

# Crossing the Finish Line

by ReadWorks



*a marathon runner*

Running a marathon is not easy. It takes hard work, practice, and patience. After all, to run a marathon, you have to run 26.2 miles by foot! Think about it this way: 26.2 miles is the same as running the length of a football field more than 460 times. It takes most people four or five hours to finish. In 2013, the world's fastest marathon runner finished the race in 2:03:23. Imagine running for over two hours without a break!

By the age of 30, Lea Tambellini had run more than five marathons and had no plans to stop. She had always been an athlete. When she was in high school, she swam on her school's swim team and ran to stay healthy and active. Her mom and dad ran marathons, and when she was 22, they helped her train for her first marathon.

Lea's first marathon took place in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was called "The Flying Pig."

"I was very nervous," she said, "but I had my mom there, so that helped."

Running the race was hard, but the hardest part was when she ran past a cookie factory and smelled cookies at mile 18. "I just wanted to be done," she said. "I was spent, but my mom kept me going. It was already her 15th marathon."

The word "marathon" comes from a Greek legend. In the legend, a brave soldier ran all the way from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens, Greece to tell everyone the Greeks had won the battle against the Persians. It is said that he ran the entire way without stopping-a distance equal to a modern marathon.

Today, thousands of people run marathons every year. Runners train for months to get ready. To prepare for one of the marathons, Lea ran four to five times every week. On weekdays, she completed shorter runs, five or six miles at most. But on the weekends she ran long distances-13 miles, 15 miles, and 20 miles!

"I don't mind training because I get excited about working toward something. And I love running with a group of friends and working toward the goal together. But it does take a lot of time."

Running a marathon is a great achievement. "It's a great feeling of accomplishment and nothing feels as wonderful as reaching my goal when I cross the finish line," Lea explained. "I can't wait for the next one!"

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A marathon is a long race. The word "marathon" comes from ancient Greece. The Greeks were fighting a battle at a place called Marathon. They won, and a story was told about one of their fighters. He is said to have run to the city of Athens after the battle to tell people about the victory. He ran the whole way without stopping. The distance he ran is the distance of a marathon today.

Running a marathon is not easy. It takes a lot of work and time. After all, a marathon is about 26 miles long! That is longer than 460 football fields put together. Imagine you had to run that far. How much time would it take? Most people finish a marathon in four or five hours. In 2013, someone finished a marathon in a little over two hours. Can you imagine running for over two hours without stopping?

Lea Tambellini can. She ran more than five marathons before she was 30 years old.

She trained for her first marathon when she was 22. Her mom and dad helped her prepare. They had run marathons themselves. Her mom even ran along with her in the race!

Running the marathon was hard for Lea, but having her mom there helped. The hardest part was when she ran by a cookie factory. She could smell the cookies. "I just wanted to be done," she said. She was tired, but her mom kept her going. "It was already her 15th marathon," Lea said.

Lots of people besides Lea and her mom run marathons every year. They spend a long time training. Runners practice for months before a marathon!

Lea practiced for one of the marathons by running four or five times a week. On weekdays, she ran five or six miles at a time. On weekends, she ran a lot farther. Sometimes she ran as far as 20 miles.

Lea does not mind the training, though. "I get excited about working toward something," she said.

Running a marathon is a big deal. Finishing the race is an achievement that can make people feel great. Lea said that "nothing feels as wonderful as reaching my goal when I cross the finish line."

She cannot wait to run her next marathon.

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Running a marathon is not easy. It takes practice, time, and effort. After all, a marathon is about 26 miles long! Imagine you had to run from one end of a football field to another about 460 times. That is the length of a marathon.

How much time does running that far take? Most people finish a marathon in four or five hours. In 2013, the world's fastest marathon runner finished the race in 2 hours, 3 minutes, and 23 seconds. Imagine running for over two hours without stopping!

Someone who does not need to imagine that is Lea Tambellini. She ran more than five marathons before she was 30 years old.

Lea had always been an athlete. In high school she ran to stay healthy. She was also on her school's swim team.

When she was 22, Lea trained for her first marathon. It was called "The Flying Pig" and took place in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her mom and dad, who were marathon runners themselves, helped her train for it. Her mom even ran with her in the race!

Running the race was hard for Lea, but having her mom there helped. The hardest part was when she ran past a cookie factory and smelled cookies. "I just wanted to be done," she said. "I was spent, but my mom kept me going. It was already her 15th marathon."

The word "marathon" comes from ancient Greece. The Greeks fought and beat the Persians at a place called Marathon. According to legend, a Greek soldier ran from Marathon to the city of Athens to share news of the victory. The distance he ran is the same distance as a marathon today.

Thousands of people now run marathons every year. The runners train for months. Lea ran four or five times every week to prepare for one of the marathons. She ran on weekdays as well as weekends. On weekdays, she would run up to five or six miles. On the weekends she would run up to 20 miles!

"I don't mind training because I get excited about working toward something. And I love running with a group of friends and working toward the goal together. But it does take a lot of time."

Running a marathon is a great achievement. It is something that takes a lot of work and feels good to have done. Lea says that "nothing feels as wonderful as reaching my goal when I cross the finish line."

She plans on running more marathons. "I can't wait for the next one!" she said.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did Lea Tambellini train for when she was 22?

- A. her first marathon
- B. her first relay race
- C. her first swim meet
- D. her first baseball season

2. What does this text describe?

- A. This text describes the fight between the Greeks and the Persians on the battlefield of Marathon.
- B. This text describes how the marathon known as "The Flying Pig" got its name.
- C. This text describes marathons and the experience of someone who runs them.
- D. This text describes what Lea Tambellini's dad felt like when he ran his first marathon.

3. Running a marathon takes hard work, practice, and patience. What evidence in the text supports this statement?

- A. Runners train for months to get ready for a marathon.
- B. Lea Tambellini had run more than five marathons by the time she was 30 years old.
- C. There is a marathon in Ohio called "The Flying Pig."
- D. The word "marathon" comes from a Greek legend.

4. How did Lea's feelings about running a marathon change?

- A. At first she felt excited, but later she felt nervous.
- B. At first she felt bored, but later she felt scared.
- C. At first she felt scared, but later she felt bored.
- D. At first she felt nervous, but later she felt excited.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. It takes most people four or five hours to run a marathon.
- B. Running a marathon is hard work, but Lea Tambellini enjoys it.
- C. The hardest part of Lea Tambellini's first marathon was running past a cookie factory.
- D. Lea Tambellini loves running with a group of friends and working toward a goal with them.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

To prepare for one of the marathons, Lea ran four to five times every week. On weekdays, she completed shorter runs, five or six miles at most. But on the weekends she ran long distances-13 miles, 15 miles, and 20 miles!

Why might the author have included an exclamation point here?

- A. to help readers imagine what running 20 miles would be like
- B. to show amazement at how far Lea was running on the weekends
- C. to suggest that Lea should not have run so many miles on the weekends
- D. to support the statement that running a marathon is not easy

7. Read these sentences from the text.

Running a marathon is not easy. It takes hard work, practice, and patience.

What does the pronoun "it" refer to here?

- A. patience
- B. practice
- C. hard work
- D. running a marathon

8. Describe what Lea did to prepare for one of the marathons.

9. Describe how Lea feels when she crosses the finish line of a marathon.

10. The author states that "running a marathon is a great achievement." Based on the information in this article, explain whether Lea would probably agree or disagree with that statement.