



Tired of Being Tired? »
Fight Fatigue and Support Immune System
Dr. Marcus Elliott M.D. Harvard Medical Doctor/Founder of P3
Try It Free*
FRS healthy energy



SPECIAL OFFER
THE GOOD FOOD ISSUE
Runners
Eat Your Best
5 Weeks to Your Best
SUMMER BODY
RUN
ONLY \$1 AN ISSUE

RUNNER'S WORLD

[SUBSCRIBE](#)
[Log In or Register](#) to join the RW Community

 [SEARCH](#)
[Forums](#) [Blogs](#) [Video](#) [Tools](#) [Training Log](#) [Beginners](#) [Women's](#) [Race Directors](#) [Contact Us](#)
[HOME](#)
[TRAINING](#)
[RACES & PLACES](#)
[SHOES & GEAR](#)
[INJURY PREVENTION](#)
[NUTRITION & WEIGHT LOSS](#)
[MOTIVATION](#)
[RW STORE](#)
[MORE](#)
[SUBSCRIBE](#)

RW DAILY

About This Blog



RW Daily

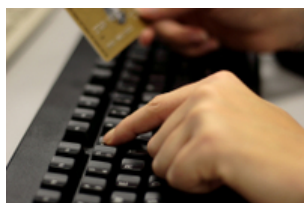
Rants, raves, reports, roundups, and other bits of nonsense -- some of it useful -- from the editors of RW and RW.com.

« [Clown Marathon Record Falls, Hilariously](#) | [Main](#) | [New Rx for Pain: Scotch and Morphine](#) »

January 28, 2009

World's Dumbest Impulse Buy? Marathon Entry

Mark Remy



Holy Moses, what have I done? I've signed up for a fall marathon—on the spur of the moment.

Committing to a 26.2-mile race shouldn't be something you just do on a whim, like grabbing a copy of *People* at the supermarket checkout line. And yet there I was, one minute reading an e-mail about the [Lehigh Valley Hospital Marathon](#) this September and the next, clicking a link to sign up for it. Before I knew it, I was digging the Visa card out of my wallet and punching my keyboard. Then clicking SUBMIT.

It was almost as if I were floating above, watching myself do it.

What was I thinking? Was my brain scrambled by the hypnotically jumbled e-mail I got that led to this decision? (See actual e-mail, right; to truly appreciate, click to enlarge.)

Or maybe the brain damage occurred earlier in the day. I remember thinking idly, after my noontime run,

What if I ran a marathon, like, next weekend? With no training? Just to see what would happen?

It was a good noontime run. Which probably contributed to my hubris.

The most likely explanation, I think, is the simplest: I am just another addict, jonesing for a fix. My last marathon was in spring 2008. I need another. I need the sacrifice and the pain, and the clarity it brings.

And now, thanks to the magic of e-mail and secure online transactions, I've got my wish. What's the line from *Apocalypse Now*? "I wanted a mission, and for my sins, they gave me one"?

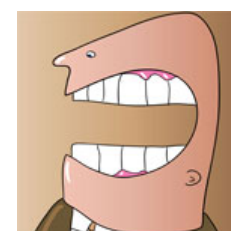
Lord, have mercy.

Wish me luck.

Posted at 09:01 AM | [Permalink](#)

« [Clown Marathon Record Falls, Hilariously](#) | [Main](#) | [New Rx for Pain: Scotch and Morphine](#) »

Comments



RECENT POSTS

[Running: Now That's Scary](#)

[The Evolution of Running](#)

[We're Moving!](#)

[Running 911](#)

[Today's Bad Idea: Running + Competitive Eating](#)

[Caption This Photo! No. 27](#)

[TV Tune-In Alert!](#)

[7 Marathons, 7 Continents, 7 Days](#)

[World's Most Painful Birthday Gift](#)

[Great Grandma Was a Great Runner](#)

ARCHIVES

[February 2009](#)

[January 2009](#)

[December 2008](#)

[November 2008](#)

[October 2008](#)

[September 2008](#)

[August 2008](#)

[July 2008](#)

[June 2008](#)

[May 2008](#)

MORE BLOGS

[See All Blogs](#)

RSS FEEDS

 [Subscribe to this blog](#)

[Click this link to view](#)

[this blog as XML.](#)

Ha, nice! I did the same thing 4 months ago and just finished the Carlsbad Marathon. Yes, it was a random goal achieved. Guess what I just did now? Impulse sign up for a Half-Ironman Triathlon. Addict, for sure.

Posted by: Mark | [Jan 28, 2009 9:14:40 AM](#)

The day after New Year's, I decided to go out and run 26.2 by myself basically on a whim. I think the weather reached a high of 5F or so and windchills never got above zero. Probably wasn't the best idea, but it was fun!

Posted by: Rob | [Jan 28, 2009 9:19:53 AM](#)

well - a look at that email and i would have been running for my purse too mark. they get you with all that sap about helping your community and then with the line about how BART YASSO redesigned the course. and you think "oh i could help out the hospital and run a great marathon and it costs so much less than chicago..." but for cripes sake - it's so far away, you have plenty of time to train. you'll be great!

Posted by: shellerz | [Jan 28, 2009 9:44:20 AM](#)

Props to you Mark! I signed up a month ahead of a 'Triple Crown' race last fall. It was a night 10K, the next day a 25K, the next day a 50K all on trails. The longest I had ran prior to the races was 15 miles and that was only one time. Still nursing a nagging knee pain from those races though, but well worth it!

Posted by: jb | [Jan 28, 2009 10:05:19 AM](#)

SUCKERZ! (Myself included) lol. I registered for a half marathon a few weeks ago. It's in September so I have plenty of time, but I've never run before on a regular basis and thought I HATED running until I started, which was after registering for the half marathon. I started telling everyone I know about the marathon- as motivation and to ensure I don't do anything stupid, like drop out or quit. Now I'm stuck with running and loving it!

Posted by: TRCANADAROCKS | [Jan 28, 2009 10:11:57 AM](#)

I ran this marathon last year and while the course will be different this year, you won't regret it! It is a GORGEOUS course and VERY well organized! I plan on at least doing a leg of the relay this year since I'm running a marathon the following weekend.

Posted by: colleen | [Jan 28, 2009 10:14:59 AM](#)

Good luck, Mark! I'm thinking you may find a colleague or two around your office who can give you some tips and keep you motivated; just a hunch :-)

Posted by: KenG | [Jan 28, 2009 10:16:20 AM](#)

I am in training for the Frederick Marathon on 03 May 09 and I am already doing research for which marathon I am going to run in the fall. I look at all these sites and e-mails with butterflies in my stomach on which I am going to choose. So far I am leaning towards the Steamtown Marathon, looks like a good option to qualify for Boston.

Posted by: Sean | [Jan 28, 2009 10:24:40 AM](#)

Maybe I'm not understanding the freak out you're experiencing. It's in Sept., almost 8 months away. You don't think you can be ready by then? You knew you were going to run another one, you stated that. Are you just freaking out because you picked this one so easily and without dwelling on the decision?

Posted by: Get Gone | [Jan 28, 2009 10:46:20 AM](#)

Impulse buy?! Ah, c'mon Mark, running is what you do. That was not on impulse, that was out of pure habit! You'll kick booty, as usual.

Posted by: SLillie | [Jan 28, 2009 10:49:19 AM](#)

Impulse?! You've got 7 months to train! Why are you so worried about this being hard? Now, next weekend, as you mentioned, I can understand being impulse.

JB -- are you talking about the Rock Cut Hobo Races?

Posted by: lindsay | [Jan 28, 2009 11:39:03 AM](#)

I am afraid I will have the impulse to sign up for Chicago this weekend. I keep thinking that it would not be a good idea due to cost, travel, and the large amounts of people, but, all that said, I am afraid that I will be hitting submit soon. Is there a rehab for marathonng? I'm thinking it is sitting on a couch drinking a beer.

Posted by: Jason | [Jan 28, 2009 11:44:25 AM](#)

Now THAT is funny Mark.

I plan to do the same thing with the Marine Corp marathon. Something about paying up front makes the commitment more real. Have a great race.

Posted by: Chris | [Jan 28, 2009 11:44:34 AM](#)

Good luck.

I am recovering from an injury and adding back on the mileage. For some reason I signed up an 8k in March. Right now, I am up to 2 mi.



Posted by: Sara | Jan 28, 2009 11:48:34 AM

I am biting my nails to keep from signing up for one, ANY one! I am trying to hold out for my first marathon to be Philly, but I feel like it won't be "real" until I pay the money-then I can get down to being really motivated!

Posted by: Erica | Jan 28, 2009 12:05:42 PM

I thought this column idea came from AllieRN's thread.

I got that same email.. I hit delete.. I'm waiting for the MCM registration to open.

Posted by: foxbite2 | Jan 28, 2009 12:27:48 PM

I almost hit the submit button for the Niagara Falls International Marathon the other day (it's in October) but decided to wait since I can't make up my mind whether to do the full or half. I need to see if I'm coaching for Team in Training's fall season before I decide.

Posted by: Laresa | Jan 28, 2009 12:39:42 PM

I did the same thing, but with the Richmond Marathon.

I registered in December, almost a year before the race date itself, just because I saw that I'd be saving a bunch of money by registering early.

Whether that's an impulse buy or a fit of frugality I'm not sure -- all I know is I have a marathon to run in November.

Posted by: Steph | Jan 28, 2009 12:42:51 PM

I define an "impulse buy" as buying something the first time you see it, without previously deciding that you were going to purchase it. It has nothing to do with the cost, or how far in the future the event happens to be.

Having said that, I have never before considered the motivational factor of pre-paying for a race. Interesting...

Posted by: D-Rod | Jan 28, 2009 1:07:54 PM

I got you beat. In Dec, I signed up for a 50k for Valentine's Day. My long run to date is 14 miles. Over-raced and under-trained is how I seem to live. It's not really that impulsive if you have 6 mo to train.

Posted by: Sam | Jan 28, 2009 1:08:40 PM

I did the same. Only I entered on my birthday after having a few too many beverages while celebrating. Imagine my surprise the next day when I have a \$50 charge on my card.

Posted by: Nick | Jan 28, 2009 1:51:28 PM

I did the exact same thing: signed up for my FIRST marathon (Portland) at the age of 44 and I haven't run at all for 2 years. BUT I knew if I submitted that form and paid the entrance fee, I'll have the motivation to complete it!

Here's to impulse marathon-registration!

Posted by: kate | Jan 28, 2009 1:54:00 PM

Lindsay- Correct, the Hobo races are great races put on by an awesome group of people.

Posted by: jb | Jan 28, 2009 2:12:05 PM

Speaking of marathons, Road Runners Club of America just announced that Milwaukee's Lakefront Marathon is the Road Race of the Year. Any shout-out to them? This race was the same day as Chicago in 2007 and was run excellently despite the heat.

Posted by: R | Jan 28, 2009 2:13:52 PM

I'm there right now. I signed up for Napa Marathon as my marathon #14 back in November. Sidelined by injuries this month, it looks like I won't make it on race day. \$100.00 down. I think they have a deferment policy. Hopefully I can run it in 2010.

Posted by: lovewoof | Jan 28, 2009 5:05:57 PM

I'm there right now. I signed up for Napa Marathon as my marathon #14 back in November. Sidelined by injuries this month, it looks like I won't make it on race day. \$100.00 down. I think they have a deferment policy. Hopefully I can run it in 2010.

Posted by: lovewoof | Jan 28, 2009 5:07:10 PM

I'm signed up for Boston. It wasn't an impulse but more of a long term plan. I am considering running a marathon 2 weeks before and another 3 weeks after. Still not an impulse since I'm thinking about it but definitely an indication of an addiction.

Posted by: kingcoffee | Jan 28, 2009 6:08:55 PM

A lot depends on several things. 1) Are you willing to commit to run a race X number of months in the future and train for it? 2) What is your injury history? If you're healthy, and willing to train, fine, go ahead.

Personally, with my injury history, I would not commit to running a marathon until I complete my last long run without any problems (which is three weeks out). If the event sells out six months early, or they want a \$50 late fee, I'll do another one. There are plenty of them around, fortunately.

Posted by: Elcontador | Jan 28, 2009 6:23:41 PM

Good Luck Mark! I did the same thing and then had to buy plane tickets, and hotel. At least yours is only away!

Posted by: Ann Marie | [Jan 28, 2009 7:46:39 PM](#)

Congrats!!! That's exciting. My first marathon, was the Stowe marathon in VT. I totally signed up on a whim. I think the longest run I'd done at the time was 7 miles. My family didn't even really believe me...That was the best part of finishing!

Posted by: Carlee | [Jan 28, 2009 9:14:08 PM](#)

Ha. It should work out well. I ran the Flying Pig Marathon after deciding to do it the day before (granted I wasn't in bad shape but certainly not marathon shape haha). It went surprisingly well until the last few miles so you should be fine that you have so much time to train!! :)

Posted by: Torrie | [Jan 28, 2009 9:20:22 PM](#)

Naw, that's not a dumb impulse buy, Mark. You've done it before. Now, if you weren't a runner, that would be dumb.

Posted by: Lee | [Jan 29, 2009 1:45:14 AM](#)

I understand that. I'm tempted all the time. If I gave in every single time it would mean I was wealthy enough to ditch a house and buy another on a whim.
Or I'd be in big financial trouble

Posted by: Mike | [Jan 29, 2009 4:10:19 AM](#)

Next time step it up...can you say Ironman

Posted by: JD Noll | [Jan 29, 2009 11:39:51 AM](#)

i'm feeling the same about a triathlon i registered for...there's no refunds, so i guess i have to go...! I've never even ran a race before, and don't have much experience on a bike or swimming...excited but so nervous!

Posted by: nicole | [Jan 29, 2009 2:46:53 PM](#)

Best of luck! I hope you beat the odds, but my money is against you.

Posted by: dave wallace | [Jan 29, 2009 3:49:07 PM](#)

JB - I plan on running it this year!! Well, at least the 25k. :-)

Posted by: lindsay | [Jan 29, 2009 6:34:41 PM](#)

I was in Brazil for work and got an e-mail from my bf to reserve Aug 30 on my calendar b/c he had spontaneously signed up for Ironman Canada! I'm not sure how you "accidentally" sign up for an Ironman....but it will be fun!

Posted by: Stacey | [Jan 30, 2009 5:07:41 PM](#)

I'm giving my bf the authority to (try to) stop me if I even start babbling about signing up for Chicago, starting tomorrow. Even though the last two years have had craptacular weather, it's the only marathon I ever do, since the starting line is steps from my front door.

Posted by: Mars | [Jan 31, 2009 7:26:59 PM](#)

i'm from the lehigh valley too - living elsewhere at the moment - but i read your blog and now i'm pretty sure i'm going to sign up for the race! oh no! i guess it'll be nice to have lots of family and friends cheering you on. see you out there!

Posted by: andrea | [Feb 4, 2009 2:16:23 PM](#)

Heres spur of the moment for you.

I started running this past April.

Did my first 1/2 marathon in Sept and the day after signed up for my first marathon in Paris in April. It will be exactly one year to the week that I started running. Now that I have only 8 more weeks, and this Canadian winter has been insane. I am starting to think, this may not have been one of my better ideas!

Linnea

Posted by: Linnea Duignan | [Feb 5, 2009 8:57:06 AM](#)

Post a comment

Name:

Email Address: (Not displayed with comment.)

URL:

Remember personal info?