

A group of runners participating in a marathon, with the text "CHARGE MARATHON NUTRITION" overlaid in white. The runners are in various stages of their stride, and the background is a blurred city street with spectators and trees. The overall color palette is warm, dominated by oranges and yellows.

CHARGE

MARATHON NUTRITION

THANK YOU

for downloading this ebook and for your support of Chia Charge & of our belief that food should be more than fuel. I hope you enjoy reading these thoughts and experiences, and if you have time to share with us, please get in touch with comments and pics on the Chia Charge [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, or email me direct timtaylor@chiacharge.co.uk

Happy training *Tim*

CHARGE

MARATHON NUTRITION

ALY DIXON AND STEVE WAY

INTRODUCTION BY TIM TAYLOR

WELCOME

I thought it would be cool to share the thoughts of two of Great Britain's leading runners, who share with us a love of Chia Charge, training and eating.

Believe it or not, they don't live on Chia Charge or Chia Seeds 24/7, they use the Flapjacks where appropriate and enjoy the taste, which as we all know, makes eating a whole lot easier and enjoyable. I'm not sure any of us agree on which Flapjack or Nut Butter is the best flavour and I suspect, you'd struggle to get Steve to share any of his stash!

I'm well aware there are plenty of other brands out there, my personal recommendation is to try everything out in training, the same as your kit, shoes, sleep and pre-race meal. Succeed in planning and you plan to succeed.

You wouldn't run a marathon in new shoes, and the same goes for your fuel. On your long runs start trying out the things for the big day, that way you will avoid hiccups and your confidence on the day will be increased knowing you've left nothing to chance.

I personally appreciate the contribution that Aly Dixon and Steve Way have made by sharing their thoughts and experience around food and running and hope you do too.



TIM TAYLOR RUNNING
THE LONDON MARATHON
April 2012





ALY

The first of our two running contributors is Aly Dixon. A runner for the Sunderland Strollers, she is popular and well known in the North East. Aly is not only a great runner but also an award winning blogger, her blog and bio can be found [here](#). You will see that she shares a lot of her life with the reader, not just your bog standard list of training runs, injuries and races. After a tough year, with a lot of hard and fast training directed towards the Commonwealth Games (including an injury picked up during the Commonwealth games in Glasgow), Aly has recently had a further look at her gait and shoes, and is hoping to bounce back better than ever in 2015.



NUTRITION- DAY TO DAY AND RACE SPECIFIC

ALY DIXON

I regularly get asked about my eating habits. People like to know how I fuel myself from day to day during high mileage training, and my refuelling strategies during marathons and ultra. I often get the impression that people expect to hear something more exciting than what they get, hidden secrets that enable me to train and race how I do.

Unfortunately it couldn't be further from the truth. I guess it could be partially due to my "previous life" and all the bad eating habits I had for the first 33 years. My diet could possibly be described as the chink in my armour.

When building up to a target race I tend to get into a repetitive routine to help keep me on the straight and narrow.

For breakfast: A double portion of Dorset Cereals Proper Raspberry Porridge.

For lunch: Ham/Avocado/Cucumber sandwich with a packet of French Fries crisps for lunch is almost guaranteed. (I did say I wasn't great, my idea of healthy is low fat crisps!)

Evening meals: Usually consist of very large portions of pasta/rice/potatoes in the form of chilli, bolognese, steak etc and then a Muller Rice for pudding.

Snacks: If I need to snack between meals to fill in the calories then it normally comes in the form of fresh fruit or handfuls of dry cereal. I don't drink tea or coffee but I do have a rather unfortunate addiction to Pepsi Max, one of the vices I'm afraid I haven't managed to kick.

Any kind of hard session is normally followed directly by a chocolate milkshake (either Yazoo or Friji) and a Chia Charge flapjack.



When it comes to refuelling on a training run, anything up to the marathon distance I tend to do calorie free but as soon as I go beyond 26.2 miles I ensure that I'm keeping my energy levels topped up.

I split my nutritional strategy into 3 categories:

Solid Food - Chia Charge Flapjacks

Slightly Less Solid - Cliff Shot Bloks

Gels - SiS Go Orange Gel

If my body will allow it then I will take on solid food as a preference but as the intensity of my running increases and the miles clock over I get to the point where I have to move to the shot bloks and then the gels. If I'm racing anything up to the marathon distance then I would only use gels as the pace at which I'm running makes it so hard to consume anything else. When racing ultras I will take the same strategy as my training runs, taking on the Flapjacks for as long as possible before switching to the alternatives.



My policy is always to take on the calories as early as possible in a 100km race as I know that once I get past around 40 miles my body starts to reject everything. I don't get on well with sports drinks during races so just tend to stick to plain old water for my hydration needs.

So that's it then, not rocket science is it!



STEVE

Steve Way hit the headlines earlier this year, running a fast time in the Virgin London Marathon and then breaking the 15 year old British 100km Road Record by 5 minutes, with a time 6:19. He then represented England at the 2014 Commonwealth games.

Steve has a terrific story, of 'fat lad to thin lad' as he puts it. Not long ago he put down his Marlboros, picked up a Garmin and after 7 years was representing his country at the Commonwealth games.

Time permitting Steve is very engaging with anyone who contacts him on his [blog](#).

There are numerous tit bits of advice on there that he has shared freely with everyone. Also he has done bits for charity this year, raising money for a local hospice with his 'The Way of Steve - Don't Be Sh*t' t-shirts which sold out rather quickly (this is a hint for the next version Steve, as mine are getting worn out).

Over to Steve...

MARATHON NUTRITION

STEVE WAY

We've all heard the horror stories about runners hitting 'the wall' during the later stages of a marathon. This is something that affects all runners. Whilst a lot of the pro runners will negative split a marathon, around 3 out of 4 total runners will run the second half of the race significantly slower than the first half with most of these runners slowing dramatically after the 20 mile mark. Thankfully this is something which can be avoided.

At this stage I am going to point out that I am not a nutritionist and I have no qualifications in that area but I have developed a good base knowledge through a lot of research on the subject and a great deal of personal experience. So whilst what I am about to say may not be scientifically proven, it is practically proven during my marathon journey.

The most common cause of hitting the wall is muscle glycogen depletion. We all read/hear about runners 'carbo loading' before a half marathon or marathon. Many people will happily participate in this practice; I mean we all love a good excuse to stuff our faces! However, the aim of the carbo load is to stuff our muscles and liver as full as possible with glycogen to fuel us through our long distance events.

Most runners will have enough glycogen stored to fuel them through about 2 hours of aerobic exercise and therefore don't really need to do an extensive carbo load for anything up to a half marathon. A slight increase in carb based foods during the few days leading up to the event will be enough to see you through the run. However, if you are looking at a time over 2 hours it may be worth it to significantly increase your carb intake in those last few days.

There are various methods of carb loading out there, so it may take time to find the method that is right for you. A popular technique is called the Carb Bleed, a method where you don't eat any carbs from the Sunday before the race through to the Thursday morning and then eat very high carbohydrate content through to the morning of the race. Another method is the Western Australia protocol where you eat more or less normally up to 36 hours before the race and then slightly increase your carb intake before completing a 3 minute hard effort on the day before your race and then taking on board a high carbohydrate content for the rest of that day.

Each protocol has its pros and cons and some people prefer each for different reasons. I personally prefer to use the Western Australia protocol as I feel it gives me the right level of glycogen needed (I've slowed slightly over the last few miles of a marathon but never hit the wall) and it also doesn't leave me feeling bloated like some of the protocols do through the excessive amount of carbs ingested.

Whichever protocol you look to use, it is worth testing it out during your training to make sure that you are comfortable with it and it doesn't cause any gastric distress. There is a lot of information out there so it's always useful to do a quick Google search.

No matter which method you choose to follow, the type of foods are the same. The ideal foods are those that are high in carbs but low in fat and fibre, as they can cause mid race stomach troubles and you don't want that! Things like rice, pasta, bagels, bread, potatoes, porridge, maltloaf and Flapjack are all great foods to use for carb loading.

For me, this is what I've found works best:

For breakfast: A large bowl of porridge with honey, raisins and banana.

For lunch: Chicken and rice and dinner of jacket potato plus snacks of malt loaf, bagels, Chia Charge Flapjacks and rice pudding along with high carb drinks generally does the trick for the day.

Before and then on race day: a breakfast of porridge with honey, raisins and banana along with two slices of toast with jam about 3 hours before the race is ideal.

DURING THE RACE

It is important to 'top up' your levels by using things like energy gels and carbohydrate drinks. Most people will take a drink every 5k or so and a gel around every 10k.

There are loads of different gels on the market. They all do the same job but are made up differently and don't all agree with everyone's stomachs. They are worth trying out in training before the big day. Find out which gel will be handed out on course from the organisers and try this in training, if you don't like it, you can then take your own along for use.

If I use a gel, I prefer a thinner more watery gel so that I can swallow it easily without the need to wash it down with water. Some of the gels are quite thick and may be easy to swallow in the early stages but come the last quarter of the race when your mouth and throat are already dry, swallowing a thick gloopy gel may prove difficult.

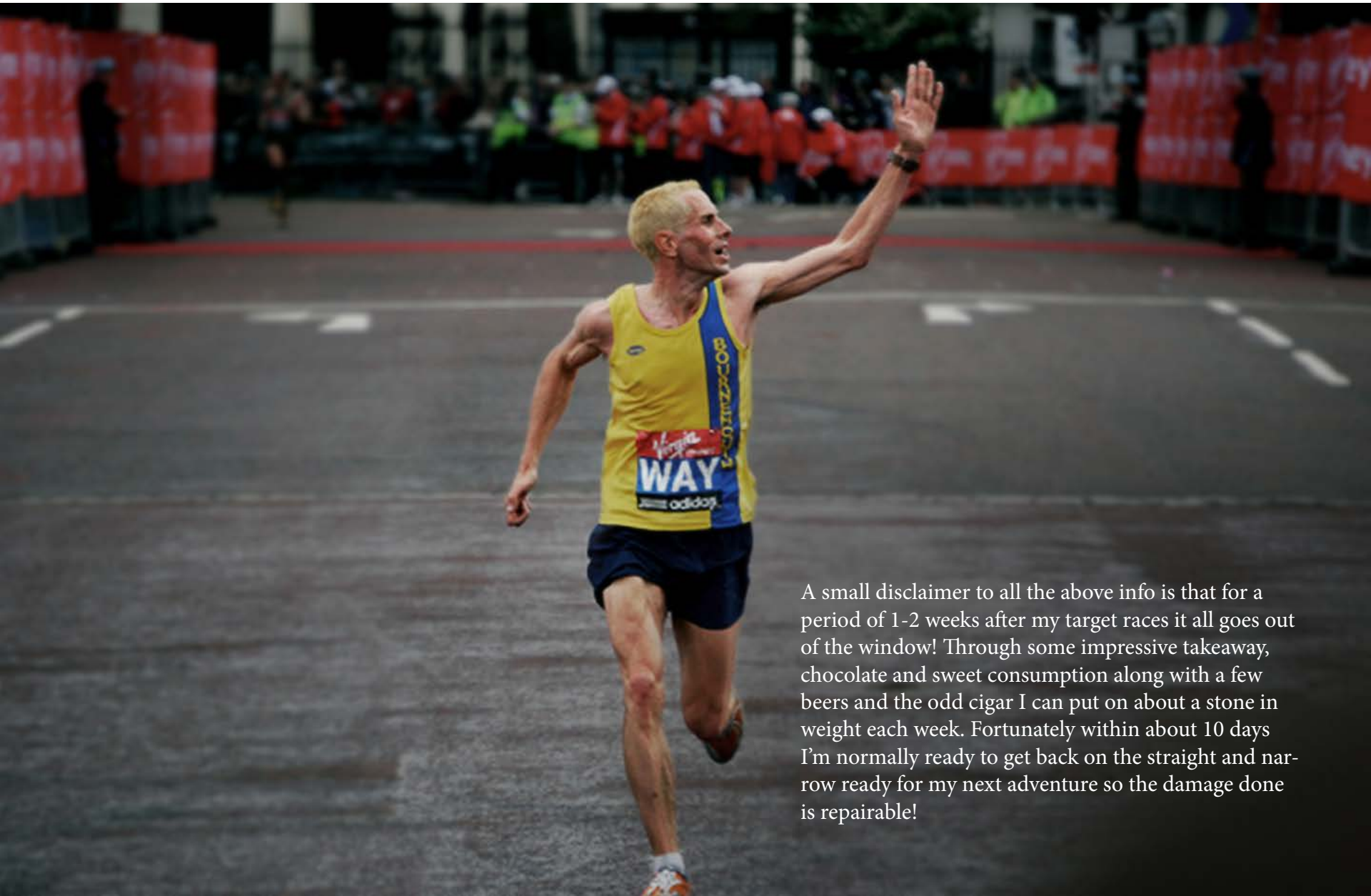
Another thing people use and races often hand out on course are Jelly Beans or Jelly Babies. I find these great for a, more or less, instant energy kick. Not only do they taste good (if you like Jelly Babies/Jelly Beans) but you can chew them once or twice and then swallow them quite easily on the move. I find a handful as I feel like I'm starting to fade a little around 22/23 miles gives me a good boost to get me through to the end.

HYDRATION

Of course through all of this don't neglect your hydration. All through training and in the week leading up to your race make sure that you are well hydrated. Ideally you should be sipping on water throughout the day and aim to drink around 2 litres a day. The day before the race make sure that you are well hydrated, especially if the weather is going to be warm.

On the morning of a marathon I drink 500ml of water on waking and then sip on another 300ml right up to an hour before race start. During the race it is best to take on water early even if you feel that you do not yet need it. By the time you do feel like you need it, it could be too late! Don't overdo it and gulp down a full 500ml bottle, just take a few mouthfuls. Most races will have water every few miles, if it is warm take a bottle at each station, take a mouthful and splash some over your head, neck and wrists to help keep you cool.

Finally, muscle glycogen will deplete quicker if your pace is erratic. Therefore it is important to learn how to pace yourself correctly. You are more likely to run a faster time by starting steady and picking up over the second half (negative split), or running at an even pace throughout, rather than sprint off at 10k pace and hoping that you can hold on – believe me, you won't last beyond half way in a marathon with that strategy!



A small disclaimer to all the above info is that for a period of 1-2 weeks after my target races it all goes out of the window! Through some impressive takeaway, chocolate and sweet consumption along with a few beers and the odd cigar I can put on about a stone in weight each week. Fortunately within about 10 days I'm normally ready to get back on the straight and narrow ready for my next adventure so the damage done is repairable!

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