

10K Road Races– Suggested Preparation and Warm-Up Routines

Before race day

- Avoid stress on the day by preparing in advance. Check the race details: are we offering car sharing? Are there road closures? Where is the car parking? Where is the start? What's the course like? (and where are the hills?). Doing a "recce" of the course beforehand is recommended so you can formulate your race day strategy.
- Set and validate your goals – what do you want to achieve and is it realistic? I'd suggest setting a main goal, a stretch goal (if everything is 100% perfect on the day), and an acceptable/fallback goal which may just be completing the course. Whilst you may tell friends you "just want to get round" it's likely you will also have a time in mind and will use this to pace your race (ask your coach if you are unsure).
- Check the weather and put out appropriate race kit. Pin your number on your vest the night before and fix your chip (if supplied) to one of your running shoes. Remember to take some warm outerwear/waterproofs for before and after the race.
- If planning to run with headphones be sure this is allowed by the race organiser (for races where the roads are closed to traffic it's normally OK). Unless you need music to get you round I'd suggest leaving headphones at home so you can take in more atmosphere and hear the encouragement. At the sharper end of the field you need to be able to listen and react quickly to the competition.
- Don't alter your normal routine and don't eat or drink anything new. Avoid drinking alcohol (or at least not more than one glass) the night before as this can be dehydrating.
- Try to get a good sleep on the Friday night and preferably Saturday night too (this assumes the race is on a Sunday) but don't worry if you can't sleep the night before.

On race day morning

- Eat a high carbohydrate, low fibre breakfast 2-3 hours before the start time. Porridge, toast or whatever you know works for you (again: don't try anything new).
- Drink 500ml or so of liquid; coffee is fine if this works for you and/or water or a sports drink
- Plan to arrive at the start in sufficient time. For races which have smallish fields and where there is no registration on the day is needed then as little as 30-40 minutes before will be OK. For mass participation races allow more time.

At the race

- Find the toilets as soon as you can and use them as there will be queues
- Have a drink and perform a warm up (see below)
- Remove warm clothing (I'd suggest to wear only one layer unless the weather is very cold)
- Use the toilet again
- Check your kit and shoes laces one more time
- Line up at the start - in the appropriate place

Warm Up

Simple rule to remember: the shorter the race – the longer the warm-up. The objective is to prepare your body for what it is about to experience, to warm up the muscles, increase the heart rate and get you mentally prepared.

For a target time of 50 – 70 minutes

- 5-6 minutes brisk walking and loosening up
- 5 minutes easy running
- 1-2 minutes of dynamic stretches such as leg swings
- 3-5 minutes walking/running
- At the start, keep moving on the spot if cold. For mass participation races there could be a delay before you cross the start line

For a target time of sub 50 minutes

- 3-5 minutes brisk walking, loosen up
- 10 - 20 minutes easy running plus pickups/strides, dynamic stretches, add drills if it helps you
- Get to the start as late as is reasonable to keep warm but be aware at larger races it may be difficult to reach your starting zone if it's crowded and you may need to climb over the barrier.
- Keep moving on the spot if cold

During the race

- Don't go out too fast (even though almost everyone will!). It's better to overtake people later than be overtaken. Try to keep an even pace and/or even effort.
- Thank the marshals for their encouragement, cheer those runners you know who are ahead of you (you'll see some of them coming back if the 10K course is out & back) and cheer those behind you.
- Enjoy it!

After the race

- Keep moving – don't come to a sudden halt or you may feel dizzy
- Join your fellow runners to compare notes and congratulate yourself and each other
- Put on warm clothing as soon as you can and have a drink and snack
- Perform static stretches whilst warm (either after the race or after a warm bath/shower)
- Check the results to see how you fared
- Take the afternoon off – you've deserved it!

Good luck!

Ian, Baildon Runners