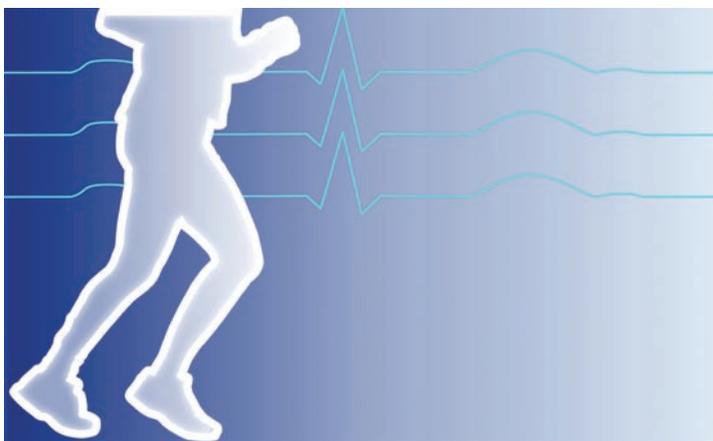


Run for Health

The author, an ardent lover of marathon and a professional runner himself, introduces the members to the healthy habit of running outdoors. Though started running the marathon quite late, i.e. at the age of 59, CA. Hariharan is quite ecstatic about sharing its benefits with the community of accountancy. This brief write-up is a smooth reading on

running with advantage. The Author, 64 now, has already won medals at State-level events in 100, 200 and 400 meters in 2010 and 2011. He has also represented India in international events like Asian Meet held in Malaysia Open Meet in Colombo. At Colombo in 2010, he has bagged medals too in the events of 200 and 400 meters runs. Having run at many national and international marathons, the author successfully persuades us to consider running while sharing his personal zeal on the profits of running. Read on:



Marathon's Brief History

According to AIMS (Association of International Marathons and Distance Races), a member-based organisation of more than 320 of the world's leading distance races from over 95 countries, "in 490 BC, the Persian Army had mustered an estimated 150,000 troops to invade Greece, in order to punish Athens for their part in the Ionian Revolt. Led by General Datis and Artaphernes, their attack was launched from the Marathon gulf. The Athenian forces consisted of 10,000 citizen-soldiers, including 1,000 soldiers from Plataea, and were lead by General Miltiades. The two forces met near the small village of Marathon to the north of Athens, in September 490 BC. The Persian military was considered one of the greatest fighting

forces of the era, and the Athenians were fighting against all odds."

It further states: "Despite being greatly outnumbered the Athenians fought and won the Marathon battle. The casualties were recorded as 192 Athenians, 11 Plataeans and 6,400 Persians. Although the writings do not mention his name, the legend says that a brave Athenian called Pheidippides ran the 40 km (approximately 25 miles) from the battlefield at Marathon to Athens to announce the Greek victory. "Nenikekamen" (We are victorious) or "Niki" (Victory) and then collapsed from exhaustion and died. It is quite possible that he may have also taken part in that battle. The marathon run is commemorating this event."

Why should We Run?

If you ask me *why we should run*, I would say:

- It gives us pleasure. It is a stress buster.
- It makes us feel younger than what we are by being physically fit. We may lose additional weight and become healthier.
- Training for marathon makes us disciplined to follow a particular schedule. It brings a potential in us which we never know we had that before.
- Long distance running gives us enough time to concentrate on our thoughts without any disturbance. Surprisingly, that we may find very good solutions for a number of our problems during those long runs, e.g. like handling a colleague



CA. B. R. Hariharan

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or boss and method of implantation of a recent regulator circular.

- Marathon running in different parts of the globe helps us know people from various professional and cultural communities. It is always very interesting to get to know their aspirations and success stories. During those runs, we can also indulge in other activities like parasailing, jet skiing, etc., in addition to sightseeing.
- Awards such as medals give us a new high and a sense of achievement. Runner's high after finishing a marathon can only be experienced.
- Marathon lets us visit places normally we don't.
- It is fulfilling and responsible when we share our joy of running with others.

Balancing Act

While there are many benefits of running, people, however, do find excuses for not running. Once we start running, we will enjoy and, then, there is no stopping after that. All excuses and disagreements will disappear.

Typically, many of the members appear bespectacled having a moderate to extra-large paunch, which is possibly an outcome of some form of physical lethargy; despite this, some of us may feel better for getting their due compensations. While all of us are good at numbers and balance sheets, we must also aim to stand out and become role models for everybody in our society by becoming health-conscious individuals.

Running Clubs in India

One of the first questions that arise after deciding to run is to know where to start and train, etc., in order to run. And, it is always nice to have partners for training or running. There are many running clubs in India, almost in all cities, where enthusiastic runners gather to run on daily and weekly basis. There are clubs that organise marathon runs in cities across the nation:

- *Running and Living, New Delhi*: Conducts marathon in Shimla, Delhi, Chandigarh, Gurgaon, Jaipur, etc.
- *Auroville Society, Pondicherry*: Conduct annual half, full marathons and 10 km-runs.

While all CAs are good at numbers and balance sheets, we can also aim to stand out by becoming health-conscious individuals before our society.

- *Runners for Life, Bangalore*: Conduct weekly/monthly/annual marathons.
- *Chennai Runners, Chennai*: Conduct daily/weekly/annual marathons in November.
- *Hyderabad Runners Society, Hyderabad*: Conducts weekly runs, hill and cross training, besides half/full (including relay) marathons in August.
- *Hyderabad 10K Foundation, Hyderabad*: Conduct annual half/full marathons in October and 10 km run in November.
- *Vasco Sports Club, Goa*: Conduct annual half marathon in December.
- *Procam International, Mumbai*

Similar clubs exist in cities like Ahmedabad, Pune, Mangalore and Kochi too. In fact, there are *marathon calendars*, which list out marathon events in India as well as in other foreign countries.

International Runs

Berlin Marathon, London Classic Marathon, Paris Marathon, ING New York Marathon, Gold Coast Marathon, Prague (Czechoslovakia), Anghorwatt (Cambodia), Boston Marathon, Chicago Marathon, Athens Marathon and the famous Comrades Race in South Africa are some of the popular international runs. Running international marathons also facilitates us in getting close to different cultures as well as places and monuments.

Sprint running versus marathon

There is a general perception that skill sets required for running a marathon is different from sprinting. But then nothing is impossible provided we have the passion and will power.

Conclusion

In order to break the stereotype of a chartered accountant, our Institute (The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India) can:

- Conduct marathon every year while celebrating the CA Day while including 10 km run, half and full marathons, and make half marathon a mandatory requirement for all chartered accountants who are above the age of 35; and/or
- Create *continuing physical education* (CPE) on the lines of *continuing professional education* (CPE) in order to help its members in keeping physically fit constantly.

Chartered accountants who are serious runners should share their running experiences with their fraternity in order to spread awareness about health benefits of from exercises like running. ■