

# The Importance of Patience

In our continuing series on running, this time on being patient with your body, setting achievable goals, and taking it easy every other day.

By Magandeep Singh

**PATIENCE IS** the most important virtue that a running enthusiast should possess. It is a virtue in any sport, but more so in running. If you don't have enough of it, make sure you work hard on acquiring some. I had little of it myself when I started, but over time, have disciplined myself into a state in which I can muster enough to help me run well. Running is among the easiest of joys to acquire (well, cycling too, but you need a sense of balance). So, it is also a discipline in which you can push yourself more. The biggest races are not won purely on speed, stamina or strength, but by a combination of all three.

One of the worst things a runner has to endure is injury. But, worse still, are the three letters DNF (Did Not Finish) — started but didn't make it across the finish line. Nothing is more humbling than a DNF and, yet, it can be the best learning experience that every runner at some point should go through.

So, what is needed to go from the couch to crunching kilometres? The first would be determination. Make a plan, a target that you wish to achieve in the future. Don't make it too close or too distant. Something in the coming year is a good

time frame to aim for. Then, try and figure out a plan that gradually builds up to at least 80 per cent of the distance within 60 per cent of the time from now and the final cut-off day. That could be a race or just a day you have decided upon. Also, among runners, there is something called a ten per cent rule that is universally accepted. The idea is to increase your running distance by only about

ten per cent every week.

Anything more and you are subjecting yourself to injury.

Also, before an important run, you should be training down and not training up, which is why the target of hitting 80 per cent a bit earlier is crucial. Also, on your big day you will always perform 25-30 per cent better than your routine average (call it the game-day boost). So, that will not only help you finish faster than expected, in many cases, it is the reason you managed to finish at all.

Don't lose heart if you think you cannot achieve your goal or if you fear falling short. As long as you are out there, you are doing a lot better than the others. The key is to remain resolved and keep some discipline. It is termed as the BtS (bed-to-shoe) ennui: the energy required to pull yourself out of bed and get your shoes on is tremendous. Once you have conquered that, the rest comes easy.

For any runner, knowing when and how much to rest during training is impor-

tant. The rule of thumb is that for every mile you run, you should rest for one day before you start intensive training again. Also, if you feel if you have hurt yourself, stop running and take the next day off. The other important rule is to always run longer distances at a slower pace than running short distances. While running, the pace should be such that you are able to talk with a fellow runner in complete sentences. If you are not able to do that, slow down.

Another factor that will influence your performance is how you equip yourself. There are gadgets you could strap on to every part of your body and more — smart socks, smart insoles, heart-rate monitor (HRM) vests, HRM watches, phone-based accelerometers, cadence and stride sensors — and they all communicate with each other through Bluetooth and eventually to you. So you can receive more information than you will ever need before, during and after every race.

Remember to know that while it is good to have the numbers to help you meet a certain goal, don't forget to listen to your body. Often people can end up pushing themselves beyond the limits of their physical capacities and that is a certified DNF waiting to happen. So, go out there and arm yourself with the best-looking gadgets you wish to splurge on, but remember that nothing is truer than what your body is telling you.

This is the last of sage-like introductions. Starting next issue, I will dive into reviews and reports on new launches and the best gadgets. In this day of information and gadgetry, looking amateur is for the kids. And if you are going to take up a recreational activity for the sake of physical and mental fitness, it is only fair you look the part while doing it.



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