

Training when tired makes a better athlete

By Lindsey Emery, *Outside*

It's an all-too familiar scene: You're 19 miles into a marathon, feeling good (ish), loose, physically and mentally strong, and then all of a sudden you hit mile 20, and everything starts to crumble. Your muscles ache, your head hurts, your feet throb, your stomach groans – you're fatigued, and you've hit a giant wall. Now you just need to climb over it. No problem, as long as you've taught your body how to do that successfully.

“For many longer events (half-marathons, marathons, Ironmans, etc.), you can't practice the full distance in training,” says Jeff Gaudette, head coach for RunnersConnect. “You need to train tired in order to simulate what the last 10K or so will feel like and to learn how to handle those specific demands during the race.”

Training tired can be tricky, though. There's some evidence to suggest that it increases your risk of injury, notes physiologist Darren Paul, author of a recent injury prevention training article published in *Aspetar Sports Medicine Journal*. “Plus, energy levels are depleted and you become slower in your reaction and decision-making time, which will also likely impact your ability to perform.” Approach it properly, however, and it may make you a better athlete. “Training through this response results in better maintenance of strength and improved postural control.”

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