

San Jose Fit – Marathon Do's and Don'ts

The Last Few Days Before the Marathon	
DO	DON'T
Decide what you will wear on race day. Be sure it is something you have trained in on your long run/s.	...wear anything new on race day – not new socks, new shorts, even new shoelaces, and especially not new shoes – this includes the race t-shirt!
Watch the forecast and plan for alternate temperatures. You may need long sleeve, tights, gloves, a trash bag, or throw away clothes.	...wear everything – just be prepared to bring what you'll need.
Cut your toenails a few days before the race, so they can grow a little if you happen to cut them too short.	
Go to bed early three nights and two nights before the race, so you are well rested before the weekend.	...worry if you can't sleep well the night before the race. If you slept well in the last week, one sleepless night won't affect you.
Hydrate well on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Don't wait until Saturday evening to get hydrated.	...drink too much coffee/alcohol for 3 or 4 days before the race. Don't over hydrate.
Relax on Saturday. Stay off your feet as much as possible, watch TV, read a book or go to a movie	...go for a 50 mile bike ride to pass the time or any bike ride for that matter. ... do any special projects around the house to consume some of the "extra / nervous energy you have". Save it, you'll need it!
Get to the expo early on Saturday morning, or go on Friday night, so you have Saturday to relax.	...spend three hours walking round the expo, nor buy new clothes to wear for the race.
Go for a short stroll and stretch on Saturday morning. Stretch throughout Saturday to stay loose.	...run too much in the last 5 days before the race. Two or three short runs are plenty to keep you loose.
Put out everything you plan to wear on Sunday morning – do this on Saturday. Attach bib to race shirt and timing chip to shoe (if applicable)	...forget your shoes.
Pack your bag on Saturday with everything you need –	...forget money and your ID. There may be something you want to purchase at the finish line festivities.
Charge your Garmin/GPS.	...wait until the morning to plug in the charger!

On Race Day	
DO	DON'T
Get up 2-3 hours before race start time so you have time to shower, eat, check you have everything, travel to the start, park, meet friends/family, hook up with running buddies/pace groups, wait in line at porta-potties, get to the start line with 10 minutes to spare.	...oversleep. Set the number of alarms you feel comfortable with, but don't stay awake all night waiting for them to go off.
Dress for the weather. If it's rainy or cold, get a large trash bag and cut a hole in it for your head. If it's cold, wear layers or throw away clothes. Gloves, or even a hat, are very effective at keeping you warm.	...wear too much clothing. You should feel a bit cold at the start, so that after a couple of miles you've warmed up and feel comfortable.
Remember your watch/ GPS.	...panic if you forget it. Just enjoy your run!
Eat 300-500 calories of high-carb food on race morning: cereal, oatmeal, whole wheat toast/bagel, banana, energy bar etc. – whatever you found worked before your long training runs.	...drink or eat anything that you haven't tried in training.
Men – use nip guards or Band-Aids over your nipples	...forget and get the "Red 11."
Use Bodyglide to lubricate any "hot spots" that have chafed in training. Use Bodyglide, Vaseline, or Aquaphor on your feet to reduce friction.	...miss any spots or you'll be painfully surprised in your post-race shower.
15 minutes before the start, consume an energy gel to top off your tank (NOTE - only do this with gels you have used before!)	...try a new gel
Meet up with supporters and running buddies approx 1 hour before the start so you have time to get in the porta potty line, check sweats and then regroup before the start.	...run alone.

The Start and the Race

DO	DON'T
Have a goal – whether it's to finish or to run a specific time. If you have a target pace, run with a pace group so you only need to focus on the run, hydrating and fueling...	...hold yourself to the goal if it's hotter than 60 degrees, or make that goal outrageous.
Get in line early for the bathroom so you have plenty of time.	...wait until the last minute to go to the bathroom.
Drop your sweats off at the sweat check early enough so you have time to get to the start.	
Consume an energy gel 15 minutes before the start of the race (only use a gel you have practiced with)	... try something new on race day
Have a disposable bottle with sports drink or water, so you can keep sipping right up to start time.	...litter. Hang onto the bottle until the first aid station, or find a trash can along the way.
Get to the start line 10 minutes before the start, find your pace marker and line up next to it.	...line up far ahead of your goal pace. You'll end up getting swept up in a pace that's too fast.
Break the race into manageable sections. Keep track of your pace, if you are far ahead of your goal in the first half, SLOW DOWN. You will need that energy in the second half.	...run faster than your goal – especially in the first half. Dwell on the miles you have left to do. Concentrate on the mile you are currently running.
Make new friends during the race.	...bore other runners with your life story if it's obvious they'd rather be left alone. (e.g. all you get in response is a grunt)
Drink a small amount at every aid station for the first half of the race. It is better to reach mile 15 well hydrated than to try to recover from being dehydrated.	...drink too much water or use the sports drink if you haven't tested it.
Thank the volunteers, police officers, and spectators. Be friendly with the other runners/walkers.	...be rude, whiney, complain, or cut off other runners.
Have a "mental toughness" plan ready for the last 6 miles to take your mind off the physical "issues." For example, count your footsteps, lampposts, yellow stripes in the road, or runners you pass. Or, do math in your head – calculate your average pace so far, or try to predict your finish time.	...despair. If it were easy, everyone would do it.
Encourage other runners toward the end. If you pass someone who is walking, cheer them on and tell them they look strong!	...forget that next time (or very soon), it could be you needing encouragement.
Motivate yourself. Think of your race medal, and the finish line. Use positive self-talk like, "You got this!" Think about your family and friends who will be waiting for you at the finish line. Visualize your happy place.	...think negative thoughts.
Practice turning off your watch without looking at it so you can smile for the camera as you cross the finish line.	...forget to make it look easy for the camera.

After the Race

DO	DON'T
Keep moving after you cross the line. Walk all the way through the chute.	...hang around in the finish area, blocking the way for others.
Keep walking immediately after you finish, so your muscles don't cramp.	...sit down. You may never get up again.
In the first 30 minutes after the race, eat or drink 300-500 calories of high carb/high protein mix. Your body is very receptive to carb replacement for 30-60 minutes immediately post-race. Take advantage!	...wait until you get home to eat. By then you will probably not feel like eating much.
Go back out on the course after you've finished and cheer on the other runners.	...cross the finish line again. If you run with someone, leave the course before the finish straight.
Take some group pictures with your medal on.	...forget to send a copy to your coach.
Take a long shower after your race your family will love you even more.	...forget to use soap.
Take an ice bath.	...sit in the tub without a sweatshirt on. Ice baths are cold!
Go for a walk on Monday. This helps prevent excessive stiffness and muscle soreness.	...sit in your office chair for hours at a time.
Wear your medal to work on Monday. It will help you to explain why you are walking like that.	...bore the entire office with a mile by mile account of the marathon (unless they ask for it☺).
Get a massage a few days after the race. You've earned it.	
Come to the post-race party to share in the celebrations.	...don't forget to bring your medal(s) and stories.