

training. "Some people think they can muster up the energy and the motivation to finish the race without preparation," says Dr. Edward Fryman, medical director for the Long Island Marathon. "They're wrong. You cannot do an 8-mile-long run and anticipate that on race morning you're suddenly going to be able to bring up another five miles."

Those interested in doing the popular 13.1-mile half marathon (3,000 runners completed the half in last year's race, as opposed to 400 in the full) should plan to complete at least a 10-mile training run this weekend, preferably 11-12.

Don't wait until the weekend before the race; the body generally does not make meaningful adaptations to endurance training in less than 10-14 days. As with the bike tour, you might want to throw in some hills during your training. The new course for this year's race includes a few hills, the most significant of which is at 9.5 miles, along Wantagh Avenue. Technical race director David Katz says the hills will give this typically flat and monotonous race "character." He's right - but they'll give you fits if you haven't trained for them.

Even the slower finishers in the half-marathon, however, will be done in two to three hours. The average time for completion of the Great Saunter is 10 to 11 hours. That's a long time to be outdoors on your feet. To dress for the weather at a time of year when conditions can fluctuate greatly, Wright recommends wearing shorts or loose-fitting pants, T-shirt and a windbreaker that can be removed if the temperatures climb. Footwear on the Great Saunter varies, but whatever you wear needs to be street-tested. "You don't have to be in great shape, but you have to be used to walking on pavement," Wright says.

This is what Jen Bertalon has been trying to do as she gets ready to embark on her second saunter. She's got a new pair of walking shoes, and she's been putting them to use. She did a 13-mile training walk along the Bethpage Parkway bike path on April 9, and she plans a 20-miler this weekend. She's also planning to rely on trail mix this time, not lunch meat, to make sure she has sufficient calories.

"We were in bad shape at the end of last year's walk," Bertalon admits. "I plan on being much better prepared this year."

Signing up for a chance to walk, run or pedal

The first weekend of May is traditionally a weekend when New Yorkers and Long Islanders get out and walk, run or pedal in three major events. (This year, another established event is being held on that date as well.)

The 21st annual Great Saunter: May 6, 7:30 a.m.; register at 212-330-7686 or www.shorewalkers.org (suggested \$10 donation to Shorewalkers). Meet at Heartland Brewery, South Street and Fulton Street, Manhattan.

Good to remember: You don't have to do the entire 32-mile walk. Check the Web site for the route and designated rendezvous points.

The 29th annual Five Boro Bike Tour: May 7, 8 a.m., register at 212-932-2453 or www.BikeNewYork.org; fee \$45; \$55 day of event).

Good to remember: Tour director Steven Taylor recommends bicyclists from Long Island drive to the finish on Staten Island, park and take the morning ferry to the start at Battery Park. "You avoid delays on the afternoon ferry," he says.

The 34th annual Long Island Marathon/Half Marathon: May 7, 8 a.m., register at 516-572-0248, www.thelimarathon.com; \$40; \$50 late registration, May 5-6).

Good to remember: Organizers recommend parking at Eisenhower Park, where the race finishes, and walking a half mile to the new start, on Charles Lindbergh Boulevard, adjacent to the Nassau Coliseum.

On May 2, a "Last Minute Running Clinic" will be held for Long Island Marathon/Half Marathon participants: 8 a.m. at the Plainview-Old Bethpage Public Library, 999 Old Country Rd., Plainview. No advance registration necessary. Call 516-349-7646 for more information.

The 16th annual Brooklyn Biathlon: May 7, 8 a.m., register at 845-247-0271 or www.nytc.org; \$55; \$60 day of race.

Good to remember: It's a 2-mile run, 11-mile bike ride and another 2-mile run in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. There are many rules regarding drafting, transitions, etc.; visit the Web site for that important information.

- JOHN HANC