

**Making Everything Easier!™**

# **Running a Marathon**

FOR  
**DUMMIES®**

## **Learn to:**

- **Train for your first marathon no matter your skill level**
- **Improve your performance through drills and workouts**
- **Successfully complete your first or fastest race**

**Jason R. Karp, PhD**

*Nationally recognized running  
and fitness coach*



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# ***Running a Marathon For Dummies®***

## **by Jason R. Karp, PhD**



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### **Running a Marathon For Dummies®**

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## About the Author

**Jason R. Karp, PhD**, is a nationally recognized running and fitness coach, freelance writer and author, and exercise physiologist. He owns RunCoachJason.com, a state-of-the-science run coaching and personal training company in San Diego, California. As one of America's foremost running experts and the 2011 IDEA Personal Trainer of the Year (the fitness industry's highest award), Dr. Karp is a trusted source of information. Through his writing, conference presentations, DVDs, and numerous print and television interviews on topics

related to running and fitness, he brings the state of the science directly to the public. A sought-after speaker, he is a frequent presenter at national fitness, coaching, and academic conferences. A nationally certified running coach through USA Track & Field, he has also taught USATF's highest level coaching certification and was an instructor at the USATF/U.S. Olympic Committee's Emerging Elite Coaches Camp at the U.S. Olympic Training Center. He also regularly holds clinics for runners, coaches, and fitness professionals.

He is a prolific writer, with more than 200 articles in numerous international coaching, running, and fitness trade and consumer magazines, including *Track Coach*, *Techniques for Track & Field and Cross Country*, *New Studies in Athletics*, *Athletics Weekly*, *Running Times*, *Runner's World*, *Trail Runner*, *Women's Running*, *Marathon & Beyond*, *IDEA Fitness Journal*, *Shape*, and *Ultra-Fit*, among others. He is also the author of four other books: *Running for Women* (Human Kinetics), *101 Winning Racing Strategies for Runners* (Coaches Choice), *101 Developmental Concepts & Workouts for Cross Country Runners* (Coaches Choice), and *How to Survive Your PhD* (Sourcebooks).

Dr. Karp has coached cross-country and track at the high school, college, and elite club levels. In 1997, at the age of 24, he became one of the youngest collegiate head coaches in the country, leading the Georgian Court University (NJ) women's cross-country team to the regional championship and winning honors as NAIA Northeast Region Coach of the Year. His personal training experience ranges from elite athletes to cardiac rehab patients. As a private coach and founder of REVO2LT Running Team, he has helped many runners meet their potential, ranging from a first-time race participant to an Olympic marathon trials qualifier. He has been profiled in a number of publications and is sponsored by PowerBar as a member of PowerBar Team Elite. His popular downloadable training programs are used by runners around the world.

Dr. Karp received his PhD in exercise physiology, with a physiology minor, from Indiana University in 2007; his master's degree in kinesiology from the University of Calgary in 1997; and his bachelor's degree in exercise and sport science, with an English minor, from Pennsylvania State University in 1995. His research includes motor unit recruitment during eccentric muscle contractions, post-exercise nutrition for optimal recovery in endurance athletes, training characteristics of Olympic marathon trials qualifiers, and the coordination of breathing and stride rate in distance runners. His research has been published in the scientific journals *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, *International Journal of Sport Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism*, and *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*. Dr. Karp has taught at several universities and currently teaches dissertation writing, a course he designed for doctoral students, at the University of California, San Diego.

## **Dedication**

For my father, Monroe, whose long walking strides through the streets of Brooklyn, New York, caused me to run to keep up. Perhaps it was those fond moments as a kid with my father that planted the seed for me to become a runner. And for my mother, Muriel, who always told me how proud she was of me and who taught me how to endure and “roll with the punches.” In her memory, I’m donating 10 percent of my royalty on every book sold to Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

## **Author's Acknowledgments**

This book has been my biggest writing project to date. It couldn't have happened without the support of many people.

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I'd also like to thank my twin brother, Jack, for inspiring me to be as good a writer as he is and for not making nearly as many jokes as he could have about me writing a book for dummies; my hard-working agent, Grace Freedson, who made this book possible and who thankfully understands my perfectionism; Traci Cumbay, who helped with the initial "dummifying" of my writing; photographer Maurice Roy, for his great photographs that beautifully illustrate my text; models Martha Carbajal Moreno, Natalie Jill, and Pedro Molina, who made the photographs pop off the page; and my parents, who left this world much too early but who are with me with every word I write and every step I run.

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We're proud of this book; please send us your comments at <http://dummies.custhelp.com>. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

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# Introduction

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To paraphrase the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, “A journey of 26.2 miles begins with a single step.” From the time the ancient Greek runner Pheidippides ran from Marathon to Athens in 490 BC to announce the Greeks’ victory over Persia in the Battle of Marathon, humans have had a compelling interest in taking that single step, and many more after that.

Humans have repeatedly tried to push the limits of running endurance, which have been nothing short of remarkable: 50 marathons in 50 days and 300 miles of nonstop running by Dean Karnazes of the United States, and the current world records in the marathon, which equal an average marathon pace of 5 minutes and 10 seconds per mile by England’s Paula Radcliffe and 4 minutes and 43 seconds per mile by Kenya’s Patrick Makau.

So when people, upon finding out what I do for a living, tell me they can’t run, I have to smile to myself. Of course they can run. And you can, too. Running is in your DNA. As long as you train your body properly, it has a remarkable capacity to adapt and endure. Whether you want to run a marathon just for the thrill of it or qualify for the Boston Marathon, it all starts with a single step, which leads to another step, and then another, and then another. When you put all those steps together and they cover 26.2 miles, you become a marathoner.

This book is all about getting you to become a marathoner, whether it’s your first one or fastest one. As the famous Czech runner Emil Zátopek, who won five gold medals in two Olympics, once said, “If you want to win something, run 100 meters. If you want to experience something, run a marathon.”



The marathon truly is different from any other running race. It unites people. When you're in the race, it doesn't matter what your income is or how beautiful or handsome you are or what your ethnicity is or what type of car you drive; everyone has 26.2 miles to run. And that's not easy for anyone.

The marathon changes people's lives. And it will change yours.

## About This Book

Much like the marathon itself, *Running a Marathon For Dummies* is a journey — it took just as long to write as it takes to train for a marathon! This book is for anyone who wants to run a marathon, and it covers everything you need to know about the marathon, and then some. Within it, you find information on

- ✓ Preparing to run a marathon
- ✓ Choosing the right running gear
- ✓ Proper running form
- ✓ Different training strategies and workouts
- ✓ Training programs for beginner, intermediate, and advanced runners
- ✓ Diagnosing and preventing injuries
- ✓ Racing strategies and tips
- ✓ Destination marathons
- ✓ Frequently asked questions about the marathon
- ✓ And so much more!

In contrast to the marathon itself, in which you can't run mile 24 without first running miles 1 to 23, you don't need to read this book from start to finish (although I put a lot of time into it, so I

hope you read the whole thing). You can pick and choose the topics you want to read about and then set the book aside until you need it again. Using this book is that simple.

## Conventions Used in This Book

I use the following conventions throughout the book to make things consistent and easy to understand:

- ✓ New terms appear in *italic* and are followed by a definition. I also use italics for emphasis.
- ✓ **Bold text** highlights the action parts of numbered steps and the keywords in bulleted lists.
- ✓ All web addresses appear in monofont.

When this book was printed, some web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that I've added no extra characters, such as hyphens, to indicate the break. So when using one of these web addresses, simply type in exactly what you see in the book as though the line break doesn't exist.

## What You're Not to Read

As a writer, I believe every word I write is important. But I understand that not every word between the covers needs to be read. After all, the more time you spend reading, the less time you have to run! The skippable material in this book includes the following:

- ✓ **Text in sidebars:** The sidebars are shaded boxes that appear throughout the book. They contain information