

What every runner should know about long distance running in the heat

Whether you run for general fitness or are training to compete in long distance, running in summer can be a dangerous game.

Little niggles and aches felt in your foot or calf can result in something much more when you are dehydrated or excessively fatigued by the heat.

So how can you keep getting the most out of your training in the hot weather? [Therese Stegley](#), Physiotherapist from our [Langwarrin](#) clinic gives us her tips for long distance running over the summer months.

What evidence is there?

Exercising in hot weather induces thermoregulatory and other physical strains on the body that can lead to an actual impairment in your exercise endurance capacity (*Racinais et al, 2015*).

One of the most important tips to reduce physiological strain and optimise your performance is to 'acclimatise' or 'get used to' to the heat. You wouldn't run regularly in Melbourne winter and then hop on a plane to the Bahamas and run in 42°C and expect to be okay?!

It takes time for our body to get used to change. Heat acclimatisation involves repetitive exercise completed in heated environments over a minimum of 1-2 weeks (*Nybo, Rasmussen & Sawka, 2014*). Also, it is imperative to account for longer recovery periods between exercise compared to other times of the year in order for the body to adequately hydrate

and cool (Nybo, Rasmussen & Sawka, 2014).

Tips to combating fatigue

Planning

Plan your run in areas known for adequate shade, aim to run early the morning or after dusk if there is a cool change. Keep in mind, most fun runs and marathons begin early in the morning for this very reason!

Hydration

Stay hydrated not just during and after your long run but also the night before.

Stretch

Being dehydrated and over-training can lead to tightness in the muscles and stiffness in the spine which can ultimately alter the way we walk and therefore run. Remember: each stretch should be held for a minimum of 20-30 seconds. Do not continue stretching if there is significant pain. Never bounce or force your body to stretch.

Click [here](#) for a great stretching program from www.runnersworld.co.uk.

For more information or to make an appointment, you can [BOOK ONLINE](#) or call your [local clinic](#).

References

Nybo L, Rasmussen P, Sawka MN. Performance in the heat—physiological factors of importance for hyperthermia-induced fatigue. *Compr Physiol*. 2014;4:657–689

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