

SURVIVING THE
MARATHON
FREAK OUT

**A Guide to Running
Your Best Marathon**

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Get the Latest and Greatest!

With the purchase of this book, you now have another person (me) on your support team as you head into your marathon. I'm very much looking forward to working with you for the best marathon of your life.

In order to help you get the most out of this Guide, step one is to "register" your book, which sounds more glamorous than it is.

Just send an email to coachgreg@mcmillanrunning.com to let me know you have the book.

I can then keep you updated as I add to the book and have more tips and advice to share. Simple as that.

My Promise

Don't worry. It's going to be okay. I promise. I know you've been training for the big day (a.k.a. marathon day) for a while now so it's normal to get anxious as the day approaches. I've been there too. As a runner, I've dealt with the rigors of marathon training and the nervousness as the race nears, none more so than before my first marathon, the New York City Marathon or before I won the National Masters Trail Marathon Championships a few years ago.

As a coach, I've trained thousands of runners just like you for marathons around the globe, in every weather condition and over all types of crazy terrain. Trust me. We got this. Let me walk you through my survival guide to these last couple of weeks before your race so you go into the big day with more confidence, leaving no stone unturned and ready for a peak performance in what I guarantee will be one of the greatest accomplishments of your life.

What you are about to read is what I use with my athletes no matter their goal: getting to the finish line in one piece, setting a new Personal Best, qualifying for the Boston Marathon or even preparing for the Olympic Games. I've helped runners do all of these and my peaking plans will help you get to the start line fit, rested and ready. As you'll quickly see, race day is simply a celebration of all the hard work you've completed and a chance to let your performance shine!

(And soon enough, you'll be planning your next marathon.)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping tail on the "g".

“I dare you to train for a marathon and not have it change your life.” – Susan Sidorik

First Things First!

First, pat yourself on the back. Training for a marathon is not easy and often does not go smoothly but getting to the starting line shows your dedication and determination. The race is the icing on the cake. As race week approaches, nervousness can seem overwhelming. Take time to remember to thank those who have supported you in your marathon quest. You know who they are and they'll appreciate that you recognize all they've done to help you.

Also, take some time to congratulate YOU. I bet you learned a lot about yourself over the last few weeks. You laced 'em up and went for runs when you really didn't want to. You made better food choices (at times reluctantly). You stretched (occasionally) and tried every trick in the book to keep your muscles happy (even the dreaded ice bath). You braved good weather and bad weather. You squeezed runs in when you had to. You experimented (successfully and unsuccessfully) with different foods to keep your digestive system happy and to find your perfect marathon diet plan. You talked more about chaffing, running shoes, pace, distance, GPS, fartleks and energy gels than you ever thought possible. In the end, you learned that

when you set your mind to something, you can do it. And here's a little sneak peak: The marathon will be no different. You can do it.

Ok. Let's get down to business.

Help! I'm Freaking Out!

The two weeks prior to the marathon is what I call the 'great marathon freak out'. Questions abound. Self-doubt creeps in. Fear is ever-present. The marathon becomes monumental. Don't worry. Everyone feels this way.

We put so much into training and want desperately for the race to go well. Use this peaking time to reflect on all your successes during training. Think good thoughts. Run strong in the remaining workouts and focus on relaxing the body/mind. Negative thoughts will creep in but just push them aside and focus on the positive. Don't over rest or overeat but just relax and smile.

In this guide, I'm going to show you how to do all of these so you "peak" for marathon day. Peaking means bringing your mind and your body to a point where you can get the absolute most from yourself on race day. You'll follow my tried and true peaking training plans and I'll walk you through what you should do before, during and after the race. The result? You'll give yourself the best shot at success on race day. You will have controlled all that you can control and then, it's just a matter of doing your absolute best on the day.

I've lived through this marathon freak out with thousands of runners, over the last 20 years, many just like you. The freak out strikes some runners more severely than others but no matter how much you are freaking out, these guidelines offer comfort and confidence.

“Don’t worry. Everything is going to be amazing.” - Unknown

How to Peak for the Marathon

I figured this peaking thing out. It took a while because, like many coaches, I fell into the standard "tapering" model we've all been taught. Problem was, tapering didn't work consistently. The results were just as hit-or-miss as not tapering at all.

So, I threw "tapering" out of my vocabulary. I replaced it with "peaking." Semantics? Maybe. But by studying peak performance research - both physiological as well as psychological - as opposed to just the tapering research, I've been able to dial in how to truly peak on marathon day. It works for all athletes no matter where you find yourself in the pack come race day.

Here are my guidelines for your peaking phase - the last 14 days before your marathon – and these ideas form the basis of my peaking training plans in this book as well as my guidance for what you should do before, during and after the marathon.

Resources and Recommended Reading

[YOU \(Only Faster\): Training plans to help you train smarter and run faster](#)

McMillanRunning.com

[Don't Taper. Peak!](#)

About the Author



Greg McMillan has been called, “One of the best and smartest distance coaches in America” by Amby Burfoot of Runner’s World magazine. Through his website www.mcmillanrunning.com he offers training tools, training plans and personal coaching for new runners, BQ seekers and Olympic level athletes.

He lives with his wife and son in Flagstaff, Arizona.

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