

## Video Transcript

### Answers to your marathon training questions

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**Emily:** Hey everyone, I'm Emily, studying my Masters in Exercise Physiology at Southern Cross University on the Gold Coast campus.

Today I'll be chatting with some of the health and exercise experts who will be answering all your questions and how best to prepare for your running event.

I'm here at Southern Cross University with Dr Luke Del Vecchio. He is an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Luke is an expert in running preparation, injury prevention and recovery.

So, Luke our first question for you today is from Jen from the Gold Coast. Her question is: Hi I'm a beginner runner I'm in my 40s. Can you suggest me some training and diet requirements? I really need some motivation.

**Luke:** Sure, I think the best thing we can do here is make sure we start gradually and carefully so we don't overdo it. What we don't want to do is you end up injured not being able to do the run at all.

So, in this instance I would highly recommend a graded and graduated program like the 'Couch to 5k' for example. Why I recommend this program is simply because it will allow you to slowly but carefully build up your tolerance to running, because if you don't have a plan it's likely you might go out and try and run maybe three or four k's and that might be just too much for your body and you wake up the next day sore. If that keeps happening all you do is get sorer and sorer until you get injured. So, it's really important you have a structured training program that's gradually progressed so it gives you a chance to build up your tolerance slowly and carefully.

**Emily:** Yep perfect thank you Luke. Our next question is from Chloe from Brisbane – a bit more specific – I'm training for the 10k run. I was wondering what tips you had for reducing knee pain. Would a knee brace be beneficial or not? I have had a few problems with my knees in the past during my runs I feel pain is holding me back. Any advice or tips are best appreciated.

**Luke:** Well there's a lot in that question. Firstly, if your knee pain is actually getting painful – quite painful – you should go and see a physiotherapist, someone who can actually make a diagnosis on the pain to make sure it's nothing more sinister. But to work around it, again it comes back to a graduated training program. Most people don't follow a graduated training program and without that structure where you slowly but carefully build up the amount of running you do you expose your body to too much flow too quickly. The result is that your tissues like your muscles tendons and ligaments they're not quite ready for all this load and that's why things start to hurt and ache. So, first thing is, get your knee looked at. Second thing is, like I answered before, get a structured training program that gradually progresses the amount of running you're going to do and then thirdly – and probably equally importantly – is make sure you look at your footwear because if your footwear aren't right and your foot isn't landing in the right position that's going to exaggerate the loads all the way back up the body and definitely towards the knee and the hips. So, there's some

things that you can think about applying to try and resolve that, but most importantly make sure you get someone to look at your knee first to make sure it's not too sinister.

**Emily:** Perfect, thank you Luke. I think Chloe would definitely appreciate that answer. Gavin from Brisbane – and a lot of people have written in asking about shin splints – Gavin's question is: can he avoid shin splints? Are there any stretches he can do to help with that?

**Luke:** Yeah absolutely and again this is a general rule of thumb that there's lots of causes of shin splints but certainly there are some stretches that would help because it doesn't help to have overly tight calf muscles. So, we've got two stretches, the soleus calf stretch and then the gastroc calf stretch. It's important that you stretch both calf muscles and you do so regularly so you're making sure that you're stretching before and after running. I'd also recommend you do some self-massage on those muscles. So, rolling using a foam roller for the calf is really good. That can help also get rid of any knots that might be building up. But ultimately and importantly it's also your footwear, it's how your foot is landing. It's really important that you land on the forefoot and you land in a neutral position so what that means is we don't want to roll in which is pronation and we don't want to roll out which is supination. So, you might need to get the help of an accredited exercise scientist or physiologist or even a podiatrist that can look at your foot to make sure your footwear is correct and that your running mechanics are sound.

**Emily:** yeah thank you thank you Luke. Our next question is from Roseanne from Melbourne: I am currently training for the gold coast marathon and I don't come from a background of running. I strength train, haven't really prepared for something so cardio to endurance based. I've realized three weeks into my training program which consists of three runs per week that my knees are so sore. Besides from investing in new shoes, is there anything else I can focus on to protect my knees?

**Luke:** Yeah it is and look my answer is very similar to the previous questions, but yeah in all these situations a very important muscle that we need to consider strengthening for running is our hip. Because it's our hip that steers our pelvis and our pelvis steers our knee and it steers our foot. So, if the hip is weak then it's very clear that your running mechanics mightn't be optimal and that might lead to the excessive pressure in your knee. So even though you've been doing weight training you might not have been doing some specific hip strengthening exercises and sometimes the best way to strengthen the hip is actually doing exercises on one leg - so that's important.

Another thing that is important – yes, it is important to check your footwear to make sure that the soles of the shoe and the shoe structure itself fits the mould of your foot. Again, I would recommend a podiatrist for that and even though you've been doing weight training, you've made this switch to aerobic training and your body's just not conditioned to those loads. It's not conditioned to the three to five times your body weight and impact forces coming back up your body every time your foot is the ground. That's a lot of load on your body and it takes time for your body to get conditioned to those stresses. So, if you've been in the gym, you've been lifting weights, that's great, it conditions some of your muscles, but it's a specific response to the running itself that you need exposure and time gradually to build up a tolerance to. So, once again a graded program would really help you.

**Emily:** Yeah thank you. Okay Michael from the Gold Coast. He asked: I keep running out of breath. Is there anything I can do to run faster without running out of breath?

**Luke:** Certainly, and that's quite a common problem when people start a running program. It sounds like to me you're just simply probably trying to run too fast. So, and without knowing your fitness level, we then identify perhaps what your ventilation threshold is. And what that means is you run at a pace that your body can keep up with that the systems in your body that supply your muscles with oxygen can keep up with the pace. And usually when someone's running out of breath it's because they're running just a little bit too fast for their current fitness level. So, two things might do is actually try and do a fitness test. Try the beep test. There's another test called the 2.4k run test you could try that, find out what your fitness level is and then it's a bit easier for you then to work out just how fast you can run because you can match your running speed to your current fitness level and I think that would be the first line of defence against trying to improve your running without feeling so breathless.

**Emily:** Yeah perfect. Libby from the Gold Coast and a lot of other people have asked about this about their hips. Her question is: every time I increase my running load my hips appear to hurt more. The muscles start to burn around the hips plus throbbing pain occurs. How can this be fixed?

**Luke:** Yeah look again, this is just some very general advice because whenever there's pain it should always should be a bit of a flag to get it looked at carefully by an appropriate professional like a physiotherapist. But it might be that the hip muscles are just a little bit too weak and remember the hip muscles are responsible for bearing all of our weight. So, when we run we're actually on one foot most of the time and it's up to those hip muscles to control your body weight. So, my suggestion is after seeing a physiotherapist to make sure that pain isn't too sinister, that you do some specific hip strengthening exercises. And sometimes the best way to strengthen your hip is to do these exercises on one leg where your body is forced to really use those hip muscles in a functional way, in the same manner which the muscles be used in running.

**Emily:** Yeah perfect thank you for that Luke. I'm here with Holly Muggleston at Southern Cross University, our nutrition expert. She's here, she's going to tell us all the details about nutrition and how it can help with running performance, recovery and all the preparation there. So, our first question Holly, is from Alice about diet - question mark - and many people have asked about diet, so what can you tell us about that?

**Holly:** It's a good question, a bit vague, but I love it because it's quite broad and it helps me to take it to the basics and it's important to know that everyday healthy eating coupled with sports nutrition really go hand in hand. Every day healthy eating really looks at having a variety of foods from the various different food groups like whole grains, fruit, veggies, lean meat or equivalent if you're a vegetarian, milk or equivalent, some unsaturated fat, and fluid particularly water.

And then we think about sports nutrition advice and they've got advice for what you have before you race, during the race, and after the race, and that's very much for enhancing your performance and for recovery. So, the nutrients that are important in sports nutrition are carbs or carbohydrate protein fluid electrolytes and for women would be iron. So, carbs are things like bread, cereals, pasta, rice, fruit, starchy veg like potatoes, sweet potato. You can have things like gels like carbohydrate gels or some of your sports drinks would be examples of carbs. Protein would be your

lean meat, your chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, milk – just be careful if you've got plant milks that they do have protein – not all of them do. And then there's your protein supplements as well.

If we look at hydration, like fluid, water is preferred. There's sports drinks, fruit juice, soft drink but not alcohol, sorry. And then we've got your electrolytes, which are types of minerals that are found in food so you're going to get them in all food. And then for women iron is important, and that's lean red meat, chicken, salmon, leafy green veggies.

The nutrients that are really important – and how you kind of, you know, having a variety of foods each day such as I described as 'everyday healthy eating' – will help to get those nutrients.

And then I think with some of the other questions that you're going to have for me we can expand on, you know, carbohydrate and protein and so forth.

**Emily:** Yeah perfect that's great. So one of our specific questions next is from Venessa from Gladstone, really specific: what is the best type of nutrition for a fit 45-year-old female? She's a runner who averages about 50 to 60 kilometres a week. What could be the best nutrition to her to help last the distance of an actual marathon?

**Holly:** Okay, well first of all, having a healthy everyday diet is very very important so that's the first start. And that's really good that this question leads on.

Okay, a couple weeks out from the race, carbs are a priority, so it really pretty much depends on the intensity and the duration of training. So, the longer you're actually running – so you are running quite a lot – so you're going to need more carbohydrate than, let's say, someone who does shorter training of a lesser intensity.

So, having adequate carbohydrate at every meal is really important in snacks so it may mean if you're getting a bit fatigued you might have to step it up a bit.

After your race, or after your training, you need to have some carbohydrate and that helps to replenish those glycogen stores, and need some protein, which is building blocks to help repair any muscle damage or build muscle. And then you're having fluid, so 150 percent of the fluid loss in sweat should be replaced in ideally water, but sports drinks are okay, milk. And I think that should hopefully answer that question Venessa.

**Emily:** Perfect, all right on to our third question here, it's a bit more in-depth as well. Achim from Gold Coast Hinterland, the question is: hi there, I often get an upset irritated tummy when running. Are there certain foods that I should avoid eating one or two days before the marathon? I found out for instance that green beans cause irritation. Should I stick to oats and carbs before running? What do you think?

**Holly:** Okay, good question and it's known as runner's gut and it's very common for runners who do long distance. Okay green beans – we'll keep that in mind – but also there could be some other things as well. So, generally the advice is to have your meal at 5pm the day before the race so you get an opportunity to digest everything that's sitting in the tummy.

The next day, the meal that you would have, would be two to four hours before the race, should be small, light, low in fibre, okay and those green beans are higher in fibre, so low in fibre oats would be



fantastic for that – low in fat and also low in protein. So, it would be white bread instead of whole grain bread, oats for cereal – that's okay but stay away from the really high fibre cereals in the morning of. If you're going to have any milk, should be skim milk, or diluted with water so you're cutting down that fat. If you're having toast don't have margarine or avocado or butter, you know, have jam, or vegemite would be okay. Stay away from really concentrated sources of sugars right before the race, so yeah, no fruit juice – better to have water or a sports drink.

And just generally know you've got to test out what you have, you know, before you actually run the race. So, it maybe you're having too much fibre and maybe not enough fluid so keep those sorts of recommendations in mind.

**Emily:** Yeah, perfect thank you Holly.

**Holly:** You're welcome.

**Emily:** Thank you everyone for joining us today as we chatted to our health experts and good luck with all your future running.