

## First-timer's Tips – brought to you by:



As you begin to train for this year's event, here are 5 easy tips to help keep you on the right track.

1. Stretch, stretch, stretch! Stretching can take as little as 10 minutes, but provides multiple benefits to the body such as decreasing pain and soreness after exercise, improving circulation and even helping you to relax.

Proper stretching techniques to help you stay injury free:

- Perform balanced stretching. This means you should always stretch the muscles on both sides of your body evenly. Don't stretch one side more than the other.
  - Avoid over-stretching. Never stretch to the point of pain or discomfort. You will feel slight tension or a pull on the muscle at the peak of a stretch.
  - Go slow! Always stretch slowly and evenly. Hold the stretch about 15 seconds and release slowly as well.
  - Never bounce or jerk while stretching. This can cause injury as a muscle is pushed beyond its ability. All stretches should be smooth and slow.
  - Don't forget to breathe! Flexibility exercises should be relaxing.
2. Follow a schedule – [Click here](#) to download a schedule that will help you stay motivated and help keep you on track for any of the Shamrock races.
  3. Clean up your plate. No, we didn't say clean your plate! Eating healthy is a big part of feeling great on race day. Grabbing a couple of donuts after your long run seems like a good reward, but can leave you feeling like a donut hole later in the day. Re-fueling after your runs with lean protein and complex carbohydrates will help keep you going when you have things to do like take the kids to their soccer games or... cut the grass.
  4. Hydrate – As a runner, you should consistently hydrate yourself during both warm and cold weather. By the time you are thirsty, your body is already suffering from dehydration, causing your running to suffer, and putting you at risk. Most runners fall short on their fluid replacement and manage only to replace about half of their losses. You know you're drinking enough water if you urinate about once an hour and it is clear.

Finally, spread out fluid intake during the day to maintain steady water levels and remember to drink past the feeling of thirst to adequately replenish lost fluid.

5. Make it fun! Run with friends, come up with new routes, take weekend trips to explore new areas where you can run or sign up for shorter races to practice your nutrition. Shamrock is all about the fun, so be ready!

***Anthem is proud to sponsor the Anthem Shamrock Half Marathon. Leading a healthy lifestyle can influence the behavior of others. Count on us to continue our 75 year history of helping Virginians be healthier — one race at a time.***