



MADISON SUN PRAIRIE

Endurance Nutrition Tips: Avoid the Bonk!

Fall marathon and half marathon training is in full swing! The cool temps and changing colors get us excited about running our fall race. SO NOW is the time to experiment with nutrition products for the Madison Marathon & Half Marathon. Everyone's body is different, and what works great for one person, may not be the best option for the next. DO NOT wait until race day to trial new products - experiment NOW!

You WILL need to take some form of nutrition supplement throughout your training to help maintain an even energy level as your mileage increases. This prevents you from getting the dreaded "BONK!"

*BONKING (def): In endurance sports, particularly cycling and running, **hitting the wall** or the bonk describes a condition caused by the depletion of glycogen stores in the liver and muscles, which manifests itself by precipitous fatigue and loss of energy. Also known as the struggle bus or pain train.*

Your long runs will be over one hour, so be sure to take in about 100 calories every 45 minutes, starting from the beginning of the run. There are a variety of gels, chews, bars and electrolyte drinks out there, so start testing products sooner than later. The race course will offer a drink and gels at some aid stations, but you can't guarantee what vendor and flavor will be available.

Here's an example, you have caffeine in your diet, so you decide to try a caffeinated tailwind drink. Mix one half pack with 12 oz. of water, and drink before a 3-4 mile easy paced run. Did you feel more energetic? Did you run quicker than expected? Did you have to stop to go to the bathroom? Did you like the flavor? Hopefully, something you tried made you feel better and will be easy to stomach over the course of 2-5 hours.

Once you have tried a couple products this way, experiment on a long run with the product and flavor that suited you the best. The amount of sugar, starch, salt, calories or caffeine can affect runners differently. Sodium and potassium can reduce cramping. Caffeine might give you the kick you need every morning, so you can replace your coffee with a gel on race day. A product with starch might last longer, so you can eat and drink less. More sugar might give you the kick you like every few miles. You might find you want two gels and two bottles of fluids. Test and refine as you gain information with each trial. Find a good combination for your needs, and stick to it on race day.

Not sure how to carry your nutrition? There are a variety of hydration belts, handheld water bottles and backpacks that can carry your racing and training essentials, so please visit a Fleet Feet Sports near you, and ask our FIT experts to help you with these items.

Happy training!