

Those people who know me well, know that I am a runner. I ran in high school and some during college but once the career kicked in with family to boot, there didn't seem to be much time for running. There always seemed to be more important things than putting on running shoes and logging the miles.

One night about three years ago I got out of bed (if you're over 40 you know why) and let the dog out. Right after the dog went out I found myself sitting on the bathroom floor kind of tingling. I thought to myself, "That was weird!" and shook it off and went back to bed. I did not figure it out till later that day that I had actually passed out and then awakened on the floor.

So I scheduled a doctor's appointment to figure out what was wrong and, after an extremely thorough exam, he said that my blood pressure was kind of high and thought I should be on medication. This was his only explanation for me passing out besides standing up too quick, which did not make sense because I

had let the dog out first.

I did not like the idea of taking pills and asked if there was any other way to bring my blood pressure down.

The doctor said, "Yes, you can try changing your diet and exercising more and that may have an effect on your blood pressure."

The doctor gave me four weeks to see if I could get my blood pressure down. So I changed my diet and started running again.

I joined a local running group three days a week for runs before work. My blood pressure is down and the diet, well it's better but not perfect. The running group trains for marathons and of course talked me into running one.

Last year I did my first marathon (Marathon of the Palm Beaches) for my 40th birthday. Some birthday present! I hit the legendary "wall" at mile 23 and cramped up like I never have before. After lying down three times trying to work out the cramps and looking a lot like a fish out of water, flopping around on hot pavement, I was finally able to finish with a time of 4 hours and 20 minutes.

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Not being satisfied with my time, I signed up to do another marathon this year and selected the Jacksonville Marathon. Part of my training was to run 22 miles on the Saturday morning three weeks before the marathon in Jacksonville. So the group suggested instead of running 22 miles on Saturday, wait until the next day and run 26.2 miles in Cocoa Beach in the Space Coast Marathon. What's another 4 miles, right? It will be a training run, they said. Then you can run the Palm Beach half marathon the next week as part of your tapering off to the big event.

Oh, it was real easy signing up for these marathons on the Internet. Just point and click and the dollars are taken from your bank account and name added to the list of other people running to get a tee shirt that you will never wear. So I signed up for two marathons and a half-marathon this year and they are all within three weeks of one another. Not the brightest thing I have ever done. To date I have completed the Space Coast marathon (Better time thankfully at 3:49:08) and the Palm Beach half-marathon and now just one more to go.

My IT band (ilial-tibial muscle from hip to knee) is killing me, three toenails are black and I am quickly finding out that the body does not recover as quickly at forty-something as well as it did when I was in my twenties.

Here's the point: Running marathons can sometimes be like managing golf courses. Signing up for marathons is easy just like saying we are environmental stewards. Actually completing the marathon in reality is far more difficult. Just like taking the time to use small hand equipment to spot spray lake banks or using walking spreaders to keep fertilizer out of the ponds and maybe taking some turf areas out of play and converting them to native areas requiring fewer inputs.

I'm not saying that at the end of the day your work should be as exhausting as running a marathon, but when you go that extra mile to do the right things for the right reasons, it can be just as rewarding.

## The Marathon Man



Craig Weyandt  
FGCSA President