



**Sunday 3 October 2021**

# **Virgin Money London Marathon Event Guide**

# Welcome to the world's biggest-ever marathon

We hope you're looking forward to being part of the world's biggest-ever marathon on Sunday 3 October! We're certainly looking forward to welcoming you back to our iconic central London course, 889 days after we last ran together there in April 2019.

Of course, a lot of things have changed since then – and that includes the Virgin Money London Marathon. We have made a number of carefully planned changes to this year's event to ensure it can take place safely for you and your fellow participants.

To help guide you through these changes, we broke them down into your [Six Steps to the Start Line](#), which we made available to all participants on Wednesday 25 August – we hope you've read these, as they will prepare you for the instructions in this guide.

The good news is you should have already completed Step One: update your details and tell us your predicted time – one less thing on your to-do list! (Don't worry if you didn't update your predicted time recently; although it's now too late to do this we'll use the time you gave us when you originally entered the event.)

**This year more than ever it is important that you read this guide very carefully – even if you have run the London Marathon before – as things will be different to what you may have been used to or are expecting.**

Look out for our 'New for 2021' tags throughout the guide, which draw attention to aspects of the event that are different this year.

We've worked extremely hard to plan the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon so we can all run together again and ensure a Covid-secure environment for all our participants – so we really appreciate your support and cooperation.

By reading this Event Guide and acting on the information within it, you'll be helping us deliver an event that will bring joy to many thousands of people and raise millions for charities at a time when they need it the most – and ensuring that you have an amazing experience!

We can't wait to see you as We Run Together on Sunday 3 October.

Good luck!

The Virgin Money London Marathon Team

## **CONTENTS**

Remember, you've already completed Step One of your Six Steps to the Start Line by letting us know your predicted finish time – please see below for where to find details of the remaining steps, plus more information.

### **Page 4**

#### **1. BEFORE VISITING THE VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON RUNNING SHOW**

Step Two: Pack your kitbag in advance

Step Three: Before you go to the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show

Take a lateral flow test

Your registration email

### **Page 5**

#### **2. THE VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON RUNNING SHOW**

Step Four: At the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show

### **Page 7**

#### **3. BEFORE MARATHON DAY**

Step Five: Plan your journey to the Start

Step Six: Prepare for Marathon Day

### **Page 9**

#### **4. ON MARATHON DAY**

Checklist

The Assembly Areas and Start Lines

The Course

### **Page 14**

#### **5. THE FINISH**

Finish Area

Arranging to meet your supporter

Heading home

### **Page 16**

#### **6. MEDICAL ADVICE**

### **Page 19**

#### **7. THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS**

# 1 Before visiting the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show

Many of the changes we've made to ensure this year's Virgin Money London Marathon goes ahead are to reduce crowding and touchpoints at the most critical areas of the event – the Start and the Finish.

This is why there will be no baggage trucks or baggage drop at the Start, and why medals, T-shirts and other items such as food will not be handed out at the Finish, for example. To ensure you can still access the items you want at the Finish, we have created a new kitbag system (Step Two of your Six Steps to the Start Line), the details of which are outlined below.

## New for 2021

### STEP TWO – PACK YOUR KITBAG IN ADVANCE

We'll post your official kitbag to you, along with a self-adhesive label that will have your bib number printed on it. You should receive this by Friday 24 September. Stick the label on the kitbag where indicated. There will also be a letter explaining the kitbag process in detail, so please read this carefully and keep for future reference.

Pack your kitbag with any items that you'd like to have at the Finish of the Virgin Money London Marathon. This could include things like warm clothing, a change of footwear, and non-perishable food items (ie no bananas or anything that could go off or get squashed or broken in transit).

Leave some space in your kitbag – you must be able to pull the drawstring tight at the top to close it. We'll be adding your finisher's medal, New Balance finisher's T-shirt, BUXTON Natural Mineral Water and Lucozade Sport to the kitbag once you drop it off at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show (see below), so please leave room for these.

If your kitbag and self-adhesive label don't arrive, there will be plenty of replacements available at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show.

### STEP THREE – BEFORE YOU GO TO THE VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON RUNNING SHOW

The Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show has always been a key milestone on your journey to the Start Line – this year, it's even more important as in addition to picking up your bib number at the event at ExCeL London, you'll need to drop off your kitbag there too – but before

### VERY IMPORTANT!

Even if you don't want to bring any items for the Finish, you must still drop off your kitbag at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show so we can put your medal, New Balance finisher's T-shirt, and bottles of BUXTON Natural Mineral Water and Lucozade Sport in it for you to collect at the Finish.

**Please remember:** there will be no baggage drop facility at the Start and no food items will be provided at the Finish.

we get to that, check out what you need to do before visiting the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show.

## New for 2021

### TAKE A LATERAL FLOW TEST

Our planning is focused on delivering a safe and Covid-secure event. To ensure the safety of all runners, we are asking every participant to present a negative lateral flow test result at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show before dropping off their kitbag and collecting their bib number.

We'll also be doing random spot-checks on Event Day, so if you take a test to gain entry to the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show on Wednesday 29 or Thursday 30 September, you'll need to take another lateral flow test on either Friday 1 or Saturday 2 October and be prepared to show the negative result at the Start of the Marathon on Sunday 3 October.

If you go to the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show on Friday 1 or Saturday 2 October you can also show this negative lateral flow test result at the Start of the Marathon. The result can be shown on your mobile phone or other device, or as a print-out.

### YOUR REGISTRATION EMAIL

We'll send your registration email, which includes your unique bib number collection (QR) code that you'll need to collect your bib number at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show, between Monday 20 and Wednesday 22 September.

Your registration email will also display all your important arrival information for Marathon Day. Please keep this email safe and arrive at the allocated times outlined in it.

# 2

## The Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show

### STEP FOUR – AT THE VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON RUNNING SHOW

Once you've done everything on the previous page, you're ready to head to the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show to drop off your kitbag and pick up your bib number (details below), as well as to take the opportunity to explore the rest of what's on offer at ExCeL London – it's the perfect place to soak up the inspiring atmosphere of the world's biggest marathon. To find out more about what's on this year, [click here](#).

#### WHERE AND WHEN TO GO

The Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show is held at ExCeL London, 1 Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL.

The Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show is open at the following times:

**10:00-20:00** on Wednesday 29 September

**10:00-20:00** on Thursday 30 September

**10:00-20:00** on Friday 1 October

**08:30-17:30** on Saturday 2 October

To get to ExCeL London, please travel to Prince Regent Docklands Light Railway (DLR) station, making sure you plan your journey in advance at [tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey](https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey)

#### ON ARRIVAL

When you first arrive at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show you'll need to show proof of your negative lateral flow test (see previous page) to ExCeL security, in order to receive a wristband to gain entry.

Then head to kitbag drop-off in hall S8. You will need to join the queue that matches your desired finisher's T-shirt size – so please consider what size you'd like in advance. Use the chest sizes below as a guide and please note the T-shirt sizes are unisex:

<b>XS</b>	33/35in (84/89cm)
<b>S</b>	35/38in (89/96cm)
<b>M</b>	38/41in (96/104cm)
<b>L</b>	41/44in (104/112cm)
<b>XL</b>	44/48in (112/122cm)
<b>XXL</b>	48/53in (122/134cm)

You'll then be able to move on to the main Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show in hall S10, where the registration desks are located, to collect your bib number, before enjoying the rest of your day.

#### CHECKLIST – MAKE SURE YOU BRING:

- Kitbag with self-adhesive label attached
- QR code from your registration email (this can be printed)
- An SMS or email demonstrating your negative lateral flow test result (this can be printed)
- Supporting photo ID, such as a passport or driving licence

#### IMPORTANT – AVOID BUSY TIMES

If you live or work in or near London, please aim to drop off your kitbag and pick up your bib number on the Wednesday or Thursday of the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show. The Friday is usually very busy, and the Saturday even more so – you may have a considerable wait to drop off your kitbag and register on both these days, so if you can visit earlier in the week, do.

If you can only visit on Saturday, please get to the registration area before 17:00, as you may have to queue, and the registration desks will close promptly at 17:30. No bib numbers will be issued after 17:30 and you won't be able to take part in the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon without one.

Please note the kitbag drop-off will close 10 to 15 minutes before the main Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show closing times shown opposite.

#### YOUR BIB NUMBER

Please look after your bib number – you will need it to locate your crate containing your kitbag at the Finish this year. It also contains your timing chip. Duplicate numbers cannot be issued under any circumstances. There will be no spare bib numbers at the Start on Marathon Day and our marshals will remove anyone on the course without a bib number.

Make sure you fill in your medical information on the reverse of your bib number. This could save your life during an emergency.

#### Bib numbers are non-transferable

You must not use someone else's bib number, nor let someone else use yours. Bib number swapping is strictly prohibited for several reasons, the most important of which is the danger and confusion it can cause in the event of an incident on the course.

## **UNABLE TO ATTEND THE VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON RUNNING SHOW?**

While we prefer you to drop off your kitbag and pick up your bib number in person, we recognise that in some cases this may be impossible. In this instance, please nominate someone to drop off your kitbag and collect your bib number for you. The person you nominate must bring the following with them:

- A letter, written and signed by you, authorising them – by name – to drop off your kitbag and collect your bib number
- A clear photocopy of your passport or driving licence showing your name and signature
- Evidence of *your* negative lateral flow test (the name on this test result must match your name on the photocopy of your ID)
- Their own suitable photo identification
- Evidence of *their own* negative lateral flow test

- Your kitbag with the self-adhesive sticker attached and packed with any items you'd like to collect at the Finish

Failure to comply with these instructions may mean your bib number is not issued.

**Please note:** your nominated person doesn't have to be a participant in the Virgin Money London Marathon, but any individual can only collect one other person's bib number in addition to their own.

## **WANT TO ATTEND WITH SOMEONE ELSE?**

At the time of writing, if you would like to attend the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show with someone else you can – however, they must be aged 18 or over on the day that you attend and, like you, they must show evidence of a negative lateral flow test on arrival.





# 3

## Before Marathon Day

### STEP FIVE – PLAN YOUR JOURNEY TO THE START

Because we need to reduce crowding at this year's event we're asking everyone to arrive at set times and to plan their journeys accordingly so that they're not too late – or too early! Read on for more details.

## New for 2021

### YOUR ALLOCATED ARRIVAL TIME

To ensure you arrive during your allocated time please plan your journey in advance (see below).

This year's start process will be a little different, with everyone set off in separate waves over 90 minutes, from 09:30 to 11:00 – this is another reason why we need you to stick to the arrival time we give you in your registration email (which you'll receive between Monday 20 and Wednesday 22 September).

### TRAVEL ADVICE AND INFO

We strongly advise using public transport on Marathon Day. To check which services you'll need to use please visit [tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey](https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey) or [nationalrail.co.uk](https://nationalrail.co.uk)

### PLANNED CLOSURES FOR SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER

The Central line of the London Underground will be closed from Queensway to West Ruislip and Ealing Broadway on Marathon Day. The London Overground will also be closed from Clapham Junction to Willesden Junction.

Do not drive your own vehicle to the Start. Roads will be closed in the area from 04:00.

You can travel to your Assembly Area (see more on pages nine and 10) for free on Southeastern services from London stations – you simply need to show your bib number to station staff.

London Underground and DLR are also offering free travel to participants until 17:00 on Marathon Day for those who need to connect with mainline stations. Again, you will need to show your bib number to station staff.

### WILL YOU NEED SOMETHING WARM TO WEAR?

As there is no kitbag drop-off at the Start of this year's Virgin Money London Marathon, we recommend you wear old clothes over your kit to keep warm and then discard them at our signposted clothing donation points prior to crossing the Start Line. Collected items will be donated to charity or recycled where possible.

### WITHDRAWING YOUR ENTRY

You must be fit and well to run a marathon. See the medical advice on page 16 for more details on health and distance running.

Life doesn't always go according to plan – so if you need to withdraw from the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon, and for further information on your eligibility to defer, please [click here](#). You must complete the online withdrawal form by no later than 20:00 on Saturday 2 October 2021.

## STEP SIX – PREPARE FOR MARATHON DAY

If you've followed the previous five steps you should be in a pretty good place by the time you get to Marathon Day on Sunday 3 October – there are just a few more things you need to consider so you're ready to take part...

## New for 2021

### CHOOSE YOUR SUPPORTER

This year, we're asking you to invite *only one* supporter to come along and watch the Virgin Money London Marathon in person – again, this is to reduce the number of people in the area. Spectators are asked to avoid gathering in large groups and, if an area is busy, find another place to watch the event. Our stewards will ask spectators to move on if areas become crowded.

However, this doesn't mean that your family and friends need to miss out on the excitement of the big day – they'll be able to [watch the coverage on the BBC](#) and track your progress from the comfort of their own homes using the Official Virgin Money London Marathon App powered by TCS.

To help your supporters track you more accurately on Marathon Day, make sure you enable GPS within the App and allow it to use your location on the route. If you don't do this, your distance travelled will be estimated based on the timing mats you'll cross during the event.

If you're running for charity now's a good time to remind your supporters to donate to your Virgin Money Giving fundraising page if they haven't already.

The Official App powered by TCS will also feature a 'donate' button so your supporters can add to your fundraising total (if they haven't already!) as they track your 26.2-mile challenge.

### PACE YOURSELF

Please note there will be no official pacers at this year's Virgin Money London Marathon to reduce crowding on course, so you'll need to follow your own pacing strategy and plan this ahead of the event. You can create your own pace wristband using [Lucozade Sport's online tool](#).

### WEAR A BOTTLE BELT

To help us further reduce touchpoints on the day, we're asking participants to carry their drinks in a bottle belt rather than relying on Drinks Stations, which can get busy.

A survey we did in 2019 showed that runners who wore bottle belts used more than 40 per cent fewer water bottles and enjoyed being able to drink when they wanted. Not only is this a more sustainable choice, as you'll be reducing the number of bottles used on the course, you'll also be enhancing your experience of the event.

You can buy your bottle belt from [our online shop](#) or at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show from the Virgin Money London Marathon merchandise stand or New Balance stand.

Rest assured that there will still be Drinks Stations offering BUXTON Natural Mineral Water and Lucozade Sport throughout the course should you need them.

See page 12 for full details of Drinks Stations.



# 4

## On Marathon Day

After months of training and preparation the big day has finally arrived – this section covers what you need to remember to bring with you, where you need to go and when, and how to find your kitbag once you've finished your 26.2-mile challenge.

### CHECKLIST – MAKE SURE YOU BRING:

- Your bib number with built-in timing chip and safety pins to attach it to your vest, T-shirt or top
- Access to this Event Guide
- An SMS or email demonstrating your negative lateral flow test result (this can be printed)
- Warm clothes to wear over your kit before you start

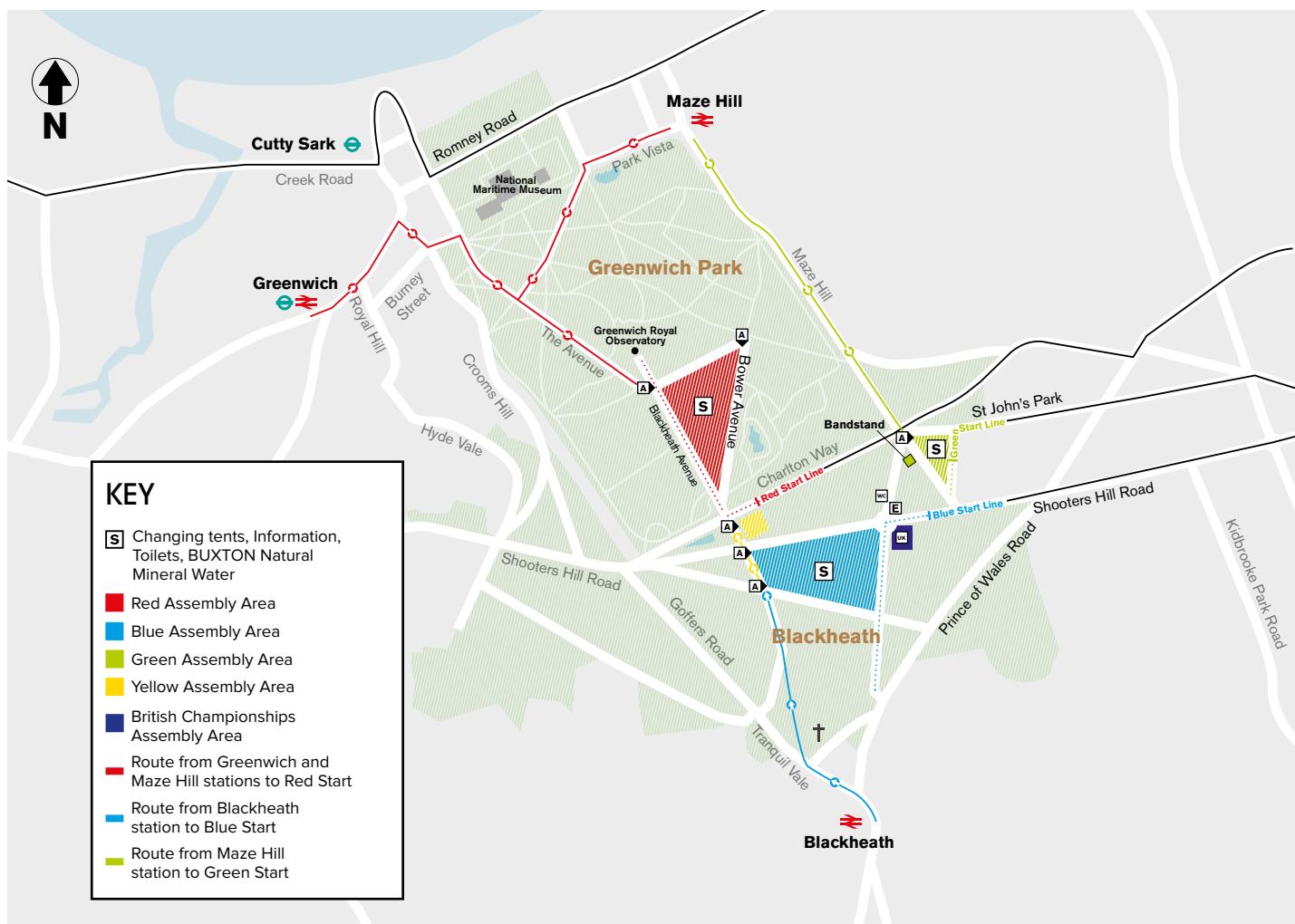
## New for 2021

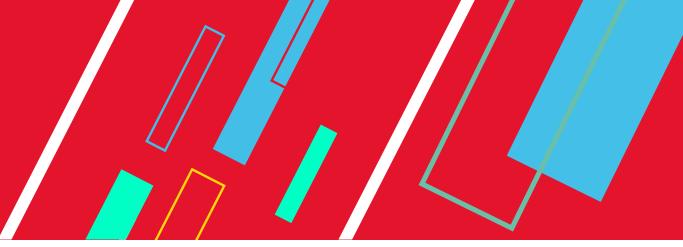
### THE ASSEMBLY AREAS AND START LINES

The Virgin Money London Marathon Start and Assembly Areas will be a little different this year in order for us to space out the number of participants on the course and provide everyone with more room.

There are four Assembly Areas (Blue, Green, Red and Yellow) and three Start Lines (Blue, Green and Red) at the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon. See map below.

The easiest way to get to the four Assembly Areas is to travel by train to the stations indicated in the table on the next page. We will also recommend the nearest station to your Start Line in your registration email.





# Getting to your Assembly Area

Who?	Where?	How?
Participants with blue numbers on a white background on their bibs	Blue Assembly Area	Train to Blackheath station, followed by a 10-minute walk
Participants with green numbers on a white background on their bibs	Green Assembly Area	Train to Maze Hill station, followed by a 10-minute walk
Participants with red numbers on a white background on their bibs	Red Assembly Area	Train to Greenwich station, followed by a 15-minute walk
Participants with red numbers on a yellow background on their bibs	Yellow Assembly Area	Train to Blackheath station, followed by a 10-minute walk

Public transport on Marathon Day will be extremely busy, so please plan your journey at [tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey](https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey) (see Step Five). We will let you know the best train arrival times for your allocated start time in your registration email

## ARRIVING AT YOUR ASSEMBLY AREA

Please ensure your bib number is clearly displayed before arriving at your Assembly Area.

Only participants are permitted into the Assembly Areas, no spectators are allowed – we recommend that they watch the BBC coverage of the event at home this year to help prevent crowding along the course.

Your allocated arrival time is in your registration email, which you'll receive between Monday 20 and Wednesday 22 September. Please arrive at your correct Assembly Area at your allocated time and follow the marshals' instructions – you will be asked to line up in your numbered start wave, see below.

## START WAVES

Waves will operate across all three Start Lines. This means there will be short gaps in the release process to allow the course ahead to clear, thereby providing more space and a better experience for all participants.

Your registration email also contains details of your start wave. We allocated your start wave based on your predicted finish time.

**Please note:** even if you entered the same predicted finish time as another participant, that doesn't guarantee you will be in the same start wave.

One the day you cannot change your Assembly Area under any circumstances or move to an earlier start wave. However, you may join a later start wave – no need to let us know, just join the later wave on the day.



## Facilities

There are toilets and BUXTON Natural Mineral Water available at all four Assembly Areas

## New for 2021

### REMEMBER: NO BAGGAGE DROP AT THE START

There is no baggage drop at the Start this year. We will not accept bags brought to the Start – which is why you must drop off your kitbag in advance at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show (see Step Four on page five).

If you have any larger items of luggage that you will need to store on Marathon Day, we recommend leaving these with a friend or using a London-based luggage storage facility – there are lots online to choose from.

### REMEMBER: LATERAL FLOW TEST RESULT

You need to be prepared to show an SMS, email or print-out of your negative lateral flow test result, taken in the 48 hours before Marathon Day.

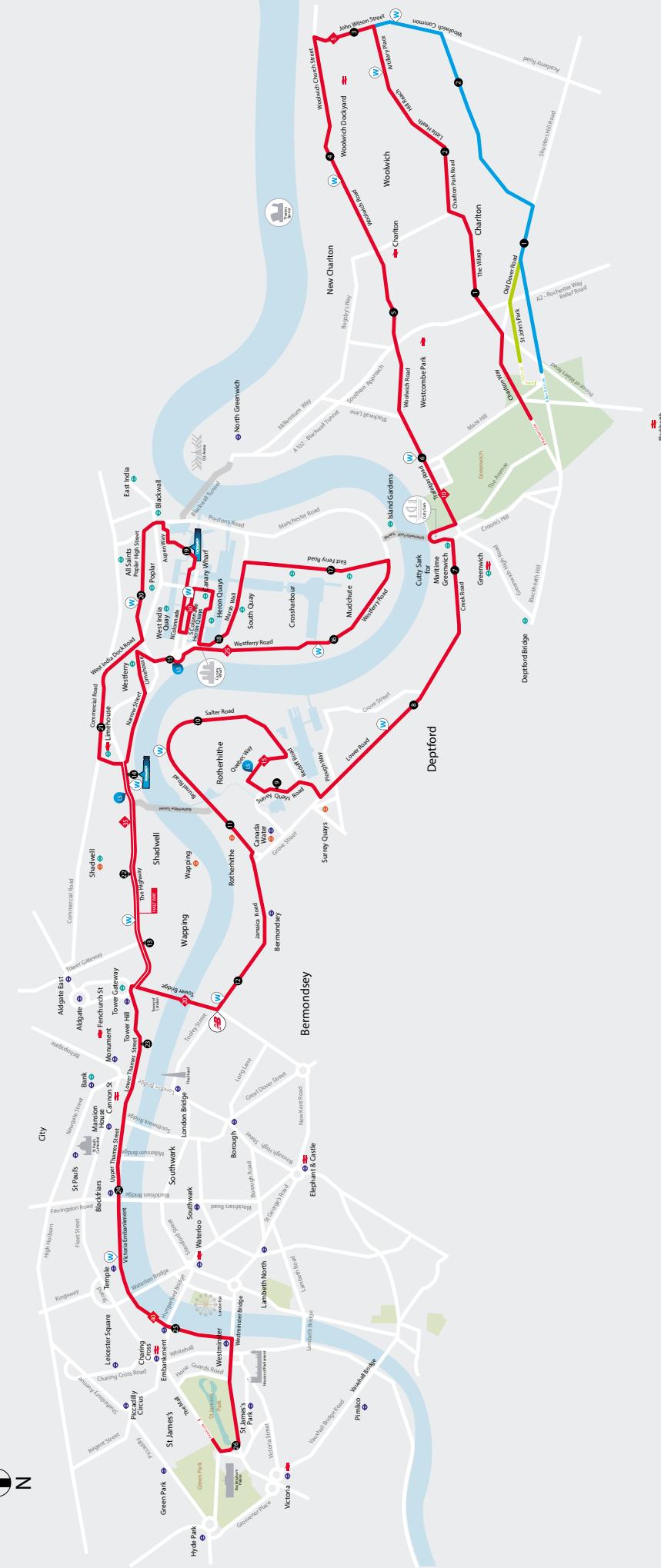
## THE COURSE

We're delighted to be running together again on the central London course this year. Your 26.2-mile challenge starts at Blackheath, passes the iconic Cutty Sark, goes over the world-famous Tower Bridge, and through Canary Wharf, before finishing on The Mall in front of Buckingham Palace. The following two pages contain everything you need to know about this route.



## KEY

- BUXTON Natural Mineral Water
- Lucozade Sport drink
- KM marker



## TOILETS

- Toilets are available at the Start, every mile from Mile 1 to Mile 24, and at the Finish
- Accessible toilets are available at the Start, the Finish, Miles 1 and 2 and then every even mile – ie Miles 4, 6, 8 and so on – until Mile 24



## DISTANCE MARKERS AND TIMING CLOCKS

Every mile and kilometre point is clearly indicated on the course, and a clock will show the running time, based on the actual start time (not elapsed time) of the Virgin Money London Marathon. Please note the map on the previous page only shows kilometre markers at every 5K.

## THE THIN BLUE LINE

A broken blue line on the road indicates the shortest route and represents the exact and correct measured distance. Please let faster participants keep to this line.

## DRINKS STATIONS

Drinks Stations are clearly marked on the course map on the previous page and listed in the table below. BUXTON Natural Mineral Water will be available (at 12 Drinks Stations) in bottles made from 100 per cent recycled material. These are also 100 per cent recyclable.

Lucozade Sport will be served in cups, which will be collected for composting, at Miles 9, 15 and 21. Lucozade Sport Gels will be provided at Miles 14 and 19.

Drinks Stations		
BUXTON Natural Mineral Water is served at 12 stations	Lucozade Sport in compostable cups is served at three stations	Lucozade Sport Gels are served at two stations
Mile 3		
Mile 4		
Mile 6		
Mile 8		
	Mile 9	
Mile 10		
Mile 12		
Mile 14		Mile 14
	Mile 15	
Mile 16		
Mile 18		
		Mile 19
Mile 20		
	Mile 21	
Mile 22		
Mile 24		

## DRINK, DRAIN, DROP

We aim to recycle every plastic bottle used at the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon, but we need your help to do this. Plastic bottles can only be recycled if they are empty, so please remember to #DrinkDrainDrop.

Drink BUXTON Natural Mineral Water, drain any leftover liquid before you drop your bottle safely in the bags provided at the side of the road, which will be collected for recycling. Do not drop bottles in the road, as this can cause trip hazards for participants behind you.



## WALKING

At some point, perhaps through tiredness, cramp, blisters, etc, you may want to walk. If this happens to you, please move over to the side of the road furthest from the blue line to allow participants to overtake.

## DROPPING OUT

If you need to drop out, you should make your way to the nearest St John Ambulance First Aid Point, tell them your bib number and then wait for a sweep coach to stop and pick you up. There will be a doctor and Virgin Money London Marathon staff on each coach.

The teams on the coaches will ensure your details are passed on to the Information Point at the Finish. If you do not require medical assistance, you will be dropped off at the Finish Area – where you will be able to retrieve your kitbag and make your onward journey.

Alternatively, you can make your own way back to the Finish Area. Public transport providers will allow you to travel for free if you show your bib number. Make your way to Embankment Underground station and our marshals will direct you from there.

## ANIMALS AND WHEELED DEVICES

No animals or wheeled vehicles/devices of any kind are allowed on the Marathon course, other than wheelchairs of participants who have permission to take part. Anyone who disregards this rule will be disqualified, removed from the course and banned from participating in any future events organised by London Marathon Events.

# New for 2021

## REMEMBER: ONE SPECTATOR PER PARTICIPANT

To reduce crowding around the course, we're asking you to only invite one person to come to support you on the day. Please ask them to avoid gathering with others in large numbers, and, if an area is busy, find another place to watch the event. Our stewards will ask spectators to move on if areas become crowded.

Of course, all your family and friends are more than welcome to support the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon by watching the BBC's live coverage of the event on television and by tracking you using the Official App powered by TCS.

Further information about the BBC coverage and how to use the Official App powered by TCS will be available soon at [virginmoneylondonmarathon.com](http://virginmoneylondonmarathon.com)

## COURSE CUT-OFF TIMES

Our aim is to support every participant, whatever their pace, from Start to Finish and provide the best possible experience. We anticipate the final participant will cross the Start Line by 11:00, giving people a minimum of eight hours to finish the event.

# New for 2021

## TAILWALKERS

A specially recruited group of 50 'Tailwalkers' will move along the entire route at eight-hour pace, starting at the back of the final wave on all three starts: Blue, Green and Red. If you're unable to maintain this eight-hour pace, a Tailwalker will drop back, move with you onto the pavement and support and guide you through to the Finish Line at whatever pace you're able to maintain.

## SUPPORT SQUAD

Members of our new Support Squad will also be positioned at 400m intervals between Miles 16 and 26 on the route. They are there to support anyone who is struggling and needs help. They will be in place for the entire day, giving help, support and encouragement until the Tailwalkers have passed by.

## ON-COURSE SERVICES

Drinks Stations and timing mats will stay in place until the Tailwalkers have passed by (at eight-hour pace). Behind the Tailwalkers will be the Course Control vehicle, a DJ bus playing music throughout the day, and two coaches to collect any participants who are unable to continue.

## START ALLOCATION

All participants with a predicted finish time of more than seven hours have been allocated the Green Start.

The Green Start waves will start up to 30 minutes before the last starters on the Blue and Red Starts and merge into the Blue Start after about a mile. This new procedure will give those participants more than eight hours to finish the event and should keep other participants around them for the longest time possible.

Please note: if you think your finish time will be more than seven hours and you have not already been allocated a place on the Green Start (your registration email will confirm which Start you are on), speak to our team when you collect your bib number at Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show and they will be able to assist you.

# 5

## The Finish

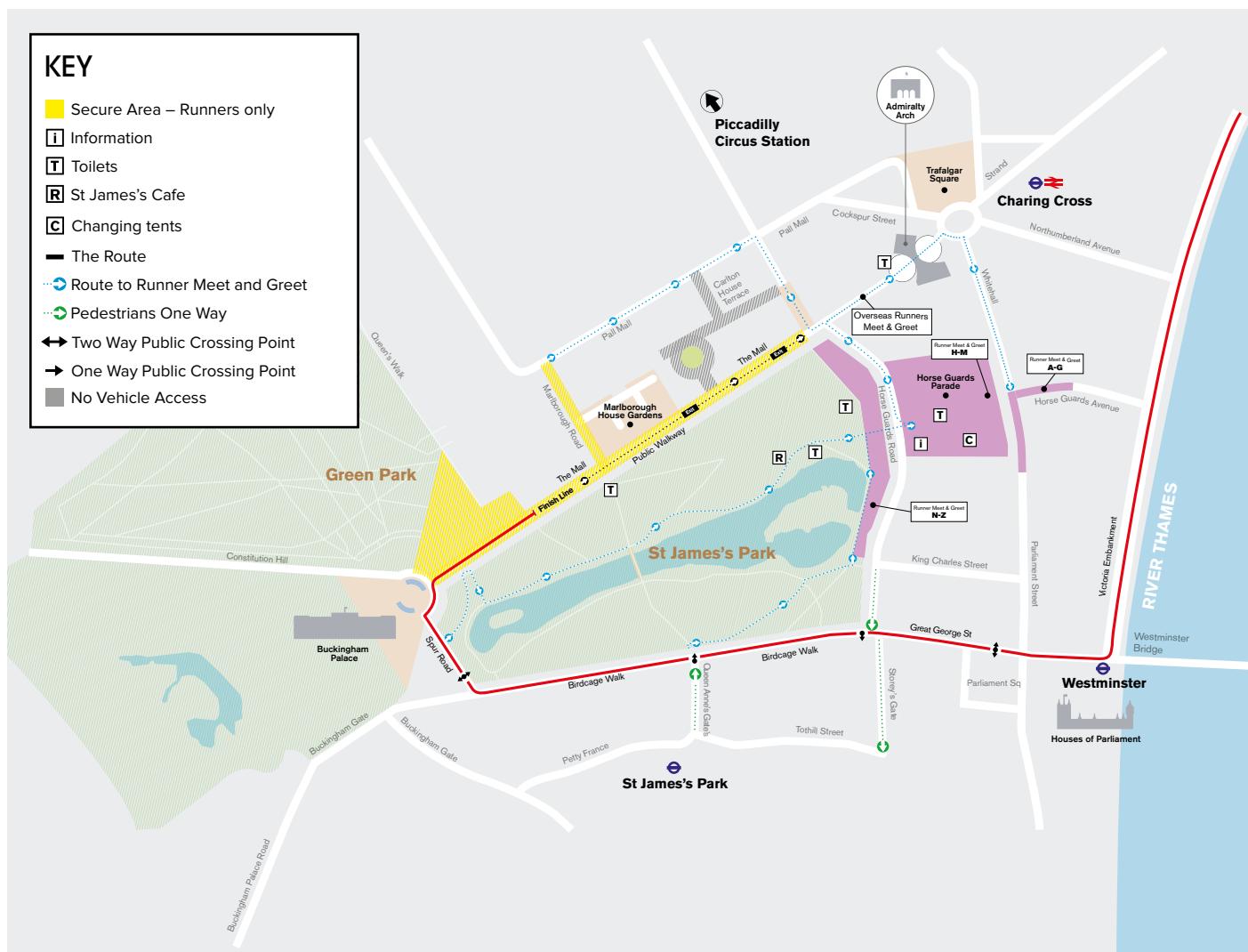
Crossing the Finish Line of the Virgin Money London Marathon will be one of the most amazing experiences of your life. You've done it! In the excitement of achieving your goal, it's easy to get swept up in your emotions and lose your bearings – so make sure you read this section so you know what to do and where to go...

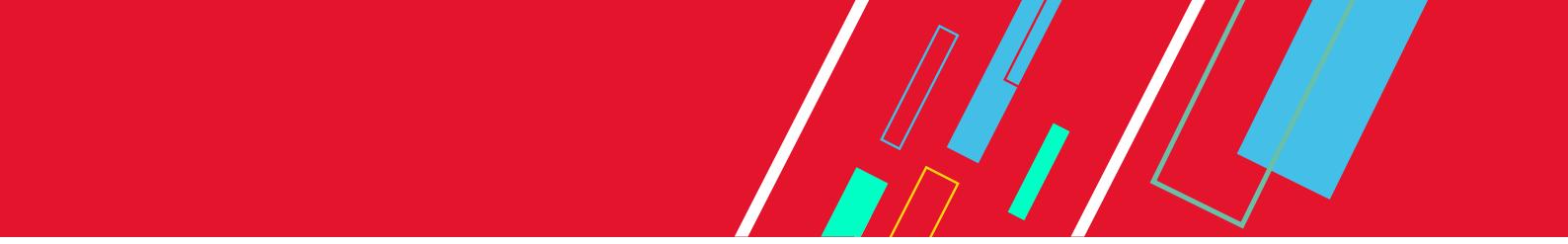
The Finish is on The Mall. As you cross the line, try to keep moving to make space for participants arriving after you. If you feel unwell, seek a member of our medical staff or St John Ambulance officers immediately – there will be plenty of them around at the Finish and they will be looking out for any participants who seem unwell or in need of assistance.

### FINISH AREA

The Finish Area is an 800m-long secure area with no public access. Once you've crossed the Finish Line, you can pick up a foil blanket to help you keep warm. You'll then be able to collect your kitbag, which will contain your finisher's medal, your New Balance finisher's T-shirt, BUXTON Natural Mineral Water, Lucozade Sport, and any items you put in it before dropping it off at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show.

Follow the signs and look out for the kitbag crate number that matches the one printed on your bib number. Once you've located your crate our volunteers will be able to reunite you with your kitbag.





## Running for a charity?

If your charity is holding a post-event reception, find out where it is, and plan how you'll get there, in advance

### ARRANGING TO MEET YOUR SUPPORTER

If you would like to meet your supporter after you've picked up your kitbag, you can do so at the Meet and Greet Area.

However, the Meet and Greet Area will very busy, which is why you must only arrange to meet one person there.

The Meet and Greet Area is made up of Meeting Points marked by the 26 letters of the alphabet. Meeting Points A-G will be located on Whitehall and Horse Guards Avenue, while H-Z will be located in Horse Guards Road and Horse Guards Parade.

So you can find your supporter quickly and easily, arrange to meet them at a specific letter, rather than just saying 'See you at the Finish'.

If your supporter finds large crowds uncomfortable, please arrange to meet them away from the busiest part of the Finish Area, which is on Horse Guards Parade.

Do not rely on contacting your supporter on your mobile phone in order to find them after you've finished, as you may find it difficult to get a signal in and around the Finish Area due to heavy mobile phone traffic on all networks.

Participants cross the Start Line over a 90-minute period. You are likely to run slower than your predicted time, and after crossing the Finish Line it will take you up to 30 minutes to reach the Meet and Greet Area. Please remember to factor this in when arranging to meet your supporter.

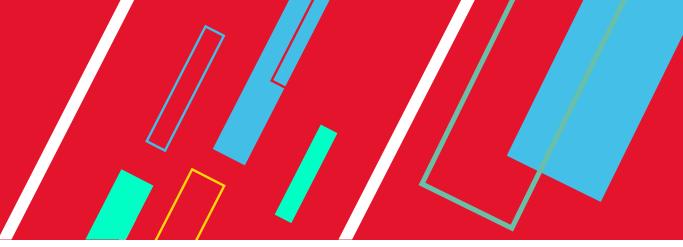
Once you've met your supporter, please do not congregate around the Finish Area exit at the northern end of Horse Guards Road. This can cause massive congestion for exiting participants, as well as other health and safety issues for people in this area.

We also advise you to agree an alternative meeting place at least one mile from the Finish Area – in case of the unlikely event of the Finish Area becoming unavailable. This will ensure you have somewhere else to meet that should be more accessible.

Finally, please make sure the person who is meeting you knows your bib number. This will help staff at our Information Points to identify you on our database if necessary.

### HEADING HOME

Remember, the DLR and London Underground will allow free travel up to 17:00 on their entire network to Virgin Money London Marathon participants only. Friends, relatives and spectators will need to purchase tickets or pay by card as usual.



# 6

## Medical advice

Since 1981, more than one million runners have successfully completed the London Marathon and many more will cross the Finish Line safely in years to come.

Provided you follow these common-sense guidelines, you too should be a picture of health as you cross the Finish Line on The Mall on Sunday 3 October.

As you know, taking part in these events is beneficial to your health, but participants need to take responsibility for their own health by equipping themselves with the right information about such things as training, eating and drinking.

The following simple advice on how to look after your body in the last few weeks building up to Marathon Day will help you to have a safe and healthy experience.

### MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Discuss any medical problems with your GP. The advice in this document should supplement anything they say.

### FIT TO COMPETE

Running is good for the heart, but even though the risks are low (more than one million participants have successfully completed the London Marathon), there have been a very small number of fatalities from serious heart disease in participants who were apparently unaware they had a problem. Their condition may have been detected if they'd had the relevant heart tests. A 'fitness test' is not sufficient to detect these problems.

Please remember, if you have a family history of heart disease or sudden death, or have a high risk from high cholesterol or high blood pressure, and particularly if you have symptoms of heart disease (such as chest pain or discomfort on exertion, sudden shortness of breath or rapid palpitations) then you should speak to your GP who can arrange for you to have a proper cardiac assessment.

Such an assessment may not be instantly available, but continuing to run with these symptoms may be dangerous.

### TRAINING

Reduce your training intensity in the last three weeks before the Virgin Money London Marathon.

It is much better to get to the Start Line feeling fresh – not exhausted because you've been trying to cram in training that you might have missed.

During the last three weeks, you should be doing about 80 per cent of your weekly mileage, 60 per cent of your weekly mileage with two weeks to go and in the final week leading up to Marathon Day, it should total about one third of your normal weekly mileage.

### ILLNESS AND TRAINING

If you have 'flu', a feverish cold or a tummy bug, do not train until you've fully recovered. Then restart gently and build up gradually. Do not attempt to catch up on lost mileage after illness or injury – this may cause further damage or illness.

If you have 'flu' it can take as much as a month to recover. If you cannot run 15 miles comfortably one month before a marathon it is unlikely that you will manage it safely or enjoy it on Marathon Day. Please do not run if this is the case.

If you have had Covid-19, be aware that even mild cases of the disease can result in delayed recovery. Covid-19 can affect almost any organ system in the body.

Before getting back into exercise you need to be sure that you have recovered fully, as Covid-19 can cause long-term tissue damage, which can lead to serious complications during endurance exercise.

Anyone who was hospitalised with Covid-19 has a high risk of cardiac complications due to inflammation of the heart muscle, long-term lung changes and/or complications as a result of thromboembolic (clot)-related illness.

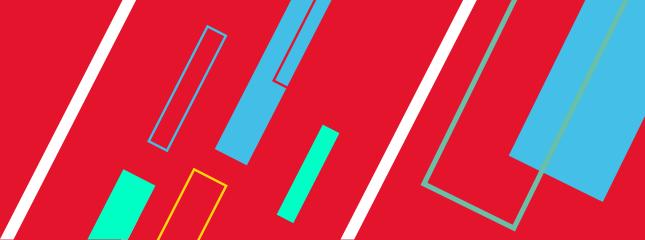
Patients who have been admitted with serious Covid-19 should follow the guidance of their healthcare professionals prior to returning to exercise.

### FEELING UNWELL ON THE DAY?

Do not run if you feel unwell or have just been unwell, even if you are raising money for charity.

Most medical emergencies occur in people who've been unwell but do not wish to miss the event. If you feel feverish, have been vomiting, have had severe diarrhoea or any chest pains, or otherwise feel unwell, it is unfair to you, your family and your charity to risk serious illness and become a medical emergency.

You are unlikely to do yourself justice. There will be many other events to take part in.



## DRINKING

Drink what you feel you need to quench your thirst. You need to replace some of the fluid you lose as sweat, but you do not need to replace it all and you do not need to drink a lot. Drinking too much fluid during (or after) a marathon can be very dangerous as it can cause hyponatraemia (water intoxication), which can lead to seizures, fits and even death.

## THINK BEFORE YOU DRINK

Individual needs vary with your build, your speed, and, above all, the weather. Using a London Marathon Events bottle belt, which is specifically designed to take the 250ml BUXTON Natural Mineral Water bottles that will be given out around the course, will enable you to carry a bottle of water with you so that you can drink according to your need throughout the event, using the entire bottle and replenishing with a fresh bottle when required.

You can purchase our specially designed bottle belts [online](#) or buy one at the Virgin Money London Marathon Running Show when you drop off your kitbag and pick up your bib number.

Lucozade Sport will be offered in cups during the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon. If you think you might use it on Marathon Day, make sure you try it during your training to see if you like it. It might taste quite different after 20 miles and drinking on the run needs practice.

Start your run well hydrated and, if you are not already bursting, drink a small amount of water or sports drink in the half hour before the start. Slower runners do not need to drink as much as faster runners. If it is a warm day you may need a little more fluid than usual, but not a lot more. On a cool day all participants should drink less.

Please don't take extra bottles of drinking water from Drinks Stations to pour over yourself during the event as you may be depriving slower runners of their much-needed drinks. If it is hot on Event Day additional water will be provided and showers will be set up on the course to help runners cool down.

Do not drink large amounts of fluid after finishing. You can rehydrate (replace lost fluids) gradually over the next 24 to 48 hours. Try to eat some salty food and stagger your drinks. This way you will not get hyponatraemia and will still replace enough of the water, salt and glycogen lost in running the Marathon.

## EATING

Do not change your normal diet drastically in the last week before a marathon, but consider eating less protein (meat, eggs and tofu/beans) and more carbohydrate

(pasta, bread, potatoes, cereals and rice), especially for the last three days when you will also be markedly reducing your training (tapering). This helps to load the muscles with glycogen, which will delay you 'hitting the wall'.

Unless you reduce your protein intake, you will not eat enough carbohydrates. (Some runners find it efficient to deplete their carbohydrate levels with a long run on a low-carbohydrate diet and then replace it by carb loading, however others find this can make their muscles feel very heavy, so you should not try this for the first time in the week before Marathon Day.)

Before your longer runs in the weeks leading up to the Marathon practise eating your breakfast at the same time that you will eat it on Marathon Day. You will then be used to eating at the right time for the event.

## ON THE DAY

Wear appropriate clothes for the weather when you're running. On a cold, wet day you can become very cold if you reduce your running pace or walk. A hat and gloves will prevent heat loss and are easy to carry. If it is hot, wear loose mesh clothing, start slowly and, if possible, run in the shade. Please don't wear multiple layers and don't try to attempt a personal best if the weather is unseasonably warm. Wear running shoes you know from experience will not give you blisters.

## AT THE FINISH

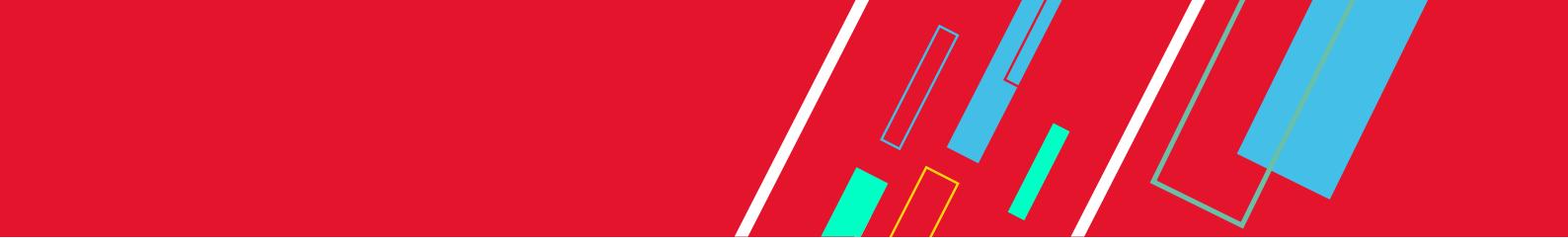
Once you have completed the event, try to keep walking if you can, especially if you feel dizzy. Walking will help to keep pumping the blood back up to the head. Do not stand about getting cold. Collect your kitbag and change into warm, dry clothing.

Drink slowly and have something to eat from the recovery items you have packed in your kitbag. Some participants feel faint more than half an hour after finishing a marathon, often because they have not eaten anything. Again, do not drink excessively.

## SUPPLEMENTS

Large doses of supplementary vitamins and minerals (such as iron) are not essential and produce no benefit if you have a healthy mixed diet, but additional vitamin C in small doses is reasonable if fresh fruit and vegetables are in short supply.

Adequate preparation for a marathon requires appropriate nutrition, hydration and rest. Athletes often consume isotonic, carbohydrate and protein drinks as well as energy gels and bars purchased in sports and health-food shops in preparation for the event, which is considered safe practice.



However, over the last two decades there have been an increasing number of commercially available compounds that claim to enhance performance. Some have been found to contain substances banned in other countries and other products (such as steroids) that are banned for use among competitive athletes. Such products are usually purchased via the internet and should not be used by anybody training for a sports event like the Marathon.

Participants using performance-enhancing compounds that have not been licensed and regulated properly may experience serious side effects and increase their risk of developing heart disturbances that culminate in sudden death. There have been well-publicised cases of runners inadvertently using compounds such as DMAA (an amphetamine-like substance) in an attempt to help them fight fatigue during endurance events and this caused detrimental effects on their health, even resulting in their death.

Do not take any unregulated substances bought over the internet.

### **PAINKILLERS**

Certain painkillers termed non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as ibuprofen, diclofenac or naproxen can cause problems with the kidneys and should be avoided within 48 hours of running the Marathon.

Muscular pain during this period should be treated with paracetamol.

*Professor Sanjay Sharma BSc (Hons), MD, FRCR (UK), FESC, is Professor of Cardiology at St George's, University of London and the Medical Director of the Virgin Money London Marathon, The Big Half and the Vitality London 10,000. Follow Professor Sharma on Twitter @SSharmacardio*

7

Thank you to our Sponsors and Partners



Abbott	BUXTON NATURAL MINERAL WATER
Lucozade SPORT	tcs TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES
FLORA	TAG HEUER
MONEY GIVING	万达体育 WANDA SPORTS
ABBOTT WORLD MARATHON MAJORS	

FULLER'S LONDON PRIDE	NISSAN
-----------------------------	--------

# **Thank you!**

Finally, we'd like to say a big thank-you to you!

We've had to make changes this year to ensure that the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon can go ahead as scheduled.

We really appreciate your understanding and assistance, and can't wait to see you on Sunday 3 October when #WeRunTogether in the world's biggest-ever marathon!

