

The aim of osteopathy is to return normal function to the body, thus reducing inflammation and pain.

Osteopathy



FUEL FOR THOUGHT – last minute nutrition advice for race day

We are aware that the marathon is quickly approaching. We thought that the following information might be useful to help you prepare your nutrition strategy for the big day. It will also provide useful information in the event of you training for a marathon in the future. You still have time to experiment with gels so that you know what and how much to consume on the big day. It can take a little trial and error. With training your body can become better able to tolerate feeding during exercise.

Our muscles consume two main energy sources during exercise. These are fat and glycogen. Glycogen is the body's way of storing sugar but this store is limited. When you run out of glycogen, your body then has to rely on fat as an energy source.

One way to understand this concept is to think of a plane that has two engines. One consumes fat and the other glycogen. The engine that relies on fat has a huge tank that can store a very high amount of energy. The glycogen dependent engine has a much smaller limited fuel tank. When the plane runs out of glycogen the engine switches off. Your plane is now running on half power as it is relying solely on the fat powered engine. This is what happens when you hit the preverbal wall. Your body runs out of glycogen, you're now running at half power on one engine and you slow down and generally feel extremely tired.

There are three ways of making the glycogen fuel tank last longer. One; is to make the engine more efficient at burning glycogen so it burns it for longer. Two; is to make the fuel tank larger. This is limited but it is possible to make it a little bigger. The third is to keep topping up the tank as it is being used.

By performing a long slow run each week you train the body to burn a greater percentage of fat, compared to glycogen or in other words make your engine more efficient at burning fat. You also increase the body's ability to store glycogen, i.e. increasing the size of the fuel tank.

By feeding just before and during exercise you are topping up your fuel reserve as it is being utilised by your engine. Don't wait for your glycogen fuel tank to deplete before you start to top it up. If your tank runs dry you will not be able to meet your engines demands through feeding. Feeding slows down how quickly your tank runs out of fuel.

It is recommended that you consume gels just before a run and as directed by the instructions on the packet during a run. You might have to take less than the recommended quantities if they upset your stomach during training. You may also find that some gel brands are more suitable than others. Just because a gel works for a friend doesn't mean it will work for you. You need to experiment during training and see what quantities and brands are best suited to you. You might also find that as you get used to using gels you are able to tolerate more during training. There are two important "Don'ts" here; don't exceed the recommended amount on the products packaging, and don't try a new gel on a race day. The last thing you want to do is queue for the loo!

It is important to eat a high carbohydrate meal soon after your training session, usually within one hour. It has been shown that the sooner you eat after training the higher the percentage of consumed sugars will be transformed into glycogen as opposed to fats.

It is possible to avoid hitting the wall of pain with smart training and nutrition but this is unlikely for the less experienced runner. However you be able avoid hitting the wall too early in the race. Hitting the wall with only two kilometres left is much better than hitting the wall with ten kilometres still to go.

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