

## **Recovery tips for all those athletes running in the Comrades Marathon**

With the Comrades marathon less than two months away, how you manage your body over the next six weeks will determine how well you do on that gruelling journey between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. April is a peak mileage month, culminating in an ultra-marathon at least six weeks before the race for those endurance junkies training for the Comrades. The challenge for these runners is to manage their bodies appropriately during their long runs and immediately post exercise. Although each of us has a variety of recovery strategies, I thought I would share what I have found to be effective recovery tips after running a marathon.

Regardless of your marathon time, there are two key elements that need to be done immediately after crossing the finish line. No matter how tired you are, you need to keep moving. This is not the time to sit down or take a nap. Walk through the finish area, get some dry clothes on (especially if it is cold or cool). You may be a bit nauseous but it is crucial to get post-race nutrition within 30 minutes after the race. Beverages are often a better choice as they are easily available and are quickly absorbed by the body. You should eat a good meal comprised of quality protein (to rebuild your muscles) as soon as you can tolerate it.

Although this is not for the faint-hearted, ice baths will definitely help with pain after the race. Using ice to relieve specific discomfort in targeted areas is much easier to tolerate. Icing a specific area can help with localized tissue recovery. Stay out of the hot tub as this will increase the microscopic bleeding into your tissues.

Putting on compression garments post-race can work miracles for muscle recovery. The most important factor is getting “firm compression”, about 20 to 30 mmHg of pressure. Whether you choose to wear compression socks or tights while running is a personal preference and will not necessarily aid performance. Experiment with wearing compression garments before, during and after exercise to see what works best for your legs.

In the days after a marathon, your priority is re-fuelling and hydration. Hydrating is of vital importance, you need to get your fluid balance back to normal. The goal is to get back to your pre-marathon weight. Scheduling a massage a week after your marathon will help with any residual soreness or tightness and can address any specific problems areas. You can also use home massage equipment (foam rollers) to do self-massage on any tight areas. Also do lots of light stretching to get rid of the post-marathon stiffness.

The Zwakala athletic club will be hosting the Solomon Mahlangu 10 km race at the Moretele Resort on Sibande Street in Mamelodi this coming Saturday. The start time for the event has changed from 6 am to 6:30 am.