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**Corewell Health Orthopedics**

## Back Where We Belong

So many great things happen in May. Mother's Day, Memorial Day, graduations and warmer weather (hopefully). And the River Bank Run, of course. You have been putting in months of work and training and we are only a short few weeks away from the 45<sup>th</sup> running of this iconic Grand Rapids road race. Now is the time to start thinking about race day preparation. No matter if you are a newcomer or a veteran to the race, you should have a plan to help you meet your goals. Here are some tips and reminders to aid in your success on May 14.

**Setting goals:** Some of you may be looking for a personal best while others just want to cross the finish line. You have dedicated a significant amount of time to training to this race and should have an ideal goal.

**Sleep:** We previously discussed the importance of sleep and how this can affect your performance. During the week leading up to race day, make sure you are getting adequate rest. Deep sleep can provide improved focus and the energy to complete or exceed your goals.

**Clothing:** Monitor the weather closely so you can choose the right clothing. It may be cold, warm or raining (but hopefully not snowing), so keep an eye on the forecast. Wear moisture-wicking clothing to help cool your body as you sweat and prevent overheating and chaffing. Do not wear too many layers or overly heavy clothing. You will become warmer as you run, which can lead to heat-related injuries. Plus, you don't want to have to carry extra clothing on the course.

**Course change:** For years, most of the hills were toward the end of the 25K course. This year, the hills will be at the front of the course, so make sure that you plan accordingly. Keep a comfortable pace in the beginning. If you push yourself too hard you may exhaust much of your energy too soon.

**Shoes:** Wear comfortable shoes that have been broken in. Do not wear different shoes on race day as this may cause pain, blisters and injuries.

**Hydration:** Hydration is one of the most important aspects of race day. Failure to maintain proper hydration can affect performance and prevent you from meeting your goals. For the 5K or 10K runs, participants typically drink lightly before the race and when they feel thirsty on the course. For the 25K, I recommend you drink about two cups of water two hours before the race. On the course, drink to thirst with either water or Gatorade. Gatorade will help to replenish some of the lost electrolytes from your run. Do not drink at every aid station or take in too much water because it can lead to cramping, nausea and sloshing in the stomach.

**Food:** Increase your complex carbohydrate intake in the days leading up to the run. This will increase the glycogen stores in your body, which are important for energy. Avoid high-fat foods the night before and day of the run. Eat a light breakfast of foods such as a muffin, oatmeal, toast or fruit on the morning of the run.

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**Enjoy yourself:** Lastly, this should be an exhilarating and fun time for you, whether you are doing the 5K walk or run, handcycle/wheelchair race, 10K or 25K run. Maintain a positive attitude about your dedication and accomplishments during training and on race day. So relax, enjoy the scenery around you and the comradery of your fellow runners and walkers.

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 program and providers on our [website](#).

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