

Champions of Mud

**Cheryl Broughton
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Calling all adventure seekers! If you're tired of running the same old 5K that meanders through the town and over the bridge, then we've got the race for you! Designed for those who like excitement, camaraderie, exercise and mud -all rolled into one - The Mud Run is undoubtedly your ticket to the dirtiest, loudest and most fun event you'll ever enter! As the "Commander" of The Fitness Edge Boot Camp and a strong supporter of setting goals (and actually following through), I recruited about 20 of The Fitness Edge Boot Camp Members to join me for an event of a lifetime. Here's what we encountered:

Getting the "Dirt" on the Mud Run

Most races start with the typical starters pistol. No so with the Mud Run! This event gives the word "3-D" a whole new meaning and hits all your senses - touching, seeing, hearing and smelling! To kick things off, The Mud Run started with its signature fire-truck shower. That's right, all those who forgot to drink their morning coffee were treated to a cold, "eye awakening" shower from two fire-trucks parked at opposite ends of starting line. Just as the spray subsided, the smoke bombs kicked in; creating a wall so thick, you had no idea what was on the other side. If that weren't enough to get your heart rate up, shots from an M-60 (extremely loud machine gun) fired off, signaling the start of the race. And, yes - all of this occurred before the race started!

Once we pierced through the wall of smoke, we were led down a steep decline and into the longest sand wash. We ran over what seemed like one solid mile of just sand and rocks. Then, the course winded through a tunnel and up a concrete wall (with the help of ropes). We traveled just a few yards more and met up with our first shoe eating mud pit. This is why you should wear tall lace up boots.

We continued on through five miles of soggy fields, nine mud pits, a water pit (with obstacles) and enough mud to make a million mud pies. I have to say the last mud pit was the most challenging - it was covered with ropes. This of course, meant you had to get down on your hands and knees and crawl under the ropes to get to the other side. Up to this point in the race, I was pretty jazzed that my face had made it that far without a speck of mud (so much for wishful thinking). As I plunged forward on my knees, I was treated to a complimentary mud facial - completing my new "Champions of Mud look." The troopers and I crawled and slithered 'till we made it out of the pit and on to the finish line.

Who Runs The Mud Run?

The Mud Run attracts everyone from "soccer moms" to Navy Seals and members of the Special Enforcement Bureau. The event was open to all ages and fitness levels. In fact, there was a

special course set up just for kids. You can enter as a group, or for those who are little more competitive, you can enter as individual.

What impressed me the most were the parents who ran with their children. With childhood obesity reaching astounding heights, the best thing a parent can do is get involved in a sport or activity with the child - not just watch them from the sidelines. "Last year my 10-year-old son, Beau and I ran the race," said Dell Goodrick, a cosmetic dentist who practices in the Santa Clarita Valley. "Although it was physically exhausting, the sense of accomplishment and bonding for the two of us was incredible. It was something that we looked forward to all year. This year we talked my 9-year old daughter, Blair in to doing the kid's 1-mile run. This too was a tremendous accomplishment for a young person to have achieved. This race really boosted her confidence, not to mention the fun that we had getting muddy and wet together. We'll all be back next year!"

And, don't let the obstacle courses scare you. You can go at your own pace at all times. One of the best ways to make it through those "tuff times" is to enlist the help of one of your teammates. "That's the only way I made it through this race," said real estate agent, Kelly Muscarella, of Realty Executives. "I would have stopped back at the first mile if my two running partners were not with me." Kelly had suffered an ankle injury prior to the start of the run, but she was determined to complete the event. "The best part of the race was crossing the finish line - knowing that I had accomplished my goal"

Don't Miss This

Put together by the Special Enforcement Bureau (SWAT, Air Rescue Paramedics, K-9 and the Sheriff's Department); the Mud run is the one event you don't want to miss. "The race started seven years ago as a community outreach event to get more acquainted with area residents and let them know what the Sheriff's Department had to offer them," said Sergeant Jack Ewell. "This is a time for us to have fun with the community - we don't always get to interact in a social setting with residents."

"I love challenges and adventure," said local Chiropractor, Kerry Sander of Valencia. "I heard a saying many years back that people on their death bed always regret the things that they haven't done versus things that they have done. I don't want to be one of those people - so, I gave it a try - and I'm glad I did."

Tips for Running the Mud Run

Before you lace up your clean and tidy running shoes -these tips will make a difference between loving and hating the experience.

1. Wear Boots - Unless you want to re-live those days of the "Electric Slide" - leave those sneakers at home! You'll need a pair of boots with good tread - especially after your first stomp in the mud. Sneakers do not have enough traction with all the mud that will get caked on. Plus, the hills of dirt that you climb along the race have been known to eat a sneaker now and then because they come off so easy.

2. Wear Thick Socks - preferably the ones made for running. This will prevent blisters and help your feet feel just as good as the day before the event.
3. Wear Long Pants - You'll need these to protect your legs in the deep, dark mud pits.
4. Wear Shorts Under Your Pants - Being able to shed down to your shorts verses your muddy, used-to-be-white-underwear will make the Outdoor Co-ed showers a much more enjoyable experience.
5. Bring a change of clothes - including shoes. You'll remember just how important this is when your carpooling buddy refuses to let you put your muddy body in their clean car.
6. Bring a Garbage Bag - This is to put your dirty clothes and shoes into for the drive home.
7. Soak it - Believe it or not, the mud does come out of your clothes! Soak everything (even your boots) in a garbage can or other container and keep rinsing and soaking until the majority of mud has disappeared. Then you can throw your clothes in the washing machine.
8. Stay Hydrated - Drink 17 ounces. of fluid two hours before your run, then another 20 ounces of fluid for every hour that you exercise. You'll need more water during high humidity and hot temperatures.
9. Warm Up - Warm up your muscles before you begin the sport. Warm muscles stretch with greater ease.
10. Stretch - your muscles before and after you participate in the sport. This will improve your flexibility and reduce chances of injury.
11. Join a Team - Join a team or find a partner to run with. You are more likely to stay strong to the end when you have someone else running with you.
12. Where to go - Our favorite store to get "geared up" from head to toe is at Neumax Army, Navy & Paintball Supplies located at 20655 Soledad Canyon Road Unit #31 (661) 251-9355.
13. Who to call - Contact Jeff Moore or Jeff Riggin at 323-264-7084. The cost to enter is \$20 and proceeds go to a non-profit organization.

Training For The Event

Whether you run the trails to stay in shape or are training for a race - following a conditioning program is the best way to prevent injury and to prepare your body for the event that lies ahead.

Beginners should start with combining walking and running. Begin by alternating four minutes of waking with two minutes of running for a total of 30 minutes. Follow this regimen every other day for at least two weeks then add a minute to the run and subtract a minute from the walk. After a couple of weeks at this level, step it up to four minutes running, two minutes

walking. Keep going until you are running continuously for 30 minutes or settle into any walk/run combo that suits you.

A week before the race, cut distances by about two thirds and limit running the last two days. As the weeks progress, it will be tempting to crank up the speed, but overdoing it increases your risk of injury.

Going For The Goal

The good news is that working toward a goal may do more to improve your physique and mental health than you might think. Experts recommend picking an event that will require physical training like a walk-a-thon or 5K. According to a recent study, runners reported that just completing the event or race gave them an increased sense of accomplishment. Newcomers and seasoned veterans alike agreed that they felt more confident and more powerful in all areas of their lives after completing the race. They felt stronger mentally and physically and more able to master problems at work and in relationships.

Cheryl Broughton is Director/Commander of The Fitness Edge Boot Camp (F.E.B.C.) and host of The Fitness Edge Health & Fitness TV Show (airs every Thursday at 5:30pm on Channel 20). F.E.B.C. is about camaraderie; team building skills, mental and physical challenges, obstacle courses, nutrition counseling and more. For info: www.efitnessedge.com or call toll free 1- 888-671-6500.

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