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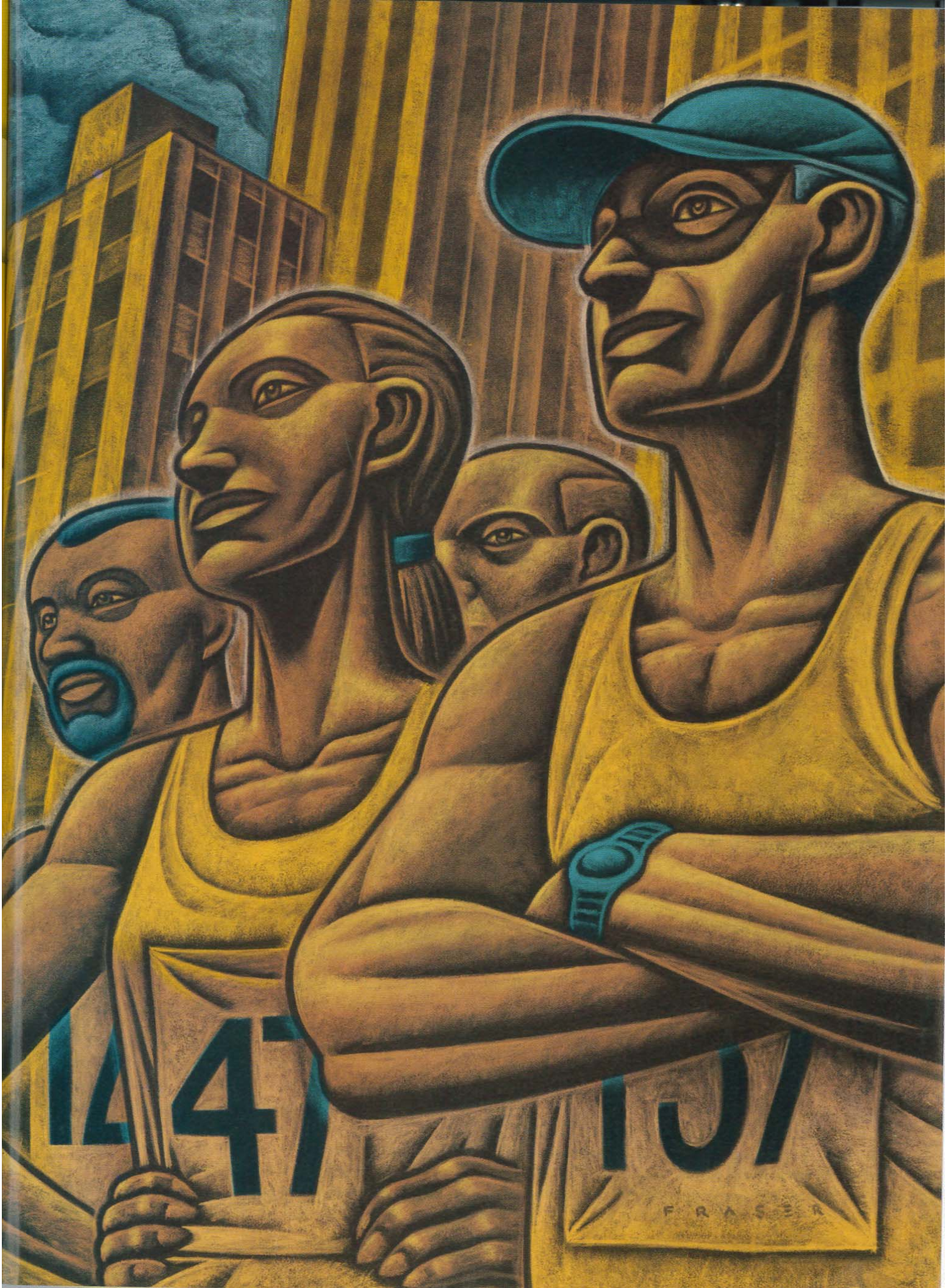
IN THE

LONG

RUN

TOP TRAINING SECRETS FROM MARATHONERS WHO TURN
IN SOLID PERFORMANCES YEAR, AFTER YEAR, AFTER YEAR

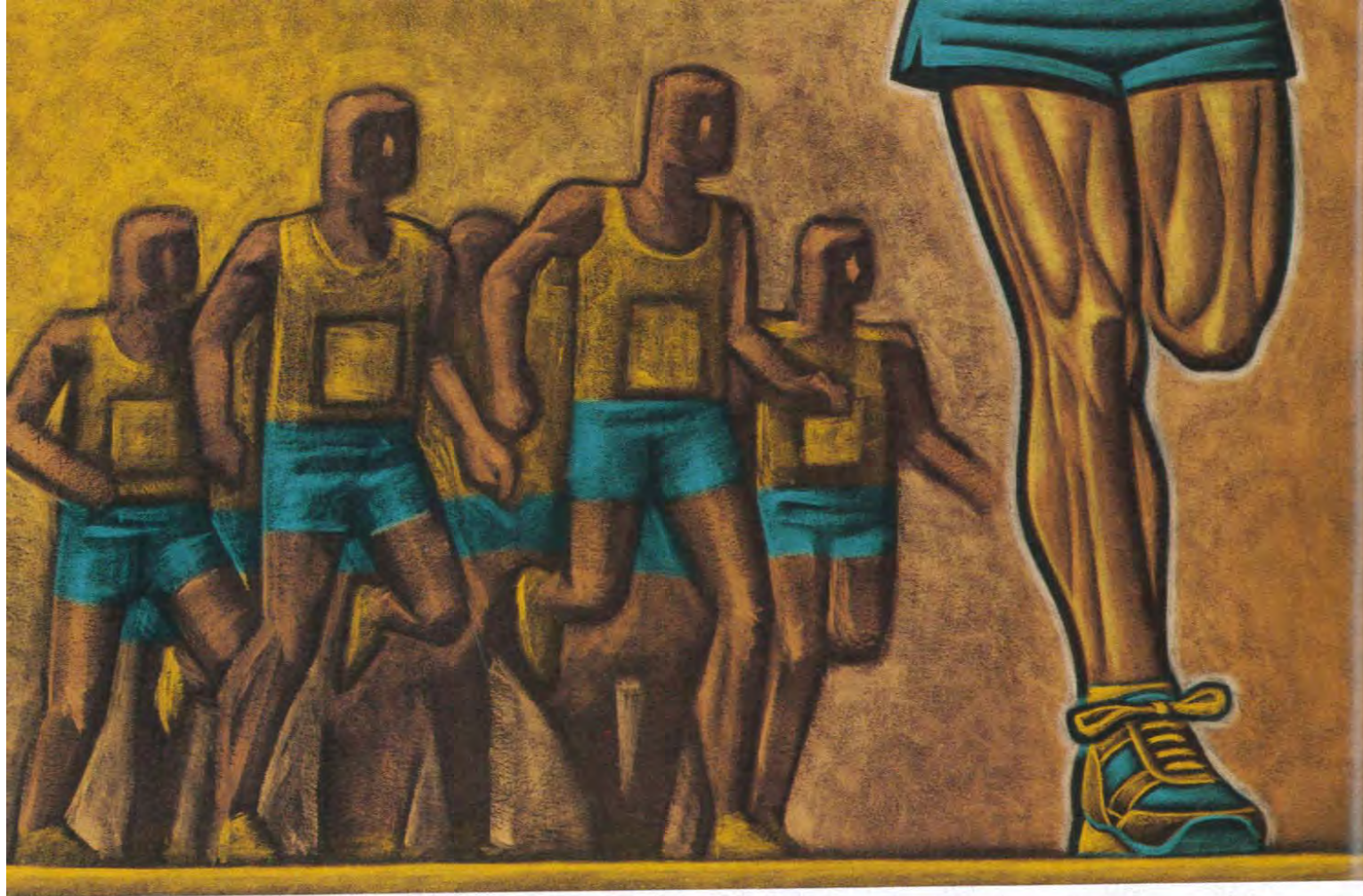
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MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO, ON AN OVERCAST MORNING IN

November, I stood on the starting line of the Marine Corps Marathon, in Washington, D.C. There were butterflies in my stomach and a trash bag over my shoulders. ¶ Back home on Long Island, New York, I had done some of the training for my first marathon with local veteran runners. However, I followed only about half their advice—the half I ignored included the part about making sure I had trained sufficiently. Instead, as an overconfident 30-year-old who could easily run a sub-40-minute 10-K, I had tried to cram in long runs like last-minute study sessions for a final exam.

I did other stupid things, too. I rode my stationary bike for an hour the morning before the race. Then, after arriving in D.C., I spent the whole afternoon on my feet at the expo, enjoyed a couple of beers with dinner, and didn't bother to eat breakfast race morning. On top of everything else, I went out way too fast.

You can see where this is going: By mile 16, I was walking. Quads sore, spirits sagging, I struggled to finish in a disappointing 3:56. I swore I'd never run another marathon.

Two decades and 19 marathons later, I decided to return to the Marine Corps Marathon to exorcise some old ghosts and answer an important question—important not just to me but to anyone who is passionate about the 26.2-mile distance. With all that the marathon demands physically and psychologically, is it possible to be a lifelong marathoner, maintaining consistent—even competitive—times over the years, if not decades?

For most people, says William Roberts, M.D., medical di-

rector of the Twin Cities Marathon, the answer is yes. “There is little reason you cannot run marathons and run them well for many years,” he says. Provided, of course, you avoid injuries. “You don't recover as quickly after age 40,” says orthopedic surgeon Nicholas DiNubile, M.D., author of *FrameWork: Your 7-Step Program for Healthy Muscles, Bones and Joints*. And considering that the median age of male marathon finishers in 2005 was 40 (for women, it was 35), those planning to marathon over the long haul need to wise up fast—with smart training strategies and new approaches to the distance.

That can also be part of the fun—and why, if the marathon

is your cup of tea, you can keep savoring it for years to come. "You never stop tinkering with the marathon," says Gordon Bakoulis, 45, five-time qualifier for the U.S. Women's Olympic Marathon Trials. "There's always something that can be adjusted, fine-tuned, or experimented with."

Experiment is the right word. We don't yet have the long-term studies that can tell us the precise formula for achieving quality marathon performances from the time you're 25 until the time you're 75, simply because so few have done it. Maybe that's the chapter of this story you'll write. But in the meantime, we asked nine marathon veterans for the training strategies that have been key to their long-term success. Their secrets to longevity are relevant even if you're not chasing 26.2-milers, because who doesn't want to keep running as well as possible for as long as possible?

And I can vouch for the efficacy of these tips, because last October I put them to the test when I returned to D.C. to redeem myself at Marine Corps. Although it wasn't my fastest finish, I ran 3:16—an accomplishment that enabled me to declare myself a lifelong marathoner who was 20 years older and 40 minutes faster. With a little luck and a lot of smart training, I'll keep going strong for another 20 years. So can you.

KEEP YOUR TRAINING—AND YOUR WEIGHT—CONSISTENT. Alan Ruben, 49, of Manhattan has run 19 straight New York City Marathons—the last 15 of them under 2:40. For him, there are no big secrets to long-running longevity. "If you want to run quality marathons over the long term,

you simply need to train consistently," he says. Doug Kurtis, 54, who ran 76 sub-2:20 marathons between 1980 and 1994, agrees. "If you're consistent in your training year-round, you're better able to control your weight," Kurtis says, "and that makes it easier on you come marathon season."

Keeping your running at a steady level throughout the year counters the age-related weight gain that plagues most people (the average American gains one to 1.5 pounds a year after the age of 25). But that doesn't mean you need to crank out megamiles all year long for the rest of your life. Few runners can handle 100-mile marathon-training weeks for one season,

IF YOU'RE CONSISTENT IN YOUR TRAINING, YOU'RE BETTER ABLE TO CONTROL YOUR WEIGHT.

much less over the course of two or three decades. "Definitely think quality over quantity if you want to keep running marathons," says exercise scientist Bill Pierce of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina.

So what's the magic number? That really depends on the individual. Ruben runs 60 to 80 miles a week, but he's a sub-2:40 marathoner. And studies have shown that the number one predictor for running injury is total weekly mileage—the higher the total, the higher your injury risk. So while you may want to bump up the miles during your peak marathon training, most

WORKOUTS THAT GO THE DISTANCE

People who successfully run marathons for life have favorite workouts that have helped them maintain consistent times. Try one or all to promote your own running longevity.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER Research has shown that the benefits of exercise can be cumulative over the course of a day. Veteran marathoner Doug Kurtis uses this principle to coach a number of age-group champs. Instead of doing a lot of long runs, Kurtis has his runners split most of their 20-milers, running 10 miles in the morning and 10 miles later that afternoon. Kurtis says splitting the long run helps keep injuries at bay and allows for a chance to rehydrate and refuel. "It's also less taxing mentally. Still, at the end of the day, you have your 20 miles in."

GO FORTH WITH TEMPO The aptly named Hal Goforth, who has run 27 Boston Marathons in less than three hours, swears by tempo runs. Start with a 1.5-mile warmup,

then do three miles at what he calls a "challenging, borderline uncomfortable pace." Cool down for another mile and a half. Do this at least once a week, building up in increments of one-half to one mile until you're running at least six miles at tempo. "These workouts will help you hold on to a faster pace for longer and longer distances," he says.

RACE WITH PURPOSE Twenty-one-time sub-three-hour Chicago finisher Dennis Petrushkevich uses races as speedwork. He races eight times in his annual build to the marathon—roughly one race every other week—ranging in distance from 5-Ks to a half-marathon. "I try to run them hard, but I don't care if my times aren't great," he says. "They're purely workouts." If you race a half-marathon

as part of your marathon training, just make sure it is four weeks or more out from the marathon itself. Do any shorter races at least two weeks before marathon day.

TALK, THEN TEST "My favorite workout is a two-hour, 30-minute winter run on Vermont dirt roads with a friend," says John Valentine, who has been running quality marathons since Lyndon Johnson was president. "The conversation should flow for two hours. Then the last 30 minutes should be an effort." Find a running buddy and a scenic course in your area. The pace for the first two hours is 60 seconds per mile slower than marathon pace. The last 30 minutes should be at marathon pace. This workout will teach you how to run hard when you're tired—crucial to marathon success. —J.H.

runners should remain in the 20- to 40-miles-per-week range during off-season training to help keep injuries at bay.

FEWER MARATHONS = FASTER MARATHONS.

Marathon running can become a compulsive habit. There are some marathoners who toe the line every month (the Fifty State folks come to mind). That's fine, if your body and temperament allow it—and if your goal is to simply cross the finish line. But if you want to run quality marathons, you need to run them less frequently. "I used to think I needed only one month of decreased training to recuperate after a marathon," says John Valentine, 56, of Roxbury, Vermont, who ran a 3:20 marathon in 1966 and a 3:19 in 2005. "Now I think it's closer to two months before I can get back into real quality training."

For some runners this means limiting themselves to one spring and one fall marathon. For others, concentrating on one big race a year works best. "I don't plan to ever again run two marathons in a single year, whereas that used to be my minimum," says Bakoulis. "To still run decent times, avoid injuries, and take care of my family, job, and other responsibilities, I've had to adapt and channel my efforts into one solid race per year." Pierce—who ran a 3:11 marathon at age 55—breaks his

running year down into three race goals: a 10-K in the spring, a half-marathon in late summer, and a marathon in the fall. "That way your training has a different focus from season to season," he says, "but you're still staying in shape for the ultimate goal: that yearly marathon."

STAY STRONG. It's a fact that strength fades as we get older. And as strength fades, so does speed. But you can retain the strength and speed you need to run quality marathons by lifting weights. "Strength training helps everything from overall strength,

GARY ALLEN HAS RUN 41 SUB-THREE-HOUR MARATHONS: "KEEP IT FUN."

to your posture, to your arm carriage," says Dennis Petrushkevich, a 49-year-old runner who has run 21 sub-three-hour Chicago Marathons. You don't need to spend hours pumping iron to see a difference. Two 30-minute sessions per week with an even mix of both upper- and lower-body exercises will do the trick. Stick with weights that are about 60 percent of your maximum.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. Longevity in marathon running, Dr. Roberts says, is largely a question of "use versus abuse." To ride that fine line year after year, you need to do everything you can to promote full recovery between your workouts and your marathons. "A weekly massage is one of the best investments you can make," says 62-year-old Hal Goforth of San Diego, who believes his 60-minute weekly session on the table is one reason he's been able to run the last 31 Boston Marathons, finishing 27 of them in less than three hours. Goforth, also an exercise physiologist, believes massage is particularly important for the veteran marathoner's body. "Connective tissue becomes less pliable as you age," he says. "When your legs get tight from training, a good massage therapist can find those little knots in your muscles, bust them up, and give you greater stride length."

SECURE SIDELINE SUPPORT. Experienced marathoners agree that they couldn't keep pace year after year without a supportive partner and family. Sports psychologist Charlie Brown of FPS Performance in Charlotte, North Carolina, cites a Canadian study of cardiac rehab patients that showed a spouse's attitude toward the rehab program was an even stronger predictor of compliance than the patient's. Brown believes the same holds true in long-distance running. "If your partner does not respect or admire your marathon running, I'm sorry, it's not going to happen," says Brown.

Note that Brown did *not* say your partner has to be a marathon runner, too. He or she just needs to be on board with the idea of you training for and racing them regularly. And if your family isn't supportive, Brown says, "find out what would need to happen to get them on board." For example, you may have to

JUST WARMING UP

A long-range plan for long-distance success

So you've never run a marathon, but you want to keep your options open—like the option to start running them and continue to do so? Here are some principles from a man who knows how to do that: Furman University exercise scientist Bill Pierce, cofounder of the Furman Institute of Running and Scientific Training (FIRST) program, a three-day-per-week plan that helps runners complete marathons.

BECOME A RUNNER FIRST, THEN A MARATHONER

Establish a foundation of running before you take on 26.2 miles—ideally, six months to a year. Earn your racing stripes by progressing up the distance ladder—5-K, 10-K, half-marathon—before you toe the line in your first marathon.

SET REALISTIC GOALS Novice marathon runners can make big improvements. On the other hand, they can set themselves up for big disappointment if they fail to achieve a target finish time that is way out of reach. Use current training and racing paces to estimate attainable finish times, and always have alternative goals, such as finishing strong, if things don't go as planned on race day.

FIND A RUNNING PARTNER OR GROUP Having others to help you train will increase the likelihood that you'll continue to do it, year after year. Through friendly competition, running partners will help you become a better runner. And you'll be less likely to skip your runs if you know others are waiting for you. —J.H.

COURSE CONCERNS

Rookie marathoners always have lots of enthusiasm. But also lots of questions. So we asked veteran experts from each of the three big fall marathons to field a few queries from anxious beginners.



LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon, OCTOBER 22

THE EXPERT: Native Chicagoan Dennis Petrushkevich who has run the past 24 editions of the Chicago Marathon, 21 of them in less than three hours

Q: The Chicago Marathon takes place at the end of October, when it can be chilly or warm. What should I wear?

A: If it's in the 30s or 40s, wear a long-sleeve shirt made of a technical fabric like Dri-FIT on top of your singlet, with shorts and gloves. If it's raining, also wear a baseball hat or stocking hat to keep in the heat. If it's warm, stick with what you trained in over the summer.

Q: Should I carry water during the race, or will the regular drink stops be enough?

A: There are plenty of aid stations along the Chicago course, but carry a sports drink or water with you to the start to sip before the race. Because of the number of runners (40,000 or so), the fluid tables do have a tendency to get backed up. Go to one of the last tables at each station so you won't have to stop.

Q: Are there any challenges on this course that I need to be prepared for?

A: It's always windy in Chicago. If you're running into a headwind, tuck in behind a group of runners. If it's at your back, get in the open and enjoy the free push.

Marine Corps Marathon, Washington, D.C., OCTOBER 29

THE EXPERT: Col. Hank Donigan (USMC), 51, 27-time marathon finisher, including 10 Marine Corps

Q: How much should weather affect my pace on race day? If it is hot, should I slow down?

A: It is not unusual to be cold at the start of this race and hot at the end. Plan for all possibilities, and dress appropriately and in layers that can be easily removed. But if the weather gets warm, slow down and run conservatively.

Q: What are the hills like in this race, and what's the best technique to use while running them?

A: Your toughest climb will be as you approach the Iwo Jima Monument, just before the finish line, but the crowd support will carry you to the end. Keep your head up and use your arms to propel you forward.

Q: I'd like to have friends and family come see me run. Is this feasible?

A: Knowing that you will have support along the course is a tremendous morale boost. And Marine Corps is ideally suited for spectators to view runners multiple times during the race. For directions to the best viewing spots, visit the race Web site (marinemarathon.com).

ING New York City Marathon, NOVEMBER 5

THE EXPERTS: New Yorkers Alan Ruben, who has run 15-straight sub-2:40 NYC Marathons, and his wife, five-time Women's Marathon Olympic Trials qualifier Gordon Bakoulis, editorial director for New York Road Runners

Q: How can I keep from getting over-excited on race morning?

A: Try to tune out the distractions and focus inward. Stay calm by shutting your eyes and resting whenever possible—on the bus to the start or at Fort Wadsworth. Don't get too excited at the start. The time to get excited is when you enter Central Park feeling great!

Q: What's your advice about how to handle the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge at the start?

A: Ignore your splits for the first two miles. The first one probably will be slow because of the uphill, and the second one will be fast because of the downhill. Instead, concentrate on settling into a steady pace from miles three through eight on 4th Avenue.

Q: Never having run a marathon, how can I pace myself properly during the race?

A: In a big marathon, it's easy to find others running a similar pace, either by joining an organized pace group or by just latching on to those around you. But don't rely solely on others. Stay within yourself, and resist the urge to surge. In the end you will reap the rewards of smart pacing when you pass dozens, if not hundreds, of runners in the final miles.

do your long runs earlier on a Saturday morning so that you're showered and ready to help with the chores once the rest of the family is up. The bottom line: While your family doesn't have to be at the finish line, cheering wildly every time you finish a race, they have to be supportive of your efforts to get there.

HAVE FUN. "I find that some folks are so fixated on performance, they view the daily training as stressful," Pierce says. Contrast that with Gary Allen, who has racked up an incred-

ible 41 sub-three-hour marathons since 1978. "When people ask me how I've done it, I say by being consistent and keeping it fun," he says. Allen, 49, keeps his training enjoyable by surrounding himself with good running partners and by exploring new routes around his home on Great Cranberry Island, Maine. While you may not be lucky enough on your long runs to spot moose or bald eagles, as Allen has, whatever you do to make running fun should keep you heading out for years to come. 