

Matthew Axtman, DO
Corewell Health Orthopedics

Relax, Refresh, Renew

It was an absolutely beautiful day for the 42nd Amway River Bank Run. Congratulations to all participants for the hours and days of intense training that allowed you to meet your goals and cross the finish line. I enjoyed seeing the mix of emotions at the finish line, including happiness, celebration, exhaustion and tears of joy. After the race, I was thinking about what I should recommend to every participant. This seems appropriate: Relax, Refresh, Renew.

Relax

Be proud of what you have accomplished. It wasn't easy to train for many months and then participate with intensity on May 11th. Now that the run is done, take some time to recover. Your body and muscles may have been pushed beyond what you did in training, so it is important to allow time to recover. This doesn't necessarily mean you should not exercise, but rather decrease the intensity of your runs and add cross training to focus on muscle groups you don't use when you run. The amount of time you should take off from training/running will be different for each individual based on conditioning and experience level. It is important to listen to your body. Don't push yourself back into training too quickly. Allow time for adequate recovery.

Refresh

You may have been pushing through injuries and pain during your training and the run. This is the time to focus on those aches and pains so that you can get back on track. Most of your post-race pain can resolve with rest, ice and medication, but there are other overuse/injury diagnoses that may require more in-depth evaluation and treatment so chronic issues don't develop. If you have pain that is lasting longer than a few days or a week, it is important to seek the advice of a medical professional for evaluation. In many instances, simple treatments will help you avoid long-term injury.

Renew

If this was your first run, I hope that you enjoyed yourself and will build from this experience. As crazy as it may sound, it is not too early to start thinking about your next race. If you have one in mind, start planning your training program early. Running is a great way to maintain a healthy lifestyle and I hope that this has motivated you to keep on that pathway. Your next race can involve your family by participating in a family fun run. You could motivate some friends to start a running group. You may even consider a more intense challenge and train for a triathlon.

We at Corewell Health will be with you throughout the rest of the year with information and insight into maintaining a healthy lifestyle. If you have any questions or are experiencing an injury or lingering pain, do not hesitate to reach out to one of our experienced sports medicine providers at Corewell Health Orthopedics at (616) 267-8860. You can also find more information about our orthopedic program on our [website](#).