

## **Race Day is Near, Are You Ready?**

You are just days away from the 42<sup>nd</sup> running of the Amway River Bank Run. All of your hard work, training and dedication will culminate on May 11<sup>th</sup> in the largest 25K in the country. No matter if you're a seasoned participant or a first-timer, you are likely to be feeling a mix of emotions, ranging from excitement to nervousness and uncertainty. Here are some last-minute tips and advice for a successful race day.

**Hydration:** Hydration is key to any long run. There are a lot of scientific equations and complicated measurements regarding how much and when an athlete should drink, but I'll keep it simple. At pre-hydrate, you should start drinking fluids before your run. But don't drink too much as it can cause nausea and stomach cramping.

Make sure you stay hydrated during the run. If you are thirsty, drink at the aid stations, but not in excess because the weight of the liquid can weigh you down. Do not just bypass all the aid stations and think you do not need any fluids. This can lead to dehydration and difficulty finishing the race.

Headaches, lightheadedness, dizziness, and fatigue are signs of dehydration. If you experience any of these, stop at one of the medical aid stations for evaluation. If you are running a longer distance, drink Gatorade provided along the course. This is important because it replenishes the sodium and minerals lost through sweating. GU energy gels will be available near Mile 6 on the 25K course. Do not drink at every aid station as overhydration is not good for you and also can cause medical issues.

**Nutrition:** You'll need calories to sustain your energy levels until you cross the finish line. A simple recommendation on nutrition is to eat a light snack about an hour before the run. This will ensure proper digestion so the food you ate will not weigh you down during the race. Examples of pre-race options include fruit, whole grain breads and oatmeal. Avoid high-fat foods. There also will be oranges at the aid stations along the course. And be sure to eat after the run to replenish lost calories. But once again, not in excess.

**Stay the course:** Do not make major changes in your training or shoe wear. As race day approaches keep following your training program. Alterations or a quick progression in the intensity of training may contribute to injuries. You should be comfortable in the shoes that you have been training in all of these months. A change now could lead to an altered stride and result in pain and injury.

**Weather:** Monitor the weather as race day approaches. Knowing the forecast will help you plan for proper attire. I highly recommend moisture-wicking garments because they remove sweat so your body's self-cooling mechanisms can work effectively. Keep in mind that the temperature will feel about 15-20 degrees warmer while you are running. So don't overdress.

**Aid Stations:** Spectrum Health Sports Medicine will be at each aid station throughout the course. If you are struggling, please stop to see the medical team at these stations for evaluation. We also will have first-aid capabilities at the aid stations, including Band-Aids, acetaminophen/ibuprofen, blister/wound care, lubrication for chaffing and feminine products.

Most importantly, enjoy yourself and have fun. We at Spectrum Health Orthopedics are looking forward to seeing all of you cross the finish line. If you have lingering injuries or pains that need to be evaluated either before or after the run, the experienced sports medicine providers at Spectrum Health Orthopedics would be pleased to help. You can call us at (616)267-8860 or learn more on our [website](#).