



## ***Is 2010 the year for your first Half-Marathon?***

*By Kendra Cendana, B.S. Exercise Science, Sports Nutrition Specialist*

You have felt the rush of excitement and accomplishment of finishing a 5k and now have started to wonder what it would take to do a half-marathon in 2010. As the largest growing race for recreational runners, the 13.1 miles of a half-marathon can be just the challenge you are looking for.

With so many half-marathons held in Northern California, you can race locally or make a weekend of it. Just this October, I went with many first half-marathoners to San Francisco for the Nike Women's Half Marathon. With 10 weeks of training leading up to the fun filled weekend, we were all rewarded with Tiffany necklaces at the finish line.

For beginner runners with the ability to run 3 miles 3 times a week, a training program should be 12-14 weeks. For a runner with a base of a 6 mile long run, 8-10 weeks will be adequate time to train for a successful finish.

A training program should consist of 3 days of running and 2-3 days of cross training/strength training including intense stretching to avoid injuries. On run days incorporate a speed day, a tempo run and a long run. Your longest run should be 10-11 miles. Be sure to give yourself a step back rest week every 4-5 weeks to allow the body adequate recovery. Try to run a 5k early on in your training as well as a 12k later on to test your race preparation and pace (hint: Run Rocklin April 18).

One of the major mistakes made by new runners is building mileage too quickly. Add one mile per week to your long run to avoid injury. The incorporation of yoga poses specifically proven to be beneficial to runners, like the pigeon, will also ward off injuries like runner's knee and piriformas syndrome.

Whether you choose to run by yourself using a formatted running program purchased at the bookstore or internet or enlist the help of a running coach and run with others, you will feel a rush of accomplishment when you successfully cross the finish line of your first half-marathon.