Getting Started Key Points – Boston 2026

The Boston Marathon is one of the most difficult marathons in the world.

It takes tremendous dedication, determination patience, and support from family and friends.

There will be numerous highs and lows throughout the training season.

You need to train like a complete athlete to successfully complete the marathon: running, strength training, cross training, stretching, mobility work; in addition to proper nutrition, recovery, and mental prep.

There is no feeling in the world like crossing that finish line in April.

The single most important component of the training plan is the injury prevention/ management.

Here are some key concepts to assist you and help you get started.

1. Pick a training plan that is realistic for you based on the following:
    a. How much running you are currently doing
    b. Injury concerns: both past and present
    c. Realistic amount of time you can dedicate to training
    d. Other fitness activities that you fit into the training plan (strength, non-impact cardio)
    e. Most novices do well with 3-4 days of running per week
    f. There are 100s of different training plans in the running world, the key is to pick one that works for you; you can always increase the plan, but if you begin too aggressively, you might get injured.
2. Build your mileage gradually and run most of your runs at a steady/easy pace
    a. Weekly mileage increases from 10-25% per week. The higher percentage is when you are starting out with not too much running and the lower percentage is when your weekly mileage is higher.
    b. Most of your training runs should be at a comfortable pace. You shouldn't be out of breath during your runs.

3. Strength training is very important for all runners!
    a. A general overall strength training plan 2x/week will help a lot
    b. However, there are specific areas that aren't typically part of a strength training plan that need to be addressed:
        i. Calves and soleus muscle
        ii. Glute medius (outer hip)
        iii. Shins
        iv. Foot muscles
        v. Hip flexors
4. Get a good pair of running sneakers that fit your foot type
    a. Take a trip to Heartbreak Hill Running Co or Marathon Sports to get fitted
    b. If you are currently wearing a pair of running sneakers that feel good and have worked for you, stick with them
5. If you have any injury concerns, or have a history of injury issues, it may be a good idea to see a physical therapist for an injury assessment before the mileage starts to get higher in January/February/March. Joint Ventures Physical Therapists will provide complimentary injury screenings after our Saturday long runs.
    a. Also, consider getting a gym membership in the event of weather or injury requires you to train indoors.
6. Nutrition considerations
    a. Balanced eating for a runner in marathon training is different than your normal nutrition. You want to make sure that as your mileage increases, you are also eating more carbohydrates. You should also include protein and fruit or vegetables at every meal.
    b. Early in training, it's important to start practicing good fueling and hydration strategies surrounding your runs. Eat some carbs before you run, and carbs and protein after.
    c. Start experimenting with different fuel during your long run to figure out what you like, just because one thing doesn't work, do not give up!

d. If you need personalized assistance with your nutrition, please reach out to Meg, our team sports dietitian at meg@nutritionforrunners.com.