

MOTIVATIONAL TIPS

I find it useful to think about the following ways to motivate yourself (these are ideas I use when advising runners).

High-level long-term motivators

1. Set a (SMART) goal - e.g. " I want to get a champs start qualifying time at the London Marathon", or "I want to beat (someone's name) at the Great North Run this year"
2. Use what economists call "strategic pre-commitment" – i.e. make it harder to back out by e.g. making a commitment to raise money for charity, or announcing your target to your coach/club-mates/work colleagues/family.
3. Make a realistic plan for achieving your goal – which helps you tick off the steps towards the goal as you do each day and each week's training.
4. Choose a peer-group with similar goals – other athletes are best, obviously. Mixing with obese couch-potatoes can sap your motivation to train, eat healthily, drink moderately etc. They will think you're weird so you start to question your own sanity. Similarly, read running magazines and runners' biographies, rather than those of unhealthy underachievers. Watch great runners on TV when you can, and train with others - group training spurs you on to greater efforts.
5. Keep a training diary - you do this already, but it is very satisfying & motivating to look over the miles you've logged when you start to doubt yourself. Note any improvements (e.g. pace for a given session, perceived effort when running up a hill or on a recovery run etc) to pore over later.
6. Seek out supporting evidence to reinforce why working towards your goal is a positive achievement – e.g. 70% of adult English males and 58% of females now have a BMI >25, and the number is increasing. Your running is your personal stand on the obesity crisis. If you have children or care for young people in some way, know you giving them an excellent role model when they see you running. Research the many health benefits (mental & physical) of running. But do avoid over- smugness with non-runners!
7. Set milestones on the way to your long term goal – e.g. to set pbs in key races leading up to marathon, such as ½ marathon, 10 K etc.
8. Imagine what success will feel like – often.

Day-today micro-motivators

9. Break the task into smaller chunks, and if even that seems too daunting, promise yourself just to start it, and then see how you feel. For example, it's cold/dark/wet outside, you've had a hard day and perhaps you might be coming down with something - or is your mind playing tricks on you? Put on your kit and tell yourself you'll run for 10 minutes and if you still feel bad, you'll turn for home. Rarely will you make that turn!

10. Remember how good you feel after a good session: there is nothing quite like the deep,deep peace of the soul that comes from having done your long run and feeling tired.
11. Think about getting one up on your rivals: It's cold & wet outside, so they might skip training, but you are getting those miles in. Or, more likely you are supposed to be doing some core stability exercises today and you hate them. But if you do them, and they don't, you'll be more efficient & less injury-prone & therefore, FASTER as a runner.
12. Make your training a routine - e.g. its 6:30 am on a Monday morning, so it's time for my recovery run.
Don't question it.
13. Promise yourself a reward e.g. a rest; a pat on the back; a gloat to your running mates; or even a hot shower and a good massage.

Good luck - I hope you find all this helpful.

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