

AAHS Distance Track Race Day Routine

Here is an example for a race that starts at 8:00am

5:00 am: wake up

5:15 am: half mile “shake-out” jog

5:45 am: Eat breakfast —

- If racing early: something simple like tea, oatmeal or toast with peanut butter and jelly, 12-16 ounces of water
- If racing later: something substantial, like the above plus a hard-boiled egg, yogurt, granola, etc.

6:00 am: Put on uniform, depart for race, listen to music, relax

7:00 am: Race day warm Up Drills

- Lunge Matrix
- Baby Skips with forward arm swings
 - *Walking Knee Hugs*
- Baby Skips with backward arm swings
 - *Walking Quad Stretch*
- Side Skips with arm swings
 - *Walking Groin Stretch*
- High Knee Carioca
 - *Walking Hamstring Stretch*
- Basketball Shuffle
 - *Walking Reverse Warrior Lunge Stretch*
- A Skips
 - *Frankenstein Walk*
- B Skips
- High Knees
- Light Bounds
- Back Pedal
- Fast Leg High Knee Butt Kicks
- Hip Swings

7:15 am: Drink 6-8 ounces water

7:16 am: Warm up at 8:00 pace for 18 minutes with 8 X 20 second light surges last mile

7:35 am: Drink 2-4 ounces water, put on spikes, relax, race visualization

7:40 am: Remove outer sweats, start **series of strides** to help get the blood flowing and heart pumping for a strong start:

- 4x20 second strides @ 10k effort
- 4x20 second strides @ 5k effort
- 2x40 second strides @ 1600m effort

7:55 am: Remove Sweats, a few leg swings and final short accelerations, race!

It is best to start a race feeling overly warmed up rather than not warm enough. Although it may seem like a lot of pre-race work, the benefit of strides and dynamic drills will become evident in the first 60 seconds of the race when what once felt like a shock to the body becomes a comfortable pace relative to the explosive, fast-twitch dynamic drills and strides.

Shakeout Runs

Perhaps one of the most underrated components of a great race is priming the body to run fast by executing a proper warm-up. Getting the muscles loose, the neuromuscular system firing on all cylinders, and the body prepared to run hard is critical to optimal performance. If your body is not prepared to handle the massive request for oxygen and efficient blood flow when the gun goes off, you run the risk of going into oxygen debt too early and fading late in the race.

I am actually surprised at how many runners do little to no warm-up before races or hard workouts.

While the normal warm-up, which consist of 15-20 minutes of easy jogging with a few strides might be perfectly acceptable, elites have long been practicing a little-known technique known as a “shakeout run” to help get their mind and body prepared on race morning.

What is a shakeout run?

A shakeout run is a very easy jog of 10 to 15 minutes the early morning before your big race – think of it as a precursor to the actual warm-up.

Ideally, you’ll want to schedule your shakeout run about 2 to 2.5 hours before the start of the race. Usually, this will correspond to your scheduled wake-up time. Yes, I know it’s early, but: As soon as you wake-up, throw on your running gear, lace up the shoes, and start shuffling out the door.

You shouldn’t be running hard on your shakeout run. The main goal is to get blood and oxygen flowing to the muscles, so a slow jog or shuffle is sufficient. Run easy for about 10 minutes, include some light stretching if you feel tight, and then return to the hotel to get in your pre race meal, hit the bathroom, and get ready to head to the starting line.

For optimal performance, you need to be awake at least 2 to 2.5 hours before your race to be fully conscious and ready to run well.

Benefits of a shakeout run

Neuromuscular stimulation and blood flow

The most important benefit of the shakeout run is that it stimulates your central nervous system and gets blood flowing to the muscles to help loosen them up. It takes several hours to get your body temperature up and to increase flexibility. The shakeout run gets this process jump started much earlier.

Wakes you up

Similarly, a shakeout run helps the body wake-up so you don't hit the starting line drowsy, yawning, and unenthusiastic about running hard. More than likely, you'll be waking early to get to the starting line on time and a shakeout run is the perfect way to shake off the morning cobwebs.

Calms the nerves

Shakeout runs are a fantastic way to calm your pre race nerves. With months of hard work on the line, sometimes you wake up on race morning with the thought "what if my legs no longer work" – trust me, we all have those nightmares about running in Jello on the big day.

Not only will you reassure yourself that the legs work, but you'll have 10 blissful minutes in the quiet morning stillness to collect your thoughts, relax, and refocus your nerves into positive mental imagery. The starting line is going to be a tangle of nerves, sights and sounds that can almost take your breathe away. Use the shakeout run to reconnect with your inner self.

Helps you use the bathroom

All runners worry about using the bathroom on race morning. Bathroom lines can get pretty long near the start, so emptying your bladder before you leave for the race is a major benefit. Think about how many early morning runs you've started only to have to go to the bathroom just 15 minutes in.

A shakeout run helps get the systems going in the morning and can prevent those numerous trips to the port-o-john line.

When to use shakeout runs

A primer for shorter races like the 1600m and 3200m

Generally, the shorter your race distance, the more important your body is ready to run hard from the gun. The intensity required to maintain goal 800-3200m pace from start to finish requires a lengthy and intense warm-up. A shakeout run is another opportunity to stimulate the central nervous system and get blood flowing, which can help you reach peak intensity faster.

At big races with thousands of runners

Many marathons and half marathons these days have thousands, if not tens of thousands of runners. Often, these races will bus you to the starting line 30-60 minutes

before the race starts and then herd you into your assigned corral to stand elbow-to-elbow with your fellow competitors.

This situation isn't conducive to a proper warm-up and can often mean you start the race feeling sluggish and not primed to run to your potential. By including a shakeout run before you leave the hotel, you can at least get some blood flowing to your legs, wake up the central nervous system, and get loose and limber before you start.