

NO HALF MEASURES

After months of anticipation, web editor Rhalou Allerhand tackled her first half marathon – and lived to tell the tale

● Rhalou (right) with *WR* sub editor Claire

MAKE MINE A HALF FEELING INSPIRED? HERE ARE OUR TOP TIPS FOR AN ENJOYABLE HALF MARATHON...



MAKE TIME

Choose a race that gives you plenty of time to train. You can prepare for a half marathon following an eight-week plan, assuming you can already comfortably run five or six miles.

SLOW AND STEADY

While training, remember not to increase the distance of your long weekend run by more than ten per cent each week. This will help prevent injury.

TAPER YOUR TRAINING

It's vital to rest the week before your race, so you are fully recharged for the big day. So, do no more than a gentle two- to three-mile mid-week jog, and then put your feet up.

DON'T PANIC!

It's natural to be hit with an attack of nerves prior to race day, but keep believing in yourself. If you've followed your training plan, you'll be fine – and even if you've missed a few sessions, the adrenaline on the day will get you round.

BREAK IT UP

The thought of 13.1 miles can be pretty daunting when you're standing on the start line, so mentally break the race up into manageable chunks. A half marathon is simply four 5K runs (OK, a little over). Simple!

'Making it round before they re-opened the roads to traffic sounded like a big enough accomplishment to me'

Having discovered running less than a year ago, I'm pleased to announce I completed my first half marathon, London's Run To The Beat, in a not-too-shabby two hours 20 minutes! This officially proves that miracles can happen.

I only started running regularly after joining the *Women's Running* team, so if you'd asked me this time last year if I thought I could run 13.1 miles non-stop (well almost – a girl's got to pee), I would have laughed out loud. I did eventually fall in love with fitness, but I confess I only really upped my game a couple of weeks before race day, so no one is more surprised than me that I made it round alive.

TRAINING GAME

In the run-up to the big day, the office was abuzz with training plans, personal bests and pre-race tips, but having never run further than a few miles, I resigned myself to the fact I wasn't going to be setting any world records. The veteran runners of the

office all seemed to have a race time in mind, but making it round before they re-opened the roads to traffic sounded like a big enough accomplishment to me.

Then ten days before race day, having not undergone any specific training, I had a minor panic attack (classic rookie reaction) and decided to run home. I work in Hammersmith and live in Bethnal Green, so that's basically the breadth of central London. Throw in some of the busiest intersections in the capital and a million eager tourists, and it's not that far removed from race day. I managed to make it home in under two hours, which gave me confidence for Run To The Beat.

DISCO DIVA

Billed as the music half marathon, there was lots of live music along the course, which really helped as I find a disco beat vital to my running. But even with a dozen sound systems and a fully stocked iPod, with only one large run under my belt, I think it's still safe to say

I was grossly unprepared (not to mention terrified).

ALL SMILES

It was a fairly flat course through the leafy streets of Greenwich and for the most part it went better than I anticipated, but the last couple of miles were a killer. Thank God for supportive colleagues, enthusiastic crowds and Jelly Babies, which I treated myself to every mile, until I finally made it across the finish line with a smile as big as London across my face!

I still can't believe I made it round, let alone in 2:20. Running across the city during rush hour two weeks prior to race day definitely helped, not to mention all the much-needed music to bolster my stride. But strangely I'm now more scared about running a whole marathon next year than I was before the race. I suspect the streets of London will be seeing a lot more of me over the coming months! ■