

## **TAPERING FOR OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE**

- Tapering refers to the gradual reduction in training volume and intensity over a 3–4 week period leading up to an important race/event
- The Taper allows your body to fully recover from months of intense training. Muscle and tendon tissue suffer damaged cells that have time to heal
- Taper has been shown to improve performance by up to 5%
- There are five phases to the Taper:

### **Phase I: Decrease in Long Run Mileage**

For a novice marathoner, the “longest” run should be ideally four weeks from race day. More seasoned marathoners may do the longest three weeks out.

### **Phase II: Decrease in Overall Weekly Mileage**

This becomes significant as we approach the final two weeks before race day and is contingent upon how much weekly mileage you do. If you average over 45 miles per week, 2 weeks out you’ll decrease mileage by 30%. Much of this decrease is due to long run. One week out, your mileage decreases by 50%.

### **Phase III: End of “Quality” Run Workouts**

The final intense interval/tempo hill workout should be 8-10 days out from race. A scaled down quality workout (maybe 30% of what your typical workout was) can be done on the early part of the final weeks.

### **Phase IV: Strength Training Decrease**

To allow the legs to optimally recover, strength work should be scaled back as race day approaches. Last day of leg training 5-6 days before race and only moderate in intensity. Last core/upper training 3 days before race and also moderate in intensity.

### **Phase V: Final 3 Day Training Period**

The last 3 days of training are very light days or days off. A few easy paced miles help to calm the nerves and keep legs race day ready. These days account for significant part of the taper, allowing your legs to be fresh and full of energy. Avoid the temptation to spend too many hours walking around the expo the day before race day.

### Final 4 Week Sample of Taper

<b>Time Until Race</b>	<b>Long Run</b>	<b>Weekday Runs</b>	<b>Intervals</b>	<b>Strength</b>
4 Weeks Out	18-22	No change	No change	No change
3 Weeks Out	12-14+	No change	No change	No change
2 Weeks Out	10-12	No change/slight decrease	Last Quality Work	No change
1 Week Out	8-10	Cut in half	None	Last Leg lift Tues Last Upper Wed/Thurs