

You're Almost There

You are about one month away from running the 46th Amway River Bank Run. You have been dedicating a significant amount of time and effort to your training, and will see all those benefits come to fruition soon. Although the race is still one month away, it is not too early to think about preparing for a successful race day.

One of the most important aspects to success is your shoe wear. Shoes typically last about 300-500 miles before the integrity of the inner components start wearing down. You may think that the shoes look fine, but just like tires on a car, they are only going to last so long.

If you are planning to change shoes, you should start training in the shoes now to break them in. It is not a good idea to have a brand-new pair of shoes saved for race day — you won't be used to them, and they can lead to aches, pains and blisters that could slow you down and cause injury. Even if you are using the same brand and same model of shoes, there can be subtle differences that your body needs to get used to. Start using the new shoes during your training now.

Although the race is about a month away, you should always monitor the forecast and weather predictions. This is West Michigan and it could be extremely warm -- as it was last year -- or there could be snow. Having knowledge of the weather will help you understand how to dress for race day. You should prepare to dress for temperatures that are 15-20 degrees warmer than the outside temperature. For example, if the temperature on race day is 40 degrees, you should dress for a 60-degree day. Why? As you exercise, your body will warm up and the temperature around your body will increase. With the increase in body temperature, wearing too many layers can warm you up too much, causing a heat injury. This can affect your speed and ability to complete the course.

Along with monitoring your temperature, you'll also want to be sure you are wearing moisture-wicking clothing. Sweating is an important function of exercise to maintain your core temperature, so you don't heat up too much. You will be sweating a significant amount along the course, and you want to make sure that this sweat is dissipated away from your body. Moisture-wicking clothing will remove the sweat so that your body can regulate your core temperature. If you wear clothing that is not moisture-wicking, such as cotton clothing, the sweat will pool in the fabric, and it will basically act as a barrier to your body, preventing you from sweating efficiently. This can cause your core temperature to increase.

Not many people think of socks during training or on race day, but they can make or break your day. If your socks are too tight, too loose or not the right fabric (synthetic/moisture wicking fabric) it can lead to painful blisters, which can significantly affect your run/walk. Just as you should start training in your shoes, you should also start training in the socks you plan to wear so that you can decrease the chance of abnormal friction, "hot spots" or blisters from developing on your feet and toes.

Whether you are walking the 5K, running the 5K, 10K or 15K or participating in the hand cycle or wheelchair race, you need to be prepared both physically and mentally. You might think that physical preparedness is the most difficult aspect of exercise, but the mental aspects of exercise are just as important --you need to keep pushing your limits and envisioning the goals that you are trying to obtain. You may feel that physically at times during your training that you can't take that next step or go that next mile, but try to overcome those thoughts and continue to push yourself.

Also, if you feel that you are exceeding at your training and want to increase your distance on race day, then do it. If you feel that you have not been consistent with your training and are not ready to go the distance that you signed up for, then decrease your distance.

Achiness and soreness are expected as part of your training as you are building up muscle and conditioning your body. However, if you are experiencing pains that are limiting your training or are becoming intense enough that you are not enjoying your exercise, then this is something of greater concern. With proper evaluation, these pains could be easily correctable to get you back on track and keep you running/walking, but if they go on too long, they could cause increased injury and take you out of training and race day.

If you feel that you are experiencing the type of pain that is limiting your training, then it is recommended that you be evaluated by a sports medicine physician to properly diagnose and treat the pains/injuries to keep you training for the Amway River Bank Run.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding an injury or pain, please reach out to one of our experienced sports medicine physicians at Corewell Health Medical Group Orthopedics at 616-267-8860. You can also find more information about our orthopedic programs and providers at <https://www.spectrumhealth.org/services/orthopedics>.