

Marathon Questions with Elizabeth Evans



1) What was the motivational drive for you to run a marathon?

I had run two half marathons, in the fall of 2014 and had signed up to run my third for the end of March 2015. A couple people said to me, “Why don’t you run a marathon, you already know you can do a half...” I thought about it and they were right, why not challenge myself and run a marathon, so I signed up for the Traverse City Track Club’s Bayshore Marathon which took place May 23, 2015.

2) What type of training regimen did you follow for proper training and how many months in advance did you train?

I started my training in January and choose an 18 week plan. It is always good to follow a training plan that fits your running level as it keeps you on track and prepares your body for the increased distance or longer runs each week. I found a marathon training plan for beginners that slowly but steadily increased mileage to help build my confidence. Running outdoors

in January and February in subzero temperatures was difficult but it helped me build the toughness I needed to get through any run.

Learning how to fuel your body during long runs is just as important as finding a good training plan. Runs lasting longer than one hour, you should consider refueling with either an electrolyte beverage and/or a gel. Refueling helps your muscles keep going as they are depleting the glycogen reserves. If you were to run out of glycogen, then basically your legs stop moving or lock up, not good when running.

I used my long runs to see what I liked best and what worked or didn't work to get me through the run. I have a hydration belt with two containers. One is usually filled with water, the other with diluted Gatorade. I wouldn't use a gel and Gatorade at the same time because that would be too much sugar at once, and could make me feel sick. Also by using the gels on your long runs, it trains your stomach to handle them because stomachs can be a little finicky due to the physiological change that occurs that keep your body moving. This is a great video that talks about the history and what our bodies do during a marathon [The Science of Marathon Running](#).

3) Describe the feeling/atmosphere moments before the race and how you personally felt.

That morning I was trying to stay focused, doing self-talk "you can do this", "don't worry about anyone else, just run your race and keep your pace", I was excited and nervous as I usually am before any race, but the energy from all of the runners, their friends and family, even my own family was awesome.

4) What was your biggest challenge running the marathon?

My biggest challenge was staying focused mentally 26.2 miles. I knew I could get through 13.1 miles but it was the next 13.1 that was going to be challenging. I was hanging in there until about mile 19. I was worried about

a calf strain I was running with so I started to panic. There was a lot of self-talk and wanting to cry because I was starting to do more walking due to my calf. I wasn't going to quit, I was determined to finish the race. My family met me at mile 20. They hugged me and gave me words of encouragement to keep going. My dad met me at mile 24 and ran with me until the mile 25 aid station where my mom was waiting to cheer me on. All of the support you receive from not only your family but volunteers and the community is amazing and definitely appreciated.

5) Describe your feelings as you finished the marathon.

When I crossed the finish line, the feeling was really indescribable. I was so happy and proud, starving, tired, I didn't know what I wanted to do first, take my shoes off or eat!

6) Share your words of advice or motivation to anyone contemplating a big race.

My advice is to be as prepared as you can be, try not to miss your long runs and most importantly don't give up!! Make sure you have the support of friends and family, you need them. They will lift you up at some of the hardest moments and I guarantee you, there will be moments. Try not to worry about time your first long race; it's good to have a goal but it's more important to cross the finish line, preferably standing up (insert smile)! I would also suggest you get involved with a local running group or community, even a group of friends that like to run is positive. I joined the Mount Pleasant Road Runners in January, which is through the local Runners Performance store and they have been a great source of support for me.