

# MY MARATHON MADNESS

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The name Marathon comes from the legend of Pheidippides a Greek messenger. The legend states that he was sent from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens to announce that the Persians had been defeated in the Battle of Marathon (in which he had just fought), which took place in August or September, 490 BC. It is said that he ran the entire distance without stopping and burst into the assembly, exclaiming “Νενικήκαμεν” (Nenikékamen, ‘We have won.’) before collapsing and dying.

The modern day marathon is a road race that is 26.22 miles. Many people actually run various lengths of a marathon race without actually going the full distance. There are common half marathon sub races held on the same day and same course with a shorter 13.1 mile alternate finish line.

As for me, 10 years ago, I was not even a runner. I thought that running is a bit of a chore and can be monotonous. 5 years ago, I started jogging a bit and built up to 3 miles a day. Any form of cardiovascular activity is a good one, but in running, I found a channel to release some of the natural pressures that build up when one runs their own business. In addition, because I interact with people all day (This aspect of my “job” is what really makes it so enjoyable) that running gives me a moment of solace from all my days activities.

A very good friend of mine, my jogging buddy, suggested that we should run a Marathon together. I naturally thought she was crazy. I said I would never do it, and that people are not built to run 26+ miles.

She started appealing to my inner competitive nature. She told me to consider joining the elite class of runners that have attempted and finished a full Marathon. Then she dared me to think about how select a group I would be in relative to the entire population of the earth. I told her that it all sounded good, but I was not moved!

She persisted the next few months to talk to me about it. I in turn rejected all of her appeals. But finally one day she uttered the magic phrase. She told me, “YOU CAN EAT AS MUCH AS YOU WANT, AND ANYTHING YOU WANT, AND STILL LOSE WEIGHT!” I have always been trim and fit, but for anyone that knows me, I love to eat and consider myself a bit of a foodie. This was just too good to be true! I was already up to 5-6 miles a day, so what are a few

more. Especially when I can eat with impunity! I agreed.

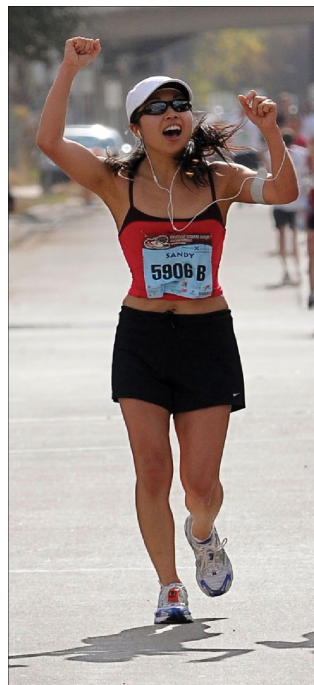
Once I studied a bit more about the training regimen that is required to take a daily jogger to a marathoner, I knew that there are a series of goals that I had to achieve. Much of this was not about will power which I have been told I have ample, but a strict discipline to work the body and adapt it to ever greater distances.



The tasks at hand seem so daunting. But after breaking them up into smaller segments, they became easier targets. In addition to my daily runs, I had to incorporate a long run every week. So each weekend, I drove to White Rock Lake to run my 18.6 miles. Beyond that, I also had to work on my speed, and that was achieved by combining interval

training and incline runs. The remainder of the training was done on a treadmill to cushion the pounding.

On the day of the marathon, my friend and I were among thousands on a Sunday morning who were all anxiously waiting to get started. There were pacers who carried balloons with their pace time written on the balloon. We started with the four hour group and eventually just ran at our own pace.



I crossed the finish line in 4.5 hrs. This equates to an average a 10 min 30 second mile. Never mind the pace, I finished my first Marathon! The sense of accomplishment was unbelievable. Our friends were there to cheer us on at mile 20 and at the finish line.

The marathon taught me a lot. I would have never finished if I had not set upon the goal of running the race. Without extensive preparation, the results would have been a far cry from success. All along this journey from the initial goal setting, to the training, and pacing myself during the run, there was much to take home. Having a running partner and friends and family to support me during this time showed me the power of care and love.

**Just one final footnote: My friend lied. After all those hours of training, running sprints, long runs, inclines, treadmill and weight training, I did not get to eat all that I wanted and anything that I wanted and still lose weight. I did not lose a pound! But I did gain a lifetime of memories and lessons.**