

Anthony Nolan Marathon Guide



**ANTHONY
NOLAN**

saving the lives
of people with
blood cancer

Contents

Ten top tips	03
Stretches	08
Dynamic Stretches	10
Strengthening	11
Balance	12
In case of emergency	12
Healing times	13
Returning from injuries	13





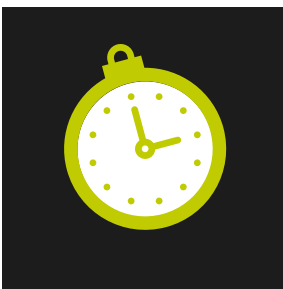
My name is Elliott Brock, I'm an experienced musculoskeletal physiotherapist and proud to be a volunteer physio for **#TeamAN!**

I've treated hundreds of runners throughout my career and been lucky enough to run a few marathons myself, supporting the amazing work of Anthony Nolan.

To make sure you're in the best shape for race day, here's my top ten tips for keeping healthy. They'll help you get the most from your training, avoid common injuries and get you back on your feet faster if problems occur.

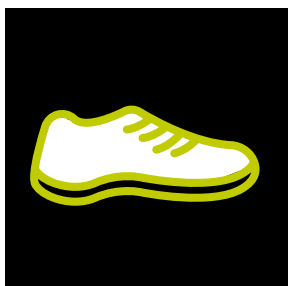
Ten top tips

- 1 Give yourself plenty of time to train:** Most marathon schedules are 16 weeks long, and that's without accounting for any injuries. A slight sprain will need two weeks recovery. A torn muscle could take over eight weeks to fully heal. The last thing you want is to be playing catch up when you're training for a marathon, even more so if you're back from being injured. This is the number one reason why people train too hard too quickly, overloading their tendons and getting injured again. If you can take longer than 16 weeks for your training, you give your body the best chance of not developing an injury in the first place and sufficient time to recover from any that do.



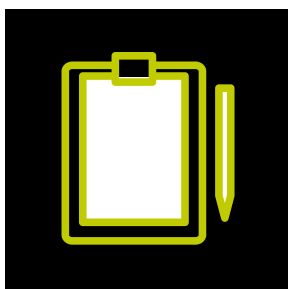
Ten top tips

2 **Think about footwear:** Many running shops offer a biomechanical assessment to get you kitted out with the best shoes for you. But be



careful with changing too much. You've had your feet for a while and your body is used to how they are positioned. Having your biomechanics altered can cause more problems if not done correctly so make sure you feel comfortable, ask lots of questions, and listen to your feet. Also, most trainers shock absorption have around a 400 - 500-mile lifespan so best not to start training in those trusty ten-year-old trainers!

3 **Follow a recognized training plan:** The London Marathon website has official plans for all levels of abilities. These have been designed by



experienced marathon runners and coaches to give you the best chance of getting to the start and finish lines. One thing to note is: most official plans say your longest training run needs to be no more than 20 miles. Personally, I think this is why so many people 'hit the wall' around 23 miles, as their body has never run that far. When I completed the London Marathon, I ran the full distance three weeks before and felt confident on the day, safe in the knowledge my body and

mind had experienced what it felt like to run a marathon. But everyone is unique, so if you feel confident at 20 miles, that might be enough training. Vicky, my stem cell recipient, had only done a half marathon (due to injury and illness), and she got around in just under five hours too!



4

Warm up correctly: Dynamic stretches and a brisk walk are a good way to get the muscles and your cardiovascular system ready for what's to come.



If you've ever seen a golf pro get ready for their first drive, they don't stand still with the club raised in the air for 20 seconds, they swing back and forth in a slow, smooth rhythm, just as we should smoothly work up to a running pace. See 'Dynamic warm up' section below

5

Stretch, stretch, stretch! Your muscles, tendons and ligaments are going to be pushed to levels they have never been before, and you need to prepare



for this. One of the easiest ways to minimise muscle tension is to stretch - not just after you've run, but at least once a day, even on the days you're not training Stretches should be held for 20 seconds and should not feel painful. If they do, back off with the intensity of the stretch. See stretching section below.

6

Treat muscular tension: Get your muscles to relax with a massage or a rolling device. Just like stretching, muscle release should not be too painful.



If it is, you are more than likely to increase muscular tension rather than ease it. You can ease tension or spot problem areas early by having a regular sports massage or using one of the many hand-held massagers or rolling devices available.



Ten top tips

- 7** **Ice ice baby!** Ice any sore sports, 15-20 minutes, 2-3 times a day to ease inflammation naturally. Again, the more proactive you can be with this, the better chance you have of calming any inflammation down. If injuries are not easing after a few days rest and ice then seek professional help – or email me at:



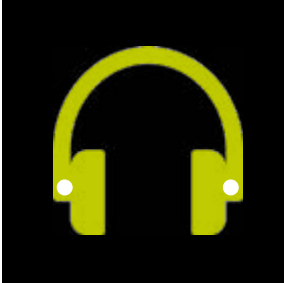
brock_physiotherapy@yahoo.com

- 8** **Take adequate nutrition:** It's really important to fuel correctly during your marathon training and there's lots of good advice out there, including on the London Marathon [training hub](#) in the Nutrition section. Everyone is different, so try out fuelling and recovery foods during your training so you know what works for you on race day!



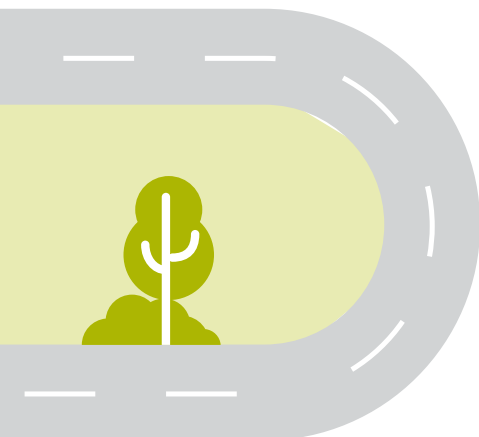
9

Look after your mind and body: Training for and running a marathon is a truly mind-blowing experience on many levels. The thought of stepping out my front door and going running for hours still felt crazy to me even after doing all my training. Podcasts and music can help pass the time as you pound the streets, although it's also important that you listen to your body and stop should niggles or pain keeps occurring. The London Marathon site has tips to deal with the [psychological challenge of marathon training](#). See the 'In case of emergency' section below should you get injured.



10

Running safety and running safely: It is good practice to have a means of calling for help when you're out running, should you suddenly develop an injury or there are any other problems. Doing 'laps' of an area is a good way to ensure you're not too far from base should you need help. Being highly visible if you are training near roads is also a must in the darker months, with reflective running gear and head and body torches widely available.



Stretches

Stretching is a great way of checking in with your body. Hold each stretch for 20 seconds and don't bounce. You should feel a 'strain but not a pain' and both sides should feel the same. If you find one muscle slightly tighter than the other side, then it is vital that you stretch this muscle three or four times a day to get both sides in the same condition. A tight muscle is an early warning that an injury may occur.



Calf stretch 1: keep your trailing leg straight and your heel on the floor. Lean forward gently



Calf stretch 2: bend both knees as if performing a 'mini lunge'



Quads stretch: pull your heel to your bottom – push your hips forward to increase the stretch if you prefer



Hamstring stretch: have your heel on a bench or step, lean forward at the waist





Hip flexor stretch: have your foot on a step or two steps if you prefer. Lean forward and feel the stretch on the front of your trailing hip



Groin stretch: lunge to either side and feel the stretch on your inner thigh



Ileo tibial band stretch (ITB): Legend has it this bit of tissue on the side of your thigh is impossible to stretch... my patients find pulling their knee across their body in sitting does the trick



Shin stretch – sit on your heels to stretch your shins and knees



Dynamic stretches

Dynamic stretches get your muscles and joints loosened and your heart rate elevated for the training that's to come. Rather than just tearing out of the front door, have a brisk walk and perform some of these dynamic stretches before you get into your running stride and pace. Perform each five times or as preferred, both sides.



Heel/ tip-toe walk – as it says on the tin: spend a few seconds walking on your heels and tip-toes to warm up your lower legs



'Over the gate' – move your hip in a circle, out to the side - as if stepping 'over the gate', to warm your hip and groin up



Heel flicks – jogging on the spot, quickly bring your heels to your bottom to warm up your thighs

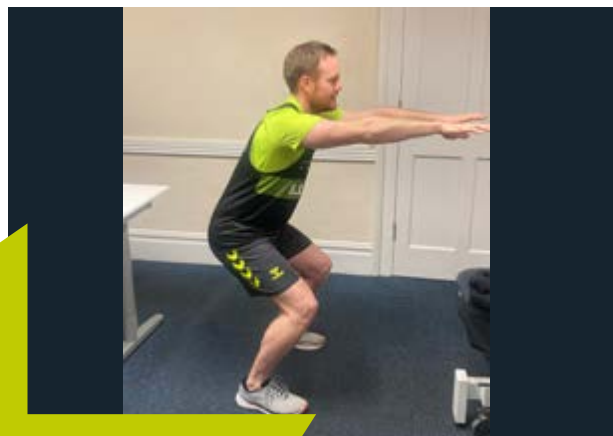


Hamstring kicks – kick your leg forward to get your hamstrings nice and loose. Try not to kick too high to start with!

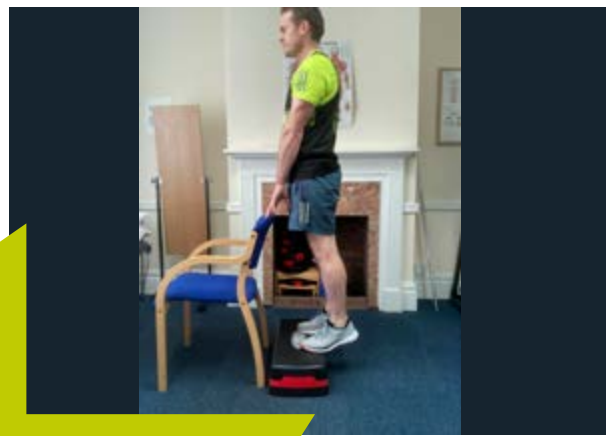


Strengthening

Lots of runners think running is enough to work and strengthen their muscles adequately. There is a little bit of truth to this but to help tone the muscles and prevent injury further, factor these body weight exercises into your training. 15 reps, 3 sets, 3-4 a week.



Squats: Squat as if sitting on a chair that isn't there



Heel raises: either on the floor or on a step, practice raising on your toes and slowly lowering



Lunges: lunge forward from a standing position and quickly return. Perform on both sides



Bridging: lift your bottom off the floor for 5 seconds, 4 reps



Balance

You can have strong, well-conditioned muscles but these won't count for nearly as much if they are not working together as a team. Balance can be improved on a daily basis by practicing standing on alternate legs for 3 lots of 10 seconds – eyes closed if you can.



In Case of Emergency – Traffic Lights:

As I have said before, while you are running, listen to your body. If you are running and you feel some localised pain or tightness, adopting the traffic light system can help:

If the pain gets worse, it's a **RED** light – STOP

If it gets easier it's **GREEN**, and you can carry on

An ache that doesn't change or go away is an **AMBER** light – proceed with much caution and keep listening to your body.

Types of injury and their Management

If you feel a sudden sharp pain that stops you in your stride, you may have torn a muscle

If you slip off a kerb and twist your ankle, you could have torn a ligament and or tendon – or even broken a bone

A gradual dull pain in your leg or foot can be due to muscular tension or, at worst, a stress fracture



Whatever the damage – you need (the) POLICE

- **P** – Protect the area, for example, using crutches
- **Optimal Loading** – if it's sore to walk on or you're limping badly, you either need more support walking (e.g with crutches) or rest up so you don't cause more damage
- **Ice** – 15-20 minutes with something like a bag of frozen peas in a damp dishcloth on the affected area, as often as you can
- **Compress** – e.g a tubigrip or bandage to keep the swelling to a minimal
- **Elevate** – have your injured limb higher than the rest of your body, as able

Healing times

Even a small sprain or tear can take a couple of weeks to ease, a larger tear can take up to six weeks to heal and longer to be able to run on it. Returning to running too soon can re-damage the area and healing can take even longer. It is important to have professional advice and to listen closely to your body when returning.

Returning from injury

When returning from injury, stretching the affected area should ideally feel the same as the 'good' side.

Running is an intense cardiovascular exercise so activities such as cycling or using a cross trainer can be used before returning to running. Always keep in mind the 'Traffic Light' rule above as you do so.

When returning from injury, it is a good idea to do interval 'power' walks, jogs or runs to gradually test the area and check it is ok with the increased stress, rather than just running straight away.

I hope you've found my tips and advice helpful! This is the guidance I've given my many hundreds of patients over the years and which I have followed myself to run marathons without injury. Prevention really is better than cure and if you have any further questions or concerns, I'd love to hear from you. Contact me at brock_physiotherapy@yahoo.com or in the [2022 #TeamAN London Marathon Strava club](#)





***Good luck and enjoy.
The hard work will all be worth it
on the day!***

**Elliott Brock BSc (Hons) MCSP HCPC
- Senior Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist,
#TeamAN Volunteer Physio**

