Running a marathon? Brilliant! Here are some top tips…

- **Water.** It takes 48 hours to hydrate your body so a couple of days before race day ensure you are drinking the recommended amount of 8 glasses a day. During the race try to have a sip or two at each water station, if you are feeling thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

- **PMA.** Positive Mental Attitude. If you go into the race thinking negative thoughts, like feeling that you haven't trained enough etc, you are likely to have a bad race. Whatever you haven't done, it is too late now. You are here, you are doing it and you are going to have a fantastic day. Enjoy the atmosphere, the crowds and you will achieve something great.

- **Relax.** This is a wonderful moment; you have made it to the start line. All that training has paid off. Enjoy it. You will meet all sorts of people from all sorts of places, exchange life stories with complete strangers. Embrace it.

- **Pace.** In mass participation marathons it usually takes at least 15-20 minutes to cross the starting line. This might be frustrating for some but use this time to relax, enjoy the moment and when crowds ease up you can get into your own pace. The time does not get logged until you cross the start line.

- **Toilet.** If you are a frequent runner, you are well aware of 'runners trots'. Eat your breakfast at least 2 hrs before you race so you can go to the toilet before you start. No matter how well organised races are, there are always lengthy queues so try and go before you leave home or your hotel!

- **The Unknown.** Avoid making any changes to your routine on race day. If you haven't tried it in your training, race day is not the time to trial something new. This applies to gels, sports drinks that give you an upset stomach or clothing that rubs on your skin.

- **Sleep.** Sleep is severely underrated; it is the cure for most things. At least a week before race day, start hitting the sack a bit earlier than usual. Sleep is when the body recovers and repairs.

- **Food.** Start increasing your carbohydrates 2-3 days before race day. You want to maximise your glycogen stores which release during exercise. Most people go nuts the night before a race and eat a tonne of pasta. This will just leave you feeling bloated and uncomfortable. Just eat what you would normally have.

- **Weather.** Check the weather so you are prepared for the day. If there is a chance of a shower, tie a lightweight jacket around your waist or a cheap plastic poncho that you can just throw away afterwards. If it looks like a chilly start, take some old clothes to wear to the start line that you can peel off when you get warmer. Some people cut arm holes in a bin bag and wear that to the start line.

- **Recovery.** Your recovery process is crucial for getting the right nutrients back to your muscles as fast as possible. Keep moving after you cross the finish line. It's tempting to lie down, but unfortunately this is the worst thing to do and will delay recovery. Your body has been moving for the last few hours so if you suddenly stop it increases demand on muscles. Try to eat as soon as you can, this might not be what you feel like after all the sugary drinks and gels but getting protein and carbs back in your system is crucial.