

GRAND RAPIDS RUNNING CLUB MENTOR PROGRAM FOR 5/3 RIVER BANK RUN 25K

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE BEGINNING RUNNER

First and foremost--CONGRATULATIONS for making the commitment to train for and run the 5/3 River Bank Run. Whatever your reason for setting this goal, trust that you can do this. It takes courage, commitment, and perseverance, but the Grand Rapids Running Club Mentor Group will support and encourage you along the way. You'll recognize our Running Club's many talented and supportive mentors (the "green bandits") by the green bandanas they wear when they run with you each Saturday morning. They are happy to answer any training questions you may have.

If you are a beginning runner, the information below should be helpful to you. It is only a general overview on running, however, since it is not possible to cover all the information available on the subject. More specific information can be obtained from various sources, such as magazines, books, or reliable sites on the Internet. However, I believe your best source is other experienced runners!

Contact Francine Robinson at: GRRCMentorGroup@aol.com for additional information, or to sign up for receiving weekly GRRC Mentor Program Newsletters.

Here are the areas you need to consider as you begin your training:

1. **Dressing for Cold Weather Running.** Please see separate document entitled "How to Dress for Cold Weather Running," with a detailed discussion on the subject as well as information on running safety.
2. **Training Schedule for the 25K:** The training schedule is also found in a separate document. Please carefully review the schedule, including the footnotes. The schedule lists the miles we will be running each Saturday morning, and it also includes suggested training runs during the week. See the training schedule for more details on those runs (distance, time and location).
3. **Cross-Training.** When you are training for a particular sport, it is best for your training to be "sport specific." So, the majority of your training for this 25K should be running. However, cross-training can complement running and can be substituted one day a week for a regular running day. This includes anything aerobic, such as swimming, biking, walking, elliptical trainer, or skating. An added benefit to cross-training is that it allows the muscles used most often in running to rest, thereby reducing the possibility of overuse injuries. You may also add weight training (light weights) and abdominal exercises to strengthen your upper body and core, areas often neglected by runners. Strengthening these areas will help you utilize better running form. Yoga is yet another beneficial form of cross-training, which can help runners balance strength, increase range of motion, and train the body and mind.
4. **Running Shoes/Gear.** Many sporting goods stores carry good quality running clothes and gear. When it comes to running shoes, however, it is crucial to get a proper fit. You should get fitted at a store where the staff has been properly trained to assist you. Local running stores that have trained personnel to help you find the right shoe include:
 - Strider's, 4045 Chicago Drive SW, Grandville, MI 49418 (10% Discount on shoes and nutrition for GR Running Club Members-present membership card)
 - The Runnery, 5361 Alpine Ave NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321 (10% Discount on shoes for GR Running Club Members—present membership card)
 - Gazelle Sports, 3930 - 28th Street, SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512 (with locations in Holland and Kalamazoo as well) -Ask about Rewards Program

5. **Nutrition/Hydration:** Although it is always important to eat nutritious foods and stay hydrated, it is especially so for an athlete. In terms of preparing for your Saturday long runs, make sure you are getting adequate carbohydrates (complex "carbs") in the days preceding your long run. Also, it is especially important to eat breakfast the morning of your long run, so you're not "running on empty." You don't have to eat a large breakfast, but at least get some nutrition in your body. Many runners eat a piece of toast or bagel with peanut butter. Or try oatmeal, yogurt, pancakes, or a banana. Also, be sure to eat at least an hour before your run to give your food time to digest.
 - Staying hydrated is necessary in order to prevent symptoms such as fatigue, muscle cramps, and headaches. Also, if you're not properly hydrated, your body will not function efficiently. Always drink before and after a run, and as you get into your longer runs, drink during your training runs as well. Most runners use water belts to carry water or Gatorade. These belts can be purchased at local running stores. Two popular brands are Fuel Belt or Nathan Belt. On cold winter days, wear your water belt under your coat to keep the water in your bottles from freezing.
 - The danger of overhydration, or a condition called hyponatremia (electrolyte imbalance), is more common in hot weather running and when running longer distances. That topic will be discussed in a Mentor Group Newsletter later when the weather gets warmer.
6. **Rest:** Another essential part of a training program is adequate rest-not just taking a rest day from running, but getting enough rest at night, and especially the night before a long run. If you normally party on Friday nights and find it difficult getting up on Saturday mornings, you might want to consider moving your party night to Saturday!
7. **Saturday Training Runs -Three Main Rules for Success: Fun/Consistency/Attitude**
 - Rule 1 is a "Joint Rule" get out there and have fun-BUT STAY SAFE! It may not seem like "fun" when you first start running-particularly in the winter when the air is cold and the roads are slippery. But if you are consistent in your training (rule 2) and have a positive attitude (rule 3), you will have fun! Being consistent in your training, including your weekday runs, will help your body adapt to the physical challenges of running. You will build strength, endurance, and confidence. Above all, keep a positive attitude. Repeat this mantra: "I am strong; I can do this; one step at a time!" There are other important rules as well, including these "**Rules of the Road**":
 - **Run single file.** Run facing traffic. If running next to a friend, switch to running single file when you see traffic approaching. You may hear other runners in front of you yell, "car up." This means a vehicle is approaching from the front. If you hear, "car back," this means vehicles are approaching from the rear.
 - **Headphones.** While you may enjoy listening to music when you run, for safety reasons, we recommend you DO NOT use headphones. You need to be aware of potential hazards around you. Besides, we think talking with your running friends is much more enjoyable!
 - **Identification.** Always carry some form of identification. I recommend Road IDs (www.ROADID.com), but you can also carry a driver's license.
 - **Safety.** This is covered in handout titled "How to Dress for Cold Weather Running." The above information should help you get started with your training program. We look forward to running with you, and we hope you will have fun and build new friendships while training with the Grand Rapids Running Club Mentor Group.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask! You can e-mail Francine Robinson at GRRCMentorGroup@aol.com. If we can't answer your questions ourselves, we will use the resources available to us to help get them answered. Have fun, and be careful out there!