



# LET'S STAY RACE READY

## 7 COACHING TIPS TO MAINTAIN COMPETITION FITNESS THIS FALL

BY ALICIA BELL

**AUTUMN CAN BE** a great time to race in Canada, so make sure to keep up your fitness to avoid injuries and disappointing results. Here are some great ways to stay fresh and race ready this fall.

**1 New Shoes:** If you haven't bought new shoes in a while, check to see if yours are wearing down. Runners require new shoes every 500K to 800K.

**2 Blood work:** If the fall means longer runs for you, then foot-strike hemolysis (the breakdown of red blood cells due to the impact of running) is a concern, so knowing your hemoglobin and serum ferritin numbers can be very important. Go to your family doctor and request your blood work. Make sure to tell him you want it for determining training parameters.

**3 Short Runs:** Schedule shorter than average runs with some pickup 30 second bursts. Push the pace in the last 10 minutes of the occasional long run (once every three weeks or so). This will keep you fresh and your body responding to your training so you will continue to see changes.

**4 Sharpening:** This consists of a number of training methods that are all run at race pace or faster for varying lengths of time. An example would be Fartlek (interval) running, hill work or time trials that can be 8K to 10K.

**5 Rest:** Although training helps get you ready to race, it also can cause progressive, accumulated mental and physical fatigue. Make sure you are implementing frequent rest days into your training program. This will allow you to recover better and improve the quality of training days. Tapering allows for better recovery so you can perform at your peak on race day.

**6 Mental Training:** Your mental state is always a factor when your running season carries over into the fall. Sometimes stamina is as much a mental battle as it is a physical one. Australia's legendary miler Herb Elliott said, "If you emphasize the physical side of training, you may become superbly conditioned but mentally not advanced at all. On the other hand, if you concentrate on the mental aspect, it is inevitable that the physical side will follow. My golden rule is to train for the mental toughness."

**7 Sleep:** Make sure you are getting enough sleep and not overtraining. Abnormal sleep patterns can hamper your training. Try to keep a regular pattern so your body is well rested when you continue training into the fall. The Mayo Clinic recommends the average adult get seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Keep your room cool to sleep better. ■

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