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Keeping Your Feet on the Road

We are quickly approaching the Amway River Bank Run! It is hard to believe that the race is only about a month away. You have been putting in a lot of time and training, so keep your feet on the road and your eyes on the finish line.

Here are some important tips to help you as you continue your training:

As you plan, **make sure that you have chosen the appropriate race distance**. There are several distances to choose from. If you are a novice runner and have not started training for the 25K distance, it is probably not the greatest and safest idea to plan on running it. If you have just decided to participate or are just starting your running career, the 5K and 10K distances are more feasible and safer options for you. If you have taken time off because of an injury or other issue but are still planning on running and are worried about your level of conditioning, you can always shorten your planned distance.

You are going to rely on your feet the most during your training and racing, so make sure you treat them well. Your shoes are going to be your best friend over the next month. Everybody has their favorite brand and type of shoe, and it is not a one-shoe-fits-all scenario. I recommend you **make sure your shoes fit well and are comfortable**. You should not be trying out a new pair of shoes a few days before the race. Instead, make sure your shoes are broken in over the next month so that your feet are used to them. Stick with a brand that you have experience with and have worn previously. If you are looking for a new pair of shoes or have questions about your shoes, many running stores can help to ensure that you have the proper fit for your anatomy and running gait.

Simulating the race course as part of your training also is important. The 25K course includes city streets, parks, turns and the dreaded hills. You need to **make sure that you are incorporating hills into your training** so that you are conditioned and don't struggle and hit a wall when you approach this difficult part of the course on race day. I also recommend you *don't* do all of your training on a treadmill. Running on a treadmill may help with conditioning, but treadmills and road running utilize different muscle groups. You expend more energy and will experience greater muscle fatigue when you run on the road versus running on a treadmill.

Most importantly, **if you are experiencing aches and pains or have sustained an injury, you need to monitor this closely** over the next month as you continue to train. If the pain does not resolve itself after a few days of rest, icing and use of anti-inflammatories, I would recommend being evaluated by a sports medicine physician. Your pain may be due to something that can be easily corrected if addressed immediately, but if it lingers, this could limit your training and participation in the race.

Keep training hard and focus on your goals, both physically and mentally, over the next month. If you have any questions or are struggling with an injury, the experienced sports medicine physicians at Spectrum Health Orthopedics would be pleased to help. You can call us at (616)267-8860 or learn more on our [website](#).