days are to be endured - and then forgotten. I am not advocating that you pull out of the workout; in fact, I insist that you do not. I am encouraging you - on those days when you aren't feeling it - to listen to your body and to get your day's work done and no more.

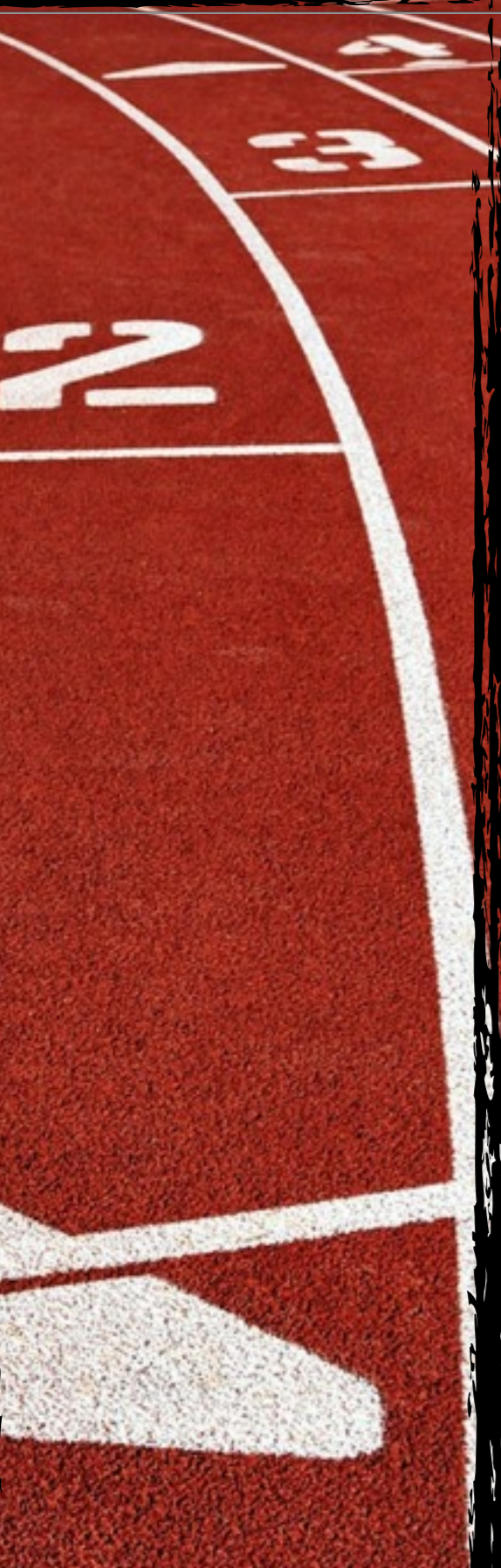
The flip-side? On the days when your heart sings with the ease of speedy cruising -- when you feel the bliss of the long-distance runner -- on those days, hit It! Punch it like a Margaret! Let your engines roar!!!

You have run on those days - if you have been at this for long. When all is right in the universe and for whatever reason all of your cylinders are firing - and there is no pain - when you are in the runner's high and you are staying there for a while... on these days, take a gut check, and if all looks good - no nagging muscle tears, no sharp tendon tugs - then HIT IT! Hurry over to the track (and pick up your watch if you dare) and roll out your best mile. In fact, do that 10X1000 workout that has been nagging at you. And enjoy that day. Not only will you perhaps lay down some PR's, but you will make solid gains from your training.

And if the stars are truly aligned, that day will come on race day!



# tip #4 - run down the uphill



run down . . .

***A***s a high school runner competing on challenging cross-country courses week in and week out, I remember once dueling on the infamous rolling hills of Pallotti High School's course in Maryland. Looking down at my feet during one climb, I decided to trick myself into believing that the hill I was ascending was really a gentle downhill. Try this...

the uphill . . .

Go to your favorite hill and  
attack it. When

the going gets tough,  
look down to the point just  
ahead of your foot-strikes. Imagine that the  
course runs down! This method has worked for me on  
many occasions and I have always coached my runners  
to run "down the uphill." This principle is similar to tip #3  
(run the hard parts easy...)

It has been said that in running 90% of the challenge is  
90% mental. Therefore, overcome the rigors of the  
physical challenge of hills with intellect. Use your mind to  
will the hard parts to become easy.

One note on all of this - I remember coaches advocating  
looking up to that point atop the hill which is the goal -  
the top - and just running without fail to that mark as you  
keep your eyes fixed on it.

This strategy is contrary to the idea of running down the  
uphills. Remember, though, to look a little bit ahead - but  
not so much that you become aware of the reality. If you  
can see that you are indeed on a hill, you can't trick  
yourself.

Run 'down' the uphill!

*philosophical aside:*

It has been argued that we humans find meaning in life  
precisely because of its finitude. I generally agree;  
however, we do not do great things by  
acknowledging our limits at each turn. Instead,  
knowing how precious life is - how precious the race  
is and how significant the daily run is - precisely  
because of the crest of the hill, the finish line - we run  
best when we are just a little oblivious. Therefore, like  
quaffing a draught of refreshing elixir, running down  
the uphill is willful oblivion. And it is *good medicine*  
for long distance runners.



# continue...

Another throwback from high school cross-country days...

"Continue...!" We would holler this mantra to each other as each week's serpentine race-course inevitably doubled back on itself and we'd catch a glimpse of each teammate racing towards our collective victory. "Continue!" we instinctively yelled out, encouragingly. We were urging each team member to keep putting one foot in front of the other to do his part for the team; to simply *continue* in his effort. And this is really a main theme of this book: the notion that the little, noble effort, when repeated and repeated, reaps a harvest many times greater than its parts taken individually.

# continue!!!



It follows that I am convinced that the greatest way to improve your running life is to start a running streak today and to *continue* it tomorrow and on and on.

The daily push, day after day without fail, rain or shine, morning, night, midday, treadmill, the effort of coursing loops around a spectacular lake or a darkened cul-de-sac... the repetition of a little for many days is the key!

To help you start your streak, I have begun a blog dedicated to the 5k a day training theory. Link to the blog for daily inspiration. When you feel like throwing in the towel or need a little advice or fine-tuning -- or simply to be reminded of why you are on this journey in the first place, the 5km a day blog promises to lift your spirits. Check it out right now!

## 5KaDay Blog

One note about 5k running: I began this goal for myself with the object of establishing and maintaining a base fitness level. The daily goal meets all of the criteria of successful goals for it is measurable, reasonable, specific, inspiring and beneficial.

## “Continue...”

*a running essay written years ago as I began to run again after some time off.* (scroll down to enjoy)

The beating of a drum - ephemeral though are its individual beats - resounds. So, too, do the foot-strikes of the distance runner. I remember running the bridges of Portland, Oregon, 10 years ago.

My course, the one I ran daily, at breakneck pace, with 20-something abandon and less understanding, coursed first down a wet neighborhood street. Tired junks and manicured gardens mixed with holey concrete and chipped curbs. The rainy sidewalk reflections of the changing traffic lights muddled with my gasps and yearnings as I struggled for shape.

Then, it was out onto the broad promenading boulevard - into the sunny - for now - open cafes and microbrew gardens, and there were darkly clad fellows and umbrellaed ladies. I was “outside” as I cruised on by. Outside their sphere, social status, outside their understanding. And I ran on and on.

In those days, I read Dostoevsky all night every night - working by day digging cold trenches with hard

PART 2

*get set...*

"If you want to become the best runner you can be, start now. Don't spend the rest of your life wondering if you can do it." - Priscilla Welch



# listen

*I* began running at age 13 when a skiing injury to my wrist kept me from playing lacrosse in my 8th grade spring. I began to run with the high school track team, found I was okay at it, and I quickly changed my plans from going out for the varsity soccer team at my small high school - St Andrews Episcopal School in Maryland - to revving up for the fall cross-country season.

# listen

I couldn't wait to experience the thrill of the starting gun and of everyone running like mad and one winner at the end. Since those days when I first began running until the days I was logging up to 140 miles in a week (remember how I talked about those compulsory runs?) -- throughout all of those days, I was passionately against listening to any music or anything else on the headphones while I ran. I don't know why. Was it a philosophical thing, a bias, or a silliness? I just never listened to anything but the sound of my foot-strikes and the wind and the cars and the rain... And my breathing *and my foot-strikes*... Believe me, those are beautiful sounds! However, sometimes you just have to inject inspiration into your soul. And that's what the iPod, iPhone or whatever mp3 player you have is for!

Not only have I come a long way in my understanding of training, but I also cannot imagine

going back through all of those runs without my iPod. These days it's my iPod touch. In fact in the 78k two weeks ago I felt that I was 'the jukebox runner' - for I had U2 and The Samples blaring so loudly in my headset that people whom I passed heard me coming from 20 meters away. They would look over their shoulders before they could otherwise have realized there was someone coming up from behind. I don't think I could have completed that great race without the aid of my iPod.

In fact, the year before, my wife and I had to fight over who got our one working iPod before our simultaneous races. Of course, she won out - her 11k took precedence over my marathon. Ah, ladies first. Still, this year, my iTunes were indispensable.

But beyond loud music pulling one over alpine peaks, I love most to listen to podcasts as I plug away at my 5 kilometers every day. For those of

you new to podcasts, I will briefly explain my going on 3 years fascination. In a nutshell, podcasts are downloadable spoken word radio shows. You can subscribe to them on virtually any topic. There are political podcasts, entertaining ones of every variety - and my personal favorite, tech podcasts. No doubt you could tune into a running guru who will elocute on the virtues of distance running. Or, like me, you can vary up your interests, so that while you enjoy your running pastime, you can also tune into the latest developments in the world of tech gadgetry, photography or you name it. My love of this newfangled spoken word has guided me through many a laborious run - and to be honest quite a few miles driven while the family sleeps...

Try it out for yourself!

And did I mention **audible books**?!... And you might also enjoy my own personal podcast, **“A Runner’s Podcast.”**

Here are a bunch of my other favorite podcasts.  
Check them out!

MarathonTrainingAcademy

RunRunLive!

RunnerAcademy

TheRunningPodcast

SavvySelfPublishingPodcast

TheNewYorkerFiction

MacPowerUsers

TrailRunnerNation

MartinBaileyPhotographyPodcast

ProPhotoShow

DigitalPhotoExperience

ThisWeekInPhoto





# finish

*F*inish Strong!” This mantra - and this spiritual principle to boot - is always a reminder to me that despite my last great effort or my list of pr's, the course is not yet finished, the final chapter is yet to be written... It also reminds me that just as the final chapter of a race defines that effort, the final chapter of one's life in many ways defines and marks the character of one's time on this earth.

finish strong

The final chapter is the legacy chapter, just as the final kilometer of an ultra, the final kick of a 1500m Olympic final, and the last loving words of a dying man, can reveal the true character of that individual and the real strength of the runner's grit.

I often teach this principle to my daughters...

Lucy ran a half-kilometer course a few weeks ago as a 5 year old.... *"What matters is how you finish; run strong through the finish!"* I coached her.

And this rings true. Consider those of us who were early bloomers, straight-A high school students and star athletes, everyone's perfect date, the popular one.... It is quite revealing to attend that 15th and 20th high school reunion... And then to see, finally, what was the true grit of

that person's character. By looking at what they've become, how that "popularity in the petrie dish" translated across the trials of the years. Then, we can discern how that initial sprint around the first turn to get into key position translated into the 10-mile split time - and how he who raced the 1st mile finally fared.

***"What matters is how you finish;  
run strong through the finish!"***

As a runner bent on a new and better running life, consider how you shall finish even as you take your initial steps. A truly noble character will prove true throughout when viewed objectively. How should you begin? How should you end that first run in the 10,000-day streak? You should run the first steps with the end in mind.



# “talk!”



*I*t is said time and again that the proper pace for distance training is the pace at which you can carry on a conversation as you go. I believe in this idea and encourage you to try it. This ties in consistently with tip #2 to forget the watch. Let the pace on your daily run work itself out as you and a buddy share life together.

The corollary to the this 8th tip is camaraderie. Share your runs with a friend. Aim, together, to complete the year-long streak... keep each other inspired. And accountable!

talk

I must admit guilt in this area. I have not generally been the most social of runners. I have been much more like the lonely long distance runner than otherwise.

Nevertheless, I have shared seasons in my running life with others - and to the great joy of each of us. When my wife and I first started dating - all those years ago - we would often incorporate a run into *our* time together. A few years later, as I was doing my best to earn a spot on the starting line of the Olympic Trials Marathon, I developed a close relationship with a super-talented runner named Gray Mavhera. Despite our often excruciating training efforts - 10x800meters, for example, at 2:10 pace.... - we became excellent buddies. Running broke down the barriers between a white suburban east coast kid and a lanky Zimbabwean immigrant. I am so grateful for our friendship forged on the running paths.

And by the way, despite his great 13-minute 5,000 meter talent, Gray taught me quite a lot about training and pace and long, slow distance.

Although on Monday nights -- by moonlight and by the glow of the Riverside canal (in Riverside, CA) - which we called "God's path" when we raced in the near darkness nearly redlining the entire workout -- the other days of the week we would jog at the most relaxed gait.... talking, laughing, sharing, and building our friendship... *and just getting the run done.*

I remember that Gray would often hearken back to his coach at Cal Baptist: "Coach Banks would just say, 'I don't care if you take 2 hours to get the mileage done on easy days. Just go the distance.'"

So, run with a partner, enjoy a relaxed pace together.... and talk your way through the streak. Your fitness and your heart will shine!

# start

I am reminded today of the great power of a little exercise daily. This reminder came in the form of teaching my older daughter another reading lesson. Lucy is 5 and we have been doing reading lessons in lieu of quiet time for a few weeks now. All of the sudden, Lucy is plowing thru Dr. Seuss's "Hop On Pop," and I can see that reading is beginning to click for her. I look back and really try to calculate how much actual time I have spent in teaching her to read,

today today





and I am surprised at how relatively few hours we have spent working on this. The key - instead of long, tedious reading sessions a few days a week - has been the day in, and day out repetition of a few pages read and learned. This same principle is at the heart of my running formula. A little a day. Every day. Do it!

Like Lucy's reading, your fitness will begin to click - and so just maybe you are closer to the realization of some seemingly impossible accomplishment than you know.

Armed with these ideas in mind, why don't you start your running streak today? And if you are already well on the journey, then - even though you may be uninspired today - lace up those shoes and go! Take that first step and run through to the finish today.

“If you have been wavering in your running, just start...”

# tip #10 - run to [truly] win

## run to

**R**un to really win - that is, run for the joy of it! Because you can. Need I say more?! We are promised only today, and we do not know what tomorrow holds. It is so important to seize today. Every day. Many running plans encourage runners to run every other day or to walk repetitively throughout a marathon. These ideas butt up against my method.

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truly  
win



I encourage you to run without fail each day, and as opposed to calculating in planned rests, I urge you to run and run and run... Until you cannot help but walk, full of exhaustion. And again, these are not my ideas. They are ideas inspired by many other coaches and experiences. It was Matt Centrowitz (the older), Olympian and currently the head track coach at American University in Washington, D.C., who once

used to encourage me - whom he dubbed 'marathon man' - to finish up my 3 or 4 x a mile workout on the track with a hard 10-mile run. I think that he knew I couldn't finish this run. He wanted me to run and run and run.... until I ran out of gas, collapsing on the side of the road. No scheduled walks in this workout; rather, RUN and then be finished with it.

How does this fit in with my run a little every day theory? This is how. This is a running book for runners who *want* to be inspired. My goal is to urge you on to accomplish more than you even believe you can. My premise is that with consistency, the sum of your individual training days will far surpass each of them taken singly and spread out over, for example, two years instead of one.

Run to win! Run to overcome the obstacles and the doubts and the injuries which ever hold you back.

Run every day! In doing so, you will inject joy into your running life and you may just experience victories you haven't even imagined...



PART 3

# GO! *2 bonus tips*

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just soft people."

-Bill Bowerman

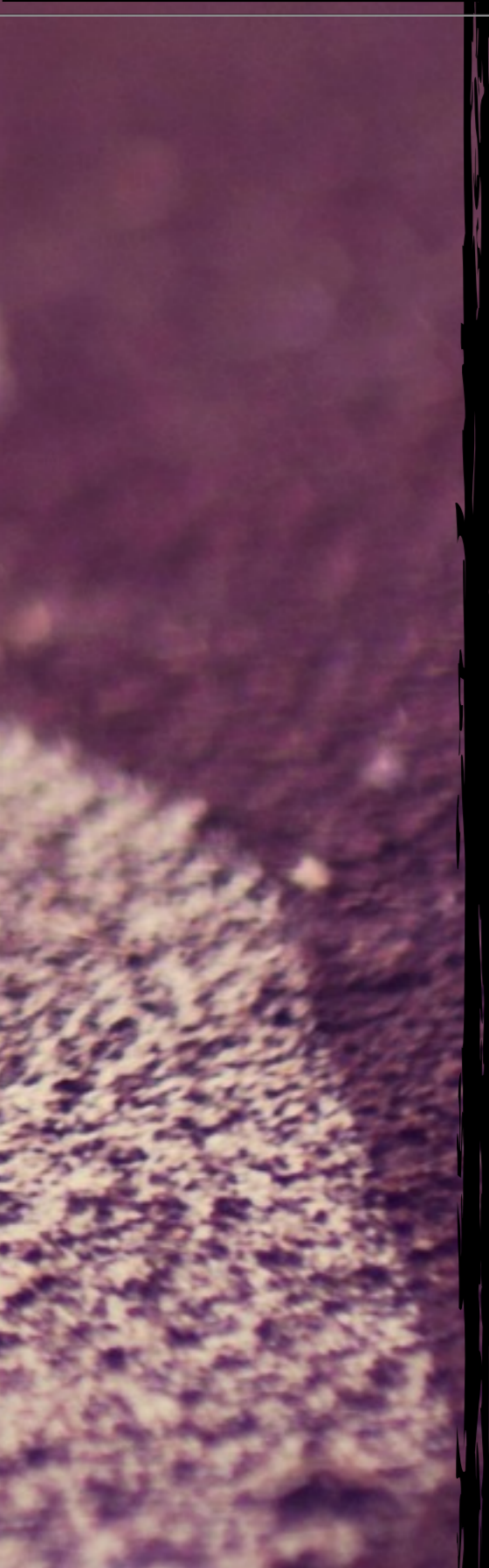
# tip #11 - run long around the turns



run long . . .

Here's an extra tip for you. In her autobiography [The Running Tide](#), famed marathoner Joan Benoit Samuleson talks about her rigorous and disciplined training... One thing I always remembered about her was that she used to (and most likely she still does this) run right on by the mailbox of her property at the end of her training runs and go a good half mile or more past her house and then return. In this way, she added on at least a mile to each of her runs...

around the turns



In her training log, she would not include the extra distance. In this way, she exceeded her own training expectations and no doubt the expectations of her competitors! Tip#11 is along these same lines: “Run the longest path around turns in your training. Go the extra mile in training.”

So, I encourage you: run the long way around the turns in your training. Don't take the fastest route on your daily runs. Take the most difficult and the slowest path. In this way, you train to win. There is a humility to this type of deferred training.... Just this morning, I practiced this method, and I do every day and tell each of my running partners to do the same. The principle behind this tip can be stated in another way: **“Train with discipline, race with excellence.”**

When we talk about practicing perfectly, we mean doing the opposite of cutting corners.

We go further than we log, we run wide around the turns to add distance and time... all in order to trick ourselves into joy on the track and in the race when we far exceed our practice times.

“Run the long way around the turns in your training. Don't take the fastest route in your practice; take the most difficult, the slowest way. In this manner, you train to win.”

when your running streak ends...



“nothing . . .

*I*t is a truism that “nothing lasts forever.” At least, on this side of Heaven. So, there must come a day when your 5km a day regimen is met with an inability to complete the course. Rest assured, when this day arrives, all will be okay. I confronted the end of my first lengthy streak one winter afternoon. I was forced to give up my daily effort. In fact, my wife shook her head as I limped into the bedroom at half past eleven that night, and she exclaimed, “You’re done!”

lasts forever.”

Yeah, I was done alright. Having ripped part of my achilles five weeks before - but stubbornly hobbled through my workouts since then - I learned the hard way about refusing to stop and about my addiction to 'the streak.'

I met my punishment with mature resignation. I had fought the good (though stupid) fight. And had lost. "Hand me my sentence; I will comply," I thought to myself. When the orthopedist put me into a boot for six months, and then physical therapy for two, I held my head high and dealt head on with the disappointment of my temporary loss. But when a talented orthopedist - who just happened to be a family friend - conspired with my wife to try a cutting-edge treatment on me, I began to get fidgety. PRP - Platelet Replacement Therapy - involves injecting the healing plasma from one's own blood (spun out in a centrifuge) into the [un-

numbable]\* injured tendon. In layman's terms this means having a needle jabbed repeatedly into the base of your heel at the insertion point of the achilles tendon. I kept getting reassuring advice like: "This is probably the closest you'll come to the pain of childbirth" and such helpful banter. I just put on my headphones to volume 11 and endured...

After all of this, you can bet that I am listening to my body much more carefully during my current running streak than I had before. In fact, I have learned a great deal from the experience of running myself into the ground. I have gained patience, insight into optimal running form and, most importantly, *I have come to cherish running more than ever.* All this is to say that your body will fight you hard one day to miss a day. The challenge is to listen to your body!

\*Notice how "un-numbable" is not even a word. This PRP was just a little "off the grid" crazy. And it worked!

# Afterword

*"We must never lose sight of the real purpose of distance running and of sport, generally: we run to build up the house of the soul in order that the soul may sing!"*

***"Out on the roads there is fitness and self-discovery and the persons we were destined to be."***

***- George Sheehan***

I began this book with a quote from George Sheehan: "I have found my hero and he is me." I agree with Sheehan that the greatest victory we each intrinsically seek lies within each of us.

Having written the bulk of "10 Running Tips," I got up early this morning to blog and to write. Yet, today, it was neither blogging nor expounding upon the great benefits of distance running that struck me as of first importance. Rather, my conscience pulled on me to reflect upon the big picture: the more philosophical question of *why* we run in the first place?

In the busyness of modern life, many things pull on us and tug at us - all urgently claiming prime importance. But, returning to a greater perspective reminded me that although physical exercise is all the rage today, we must never lose sight of the real purpose of distance running, and of sport, generally: It is to build up the house of the soul in order that the soul may sing.

On the top of one of God's glorious peaks in the middle of the Swiss Alps during that ultra-marathon which I keep hearkening back to, my soul sang. It hymned the song of the glory of a race well run. This race was a metaphor for my life itself - a long race, an impossible feat, conquered through will-power and discipline - *and* a God-given grace. An implausible victory won by a faith forged of footsteps, one stride at a time.

This is why I want to share these words with you... And why I am ultimately interested in letting you in on some of the insights I have gleaned over the course of my running career. I believe that as runners, we must leverage our God-given abilities to find this glory which each of us has to discover.

We must run for the things that last. If our endeavors have only our egos and self-gratification as their ends, we have lost even when we happen to be the one who crosses the finish line first. The ultimate running tip, then, is that you run in such a way as to get the prize. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Then all these things will be added unto you."

- (Matthew 6:33)

Thank you for reading!

Patrick Reed  
June 9th, 2012

## about the author



*A writer, photographer and runner, Patrick Reed ran to 3rd place finishes at the Philadelphia Marathon (1997) and the Marine Corps Marathon (1998), and has a half marathon personal best of 1:05:42. Patrick's most prized running accomplishment is his completion of the SwissAlpine Marathon 78k course in 7 hours and 43 minutes in Davos, Switzerland (2010).*

*Having coached high school runners for 10 years, Patrick earned his B.A. from Colby College (Waterville, Maine) in 1991, and his M.A. in the great books from St. John's College, Annapolis, in 1999.*

*He currently runs [the Run5kaday blog](#), [patrickreedphotography](#) and is the cofounder of [2Market: Marketing for Photographers](#) and Editor-in-Chief of [TWiP Magazine](#).*



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*please*

let me know

how you enjoyed “10 Running Tips”

link [here](#) to complete an  
online questionnaire.\*

Thanks!

\* Please note that you must be connected to an internet signal in order to complete this survey. Thank you!

