

Its' National, Punctuation Day!

By Mark Remy

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This is a running blog on a running web site, which means that we usually discuss stuff here that's, you know, running-related. Or at least health- and/or fitness-related.

But in addition to being a runner, I'm an editor. (No, really! I am!) Which is why I'm so excited to announce that today is National Punctuation Day. A former copy editor named Jeff Rubin started National Punctuation Day five years ago as "a celebration of the lowly comma, correctly used quotes, and other proper uses of periods, semicolons, and the ever-mysterious ellipsis."

There's tons more information on Rubin's web site, nationalpunctuationday.com, including rules for the National Punctuation Day Baking Contest and — I swear — lyrics to a punctuation rap song. ("I am a COLON, I am two dots / I'm the introducer, I express your thoughts.")

So as an editor, I'm pumped. My plan is to walk around all day rapping about punctuation. Possibly while wearing a large, gold apostrophe medallion around my neck.

It's worth noting, though, that punctuation is important for all runners — not just the ones who happen to be geeks wordsmiths. In that spirit, I've put together a little tutorial to demonstrate correct and incorrect runner's punctuation. Or is it runners' punctuation? Runners's? Anyway, on with it.

Incorrect: "Are those the new Asic's DS Trainers&&"

Correct: "Are those the new Asic's DS Trainers?"

[After a question, use a question mark—not a pair of ampersands.]

Incorrect: "Haile walked/ran a 4 48.30 marathon at Twin Cities, he just don't care anymore."

Correct: "Haile walked/ran a 4:48:30 marathon at Twin Cities; he just don't care anymore."

[When describing a race time, use a colon to separate hours, minutes, and seconds. And join two independent clauses with a colon, not a comma.]

Incorrect: "Are you telling me I should tape my nipple's before my 10-K marathon next weekend?????????"

Correct: "Are you telling me I should tape my nipple's before my 10-K marathon next weekend???"

[The correct way to express incredulity is with three question marks—not 10.]

Incorrect: "Must ignore pain. Must finish race."

Correct: "Must... ignore... pain.... Must... finish... race."

[When muttering to yourself in the final miles of a marathon, use an ellipsis between each muttered word.]

Have a running punctuation question of your own? Leave it in the Comment's section, below.

Happy National Punctuation Day!