



Self-Care When Life is Like a Marathon

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Our capacity for endurance in 2021 and beyond may be enhanced by following tested tips from the pros on marathon race training, blended with energy practices.

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The strategy of a long-distance race is different from running a quick sprint; thus, here is where we have a lot to learn from marathon runners.

Successful marathon runners train for long-distance races by maximizing their energy and stamina, while protecting their bodies from overuse and damage. They pinpoint when and how to exert effort, conserve energy, and deeply rest.

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4 KEY STEPS FOR SUSTAINED SELF-CARE

Step 1: Identify necessary requirements

Step 2: Gather resources

Step 3: Practice rejuvenation

Step 4: Face reality

STEP 1: REQUIREMENTS: PACING, STRENGTHEN, AND STRETCH

Pacing yourself is the first rule of the road. If you work too hard too soon, you may face burning out or peaking early. Sustain your energy with daily energy practices — such as those that can be found here (Resources for Resilience <https://www.r4r.support/>). You can also create reminders to slow down; try setting alarms on your phone, or prioritize your tasks so you are not overwhelmed.

Build your strength. A strong physical inner core efficiently supports your entire being, stores energy for endurance, and supports you when fatigued. Strengthening your physical, emotional and energetic systems is vital for longevity. Communicate your needs and feelings to yourself and others in a healthy way. You can create energetic resilience by grounding, centering and using energy practices to reinforce the lower chakras (root, sacral and solar plexus). Breathwork, chakra clearing, and barefoot connection to the earth may be helpful as well.



Stretch yourself on all levels. Strength and flexibility are twin processes that support one another. When you stretch your body, your nimbleness can help avoid injuries. Massaging overactive muscles reduces inflammation, which in turn reduces the risk of injury and disease, and promotes rapid recovery. Stretch your consciousness by expanding your perspective and connections outside yourself. Learn something new by taking some risks. Energy medicine techniques like *Connecting Heaven and Earth* and *Heaven Rushing In* (Connecting Heaven and Earth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OcnjqlqMQ>; Heaven Rushing In <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-wvZTul7NY>) can build your energy field and spiritual access.

STEP 2: RESOURCES: INVENTORY, PLANS, GOALS

Take an inventory of what is going well, and name what you still need, by assessing your strengths and weaknesses. A good coach will start here, when working on long term goals. We tend to overlook and undervalue what comes easily to us, while overestimating our difficulties when faced with a lack of resources. Give yourself credit for what is already working, and ask for help to shore up the gaps. Identify and treat areas of weakness when appropriate, using Energy Practices (i.e., Comprehensive Energy Psychology, Emotional Freedom Technique, Thought Field Therapy, Tapas Acupressure Technique) or other approaches. Share your woes with a trusted friend, and then let them give you a good push from shore when it's time to move on.

Make plans based on changing situations. Endurance events require greater adaptability for change than shorter events. Create and modify your plans over time, from day to day, and over the course of weeks, months, and possibly years. Your mind, body and spirit shift from minute to minute, but trends can be tracked over time. Find your rhythm

and move with the shifting tide.

Set realistic goals. No one finishes a distance race without building up to it in steps. Remember that incremental changes that are *doable* are better than more ambitious goals that are *not* achievable. Look to the past for when you were successful in reaching goals despite long term challenges. What supported your success? Use this knowledge when setting new objectives. Energy practices can help you work on blocks that arise as you tackle your goals.

STEP 3: REJUVENATION: HAVE FUN, RELAX, SIMPLIFY

Have fun! You can't spend all your time pushing yourself. Runners who have daily practice need a break from training, too. Life is meant to be enjoyed, even (or especially) when times are hard or you feel down. Find creative ways to add pleasure, do things that put a smile on your face — either alone or with others who are up for some levity. One idea is adding laughter therapy to your life, deliberately turning your frown upside down. Your mind, body and spirit will be refreshed with a healthy boost of deep breathing, filling your body with a biochemical soup of joy, while receiving an abdominal workout. Remember, seven days without laughter makes one weak!

Relax like you mean it! The body is not a machine. Although your mind and spirit may want to be engaged with life 24/7, athletes know if you push too hard, you risk injury and risk becoming unmotivated. When you relax, you rebuild and rejuvenate on all levels. Schedule time off and stick to it. See it is a vital appointment in your day (which it is!). Find ways to relax, even if it is not easy at first. Dreamy down time may spark unexpected creativity. Go outdoors, day or night, to let nature fill you up. Even one minute of outdoor time is better than none at all. Let others take care of you, possibly exchanging energy practices with one another.



Keep it Simple. Simplicity has a brilliance often overlooked. If you are overwhelmed or it's not your day, *slow down*. Simplify your life, and get back to basics. Even master runners know they can polish their skills by reviewing foundational techniques. When all else fails, reset your system by closing your eyes and taking a breath. Present moment focus is the point of power, where change can happen. Notice what is around you, as your senses can alert you to the here and now.

STEP 4: REALITY: TRUTH, ADVERSITY, OPPORTUNITY

Facing Your truth. It's easy to ignore painful truths, especially when you are working with sustained effort. Runners sometimes find they make the same mistakes race after race. Being creatures of habit, people tend to recreate the same approaches without much conscious awareness. It is natural to dismiss what makes us uncomfortable, inadvertently generating additional problems. Stop avoiding. For effective problem solving, face your truth on an ongoing basis. Energy practices can often shift your ordinary awareness, revealing expanded perceptions, and novel opportunities for change. Set your intention that you will receive in detail what you need, with a felt sense of experiencing it, and offer thanks.

Adversity can be your teacher. Just as in life, runners face adversity. If you have pain, disappointment, or blocks to your hopes and dreams, learn from it. Take the time to reflect on the message behind the adversity. If it's a familiar pattern, see if you have resources which you already know about and can use. If it's a new problem, there is a chance to learn and grow. Place the adversity center stage in your energy practice by naming it. As is said in energy psychology tapping sequences, "Even though I (have pain, am disappointed, am angry, etc.) I love and accept myself."

Opportunity in endurance. Simply getting up and facing another day can be a victory in itself when enduring long term challenges. Long distance runners learn from daily practice the *consistency*, *dedication* and *choice* to do it all one more time, yields its own treasures that are not available with shorter term experiences. You may discover skills and character traits you did not know you had. Similar to peeling the onion on an issue, when you work on liberating the layers of an experience or memory with energy practices, you often can't anticipate where you'll wind up. Be open to the wonder and joy hidden in the inevitable toil and boredom that comes with sustained effort.

The road can seem long and lonely when facing sustained challenges. You don't have to go it alone. Ask for help, *before* you need it! Reach out to others in your energy practice family. For instance, ACEP (www.energypsych.org) provides groups of like-minded energy practitioners meeting online based in many communities in the USA. (<https://www.energypsych.org/page/localgroups>) And volunteer committees (<https://www.energypsych.org/page/GetInvolved>) that are dedicated to working together and supporting one another as they spread the word about energy practices.

Build your support team to reinforce stamina, consistency and morale which wax and wane. Overall, be kind and compassionate with yourself, finding love and letting it surround you, then passing it on from your abundance. You can make the most of your precious energy that is required in the marathon of life. 🍋



Learn more about Dr. Hops at www.DrLoriHops.com