

# Ingredients & Flavours

## Nutrition for the marathon

The popularity of marathon running has increased as more people catch the health and fitness bug and seek to test themselves in what many regard as the ultimate physical and mental challenge. However the strain on the body during and after the race is huge and for this reason sports nutrition products that enhance performance and aid recovery are gaining in usage. The addition of amino acids to sports drinks, pioneered by Ajinomoto, could provide the physical boost and improved recovery rates people are looking for.

Scientific research suggests that the branched chain amino acids (BCAAs) valine, isoleucine and leucine may improve physical and mental performance in marathon runners. In one study, the performance of untrained athletes, measured by the time taken to complete the race, was improved by 3% (or 5-6 minutes). BCAAs may also reduce mental fatigue, particularly during competitive exercise or when exercise is performed at warmer temperatures.

Paula Radcliffe, who recently smashed the women's world marathon record in London, took two ice cold baths to speed up recovery times following her fantastic performance. Amino acids could offer a



more congenial alternative. During exhaustive exercise muscle protein can be damaged. Consumption of BCAAs may help create conditions that promote muscle synthesis and repair by restoring the levels of these essential amino acids. It is also thought that arginine may be beneficial to the recovery process by increasing the levels of body growth hormone.

In fact, the benefits of amino acid sports drinks are already enjoyed by athletes and marathon runners around the world. Ajinomoto's AminoVital product range,

which contains BCAAs, glutamine and arginine, has been the official drink of the Honolulu Marathon for the past three years. In December 2002 more than 30,000 runners gained the benefit of consuming AminoVital Water Charge. Dr Jim Barahal, President and CEO of the Honolulu Marathon Association, said "AminoVital was definitely one of the contributory factors to the success of the Honolulu Marathon. Aid stations served AminoVital throughout the race and we were delighted to see more people crossing the finishing line than ever before".