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**SHORTCUTS
TO PERFECT
POSTURE**

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AND RELAX...

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7 SECRETS OF
SUCCESS

Plus
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**GEAR
OF THE
YEAR**

**26 BEST SHOES
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2018

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Photographer: Peter Yang. **Model:** Elsa Couvelier. **Styling:** Argy Koutsothanasis
Hair/ makeup: Deshawn Hatcher/ Zenobia Agency.
Clothing: North Face (Jacket, shoes), New Balance (top), lululemon (tights), Garmin (watch)

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What breach of running etiquette particularly gets your goat?

'Runners' Commandment No. 1: Thou shalt not flaunt thy phlegm.'
— Wayne Hannon

'Bundling people aside on your way to the front of the race start as if you are late for the reading of a will at which you expect to do really well.'
— John Carroll

'The suspiciously fast sprint finish. Performed by a runner, usually male, who has been conserving an unheroic amount of energy until a race's final moments.'
— Rick Pearson

'Runners who don't so much draft you as try to climb into your pocket. Repeatedly clipping my heels means you're too close, buddy.'
— Kerry McCarthy

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EDITOR'S LETTER



THE LAST FEW WEEKS OF THE

year are a good time to reset your running. The days are short and there's lots of other stuff competing for your attention – including seasonal hangovers. But rather than viewing this as a threat to your

running, why not see it as a chance to recalibrate your body and mind, so that when your mileage and frequency build up again, you're in prime mental and physical condition to take advantage.

A lot of runners see rest as a dirty word, but as our feature on page 34 shows, if you're constantly churning out miles like a hamster on a wheel, you are more at risk of losing motivation. So scaling back can help you maintain your hunger to improve. You could also use more non-running time to build strength in problem areas, increase your flexibility and work on your form, as coach Greg McMillan does (page 77).

If your running has got bogged down in a mire of mile splits, segment times and data analysis, it could be time for a reboot of your running mojo. Turn to page 44 for advice on how to broaden your running horizons, find fresh sources of motivation and put the joy back into your runs.

Of course, runners can't be expected to not run for long, so on page 70 you'll find the seven key strategies – and a schedule – that will help those preparing for a spring marathon to arrive at the start line in the best possible shape. After four months of training, you'll be glad you rested well.

ANDY DIXON
EDITOR

@RW_ed_Andy

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DR JOSEPHINE PERRY

The sports psychologist and 10-time marathoner explores the perils of comparing your performance with that of others, and extols the motivational power of holistic 'ment' goals, in *7 Ways to Move Your Mental Goalposts*, p44.



DANNY COYLE

The journalist, runner and race organiser (the Spitfire Scramble, a 24-hour trail race) looks at the life of Jim Fixx and his seminal work, *The Complete Book of Running*, 40 years on from its publication, in *The Leader of the Pack*, p60.

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FOOTWEAR

View the latest new releases from the biggest brands in running. Whether you want the cushioning of the adidas Ultraboost, or the fast pace of the Saucony Liberty. Or are you looking to improve your training with the latest tech, we've got you covered this festive season.

MEN'S



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Nike Structure 21

Dynamic Fit

Heel Drop - 10mm

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WOMEN'S



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Heel Drop - 4mm

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Nike Structure 21

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IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME....



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Garmin fenix 5s

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Garmin Forerunner 35

QR: 154207 - £140



TomTom Runner 3 HR Music

QR: 147000 - £225



Polar M430 GPS Watch

QR: 168365 - £200

RAVE RUN

BEER, **EAST DEVON**



THE EXPERIENCE

Follow the South West Coastal Path from Branscombe to Beer in South Devon, but be prepared to stop and stare in awe at the spectacular views of the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The stretch to Hooken Undercliff, known as the 'Stairway to Heaven', will certainly test those quads.

AFTER THE RUN

There is no shortage of restaurants in Beer and you really ought to have a beer, too, for obvious reasons. At the other end of the trail, try the Sea Shanty Beach Café in Branscombe.

RUNNER

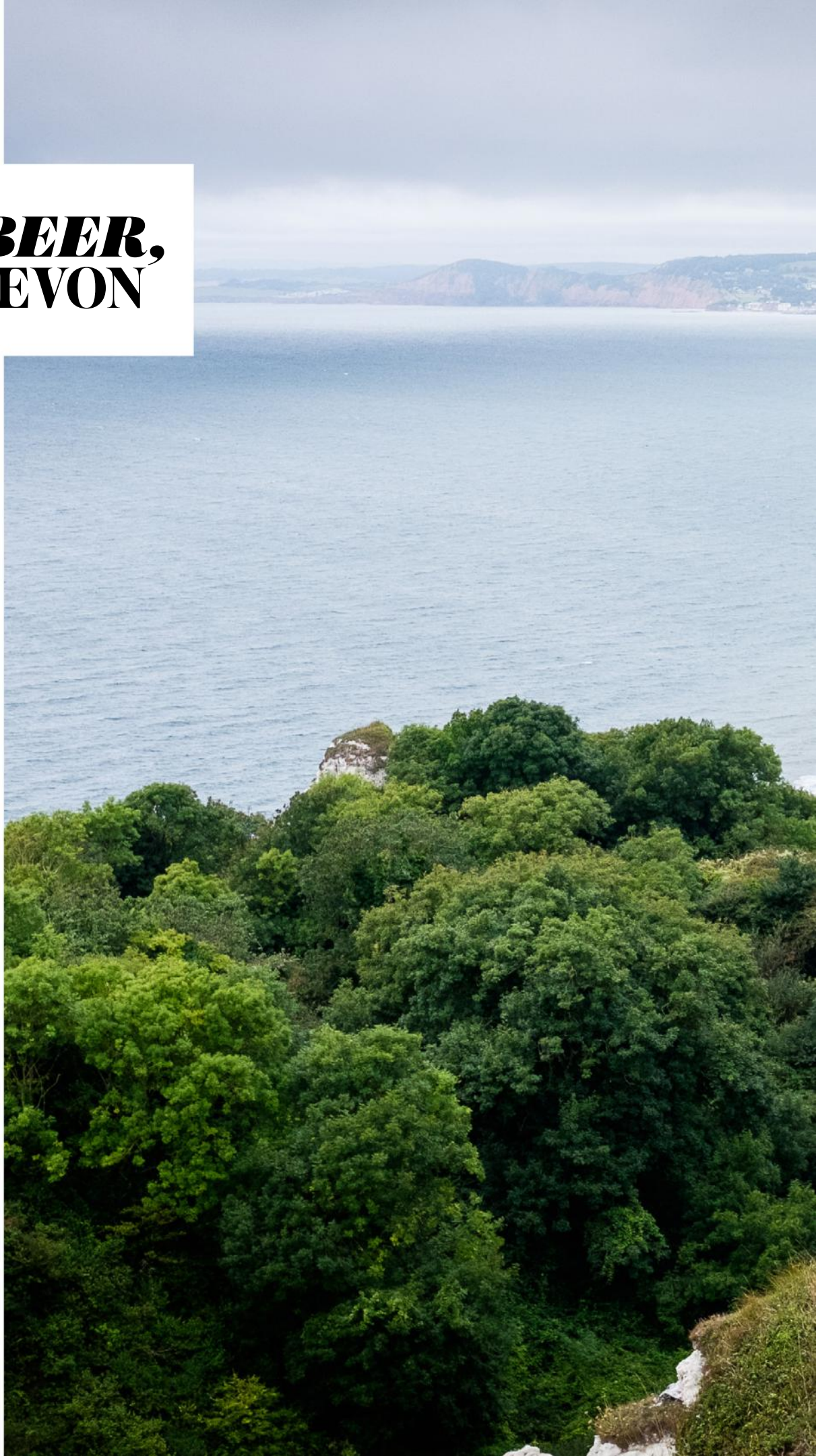
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WARM-UPS

The TIPS YOU NEED to GET UP to SPEED



TIME WEIGHS HEAVILY

*When the going gets tough,
the minutes pass at a snail's pace*

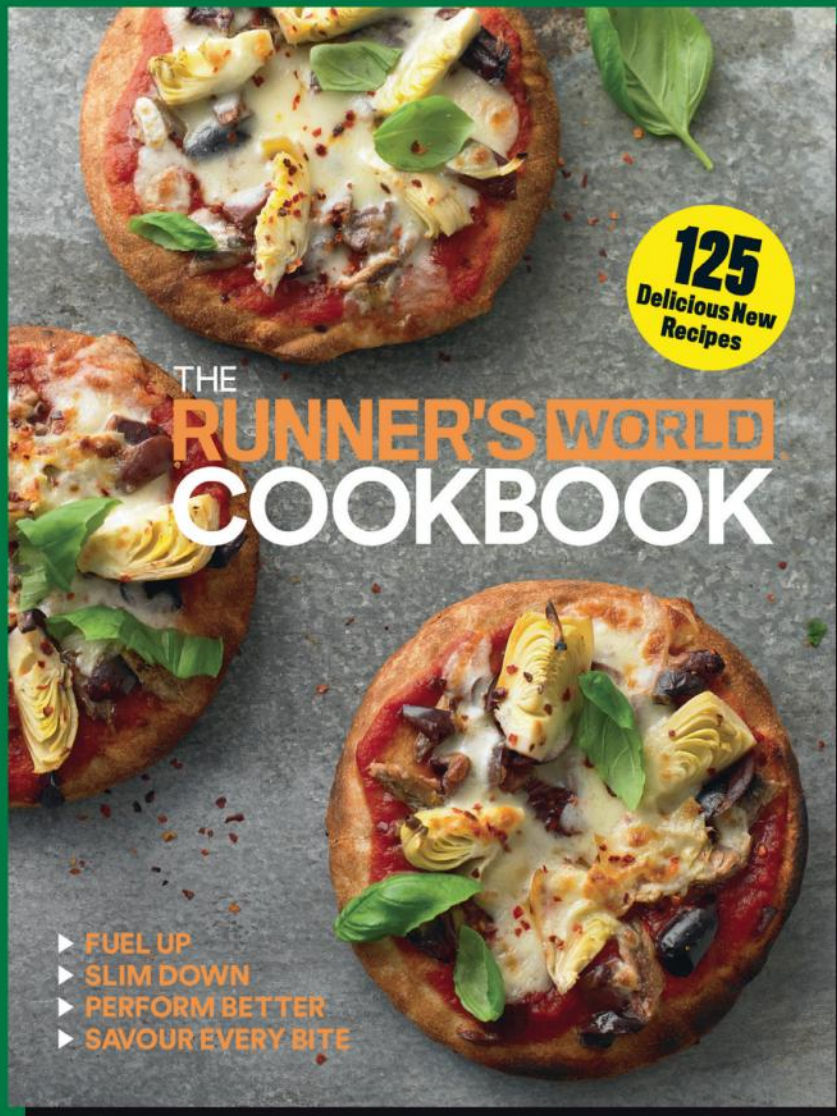
→ **EVER WONDERED WHY** the second half of a marathon feels like an eternity, or that final two-minute rep seems to stretch on forever? According to a new study,¹ it's because our perception of time slows down during intensive exercise.

Twelve fit adults carried out a series of 20-minute rowing and 30-second cycling tests, working at light, heavy and maximum exertion. They were then asked to report when they felt they'd reached 25, 50, 75 and 100 per cent of the allotted time. Participants accurately estimated

when they had completed 25 or 50 per cent of the time, but their later estimates during heavy and maximal exercise were shorter than the actual time.

Lead researcher professor Andrew Edwards says: 'A misjudgment in time could lead to a misjudgment in pace... This research underlines the importance of having a race plan that incorporates pacing and time. Something as simple as wearing and using a watch to monitor time during training and an event could help keep endurance athletes on track.'

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CROSS EXAMINE
A few cross-country runs will test your mettle and help you prepare for a road race

IT'S A DIRTY JOB...

Looking to run your best half or marathon in spring? Go cross-country during winter

→ **EVERYONE FROM** Mo Farah to Paula Radcliffe cut their teeth on the cross-country circuit, and as is clear from their success, embracing the mud can have great crossover gains for road running. Here are three reasons why it pays to get down and dirty at any time of year. In winter you'll be cold, wet and muddy, but that's part of the fun.

GET TOUGH

No doubt about it, cross-country is hard on the body – and that's why it works. 'Running cross-country not only builds your physical strength but also your mental strength,' says Tom Craggs, running coach with Running With Us (runningwithus.com). 'It teaches you how much pain you can tolerate – often, that's a lot more than you think.'

BOOST YOUR VO₂

Short in duration but heavy in effort, a cross-country run is similar to a VO₂ max session. These sessions – designed to improve the rate at which your body can

transport oxygen to your muscles – are ideal for runners. 'Cross-country is fast and furious,' says Craggs. 'I encourage my runners to go off fast and get themselves in a position they can try to defend. That's very different to a road race, but that's why cross-country is so exciting: it's unique.'

FORGET YOUR SPLITS

Cross-country is racing in its purest form. 'It breaks the GPS and personal best mindset,' says Craggs. 'It encourages people to run on feel rather than on pace. And, unlike many other races, it's a team event – you run to help your team, not just yourself.'

ON THE MAP

A new study by price-comparison website MoneySuperMarket has revealed the top UK cities as ranked by the number of endurance events they stage and the average price for entry.



4. Bath 5. Birmingham 6. Sheffield
7. Sunderland 8. Nottingham
9. Bradford 10. Leeds

90

The average number of minutes UK adults spend exercising each week – less than half the time they spend on the toilet (over three hours!).¹

FITNESS BY STEALTH

NO. 7: THE TOE-GA ROUTINE

Toe-ga, in case you're wondering, is yoga for the feet. Sat or standing at your desk, kick off your work shoes, push your big toe down into the floor and raise the other four toes off the ground. It's important to keep the ball of your foot in contact with the ground, rather than rolling your foot inwards. Aim to hold the position for 30 secs. Rest and repeat twice more.

The ultimate training log



The ultimate week-by-week training log for runners of all abilities. Track your progress by recording your runs, routes, distance and times as you chase down your goals, with tips and expert advice on training, nutrition and injury prevention. *The Runner's World Training Diary* is the secret weapon that will take your training to the next level!

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WHY OYSTERS ROCK

Shell out for top nutrition

→ **WHEN IT COMES** to zinc content, these briny bivalves beat all comers. Zinc plays a role in enzyme activity and protein syntheses and is key for immune health. And studies have also suggested a link between zinc deficiency and decreased testosterone. Oysters are loaded with iron and vitamin B12, both of which support blood circulation and energy metabolism. A pearl of wisdom: try to work them into your rotation of two to three servings of seafood a week.

WHEY TO GO

Whey protein can help older men gain strength, and build lean muscle. In a US study, one group of men aged over 70 took supplements twice a day consisting of whey protein, creatine, vitamin D, calcium and polyunsaturated fatty acids, while a control group took a placebo. After 14 weeks of training, only the supplement group showed significant increases in their upper-body strength.



Try this

Get the D brief

In winter many of us are low on vitamin D, as we get most of it from exposure to the sun. A daily spray on the tongue of **BetterYou Dlux 3000 Vitamin D Spray** (£7.99 for 15ml, hollandandbarrett.com) is one way to get your recommended intake.

STOMACH MORE MILES

How to avoid intestinal upset

Australian research has found that prolonged exercise, even at just 60 per cent of maximum intensity, could damage cells in the intestines, raising the likelihood of digestive issues. The researchers named it 'exercise-induced gastro-intestinal syndrome'. So how can you minimise the effects without cutting your mileage?

PROBIOTICS

Take a probiotic supplement before a run to help protect against midrun bowel distress. Probiotics help to keep gut cells together, which strengthens the intestinal wall. Result: fewer toilet breaks. **TRY:** *Alfflorex*, £34.95 for 30 capsules, precisionbiotics.com

TIMING AND QUANTITY

When it comes to taking in solids during a long run or race, it's always better to go for 'little and often', rather than filling up. Also, stick to easily absorbed options – some swear by energy gels, but if you're looking for a natural option, try dried fruit and nuts.

REDUCE FIBRE

In the days leading up to a race, consider cutting back on fibre-heavy foods such as cereals, beans and pulses. Although these are full of runner-friendly benefits and should be part of your general diet, they may make you more likely to be dashing to the toilet.

Men's Health

PRIMAL 9

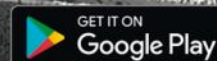
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HAPPY TRAILS

Looking to lower your blood pressure and boost your immune system? Head for a gentle walk or run in the forests. The Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) is now taking root in the West, with clubs offering forest bathing popping up across the US and UK.

Experiments at Chiba University in Japan measured the various psychological effect of Shin-rin yoku on 280 subjects in their early twenties. The team measured the subjects' salivary cortisol levels (which increases with stress) and blood pressure during a day in the city and then after a 30-minute walk in the forest, finding that both were significantly lower after the walk.



RUNNING BATTLE

Exercise helps manage ADHD in children

A recent review found that physical activity, and especially aerobic exercise such as running, improved the cognitive, behavioural and physical symptoms of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children. The review included 30 studies that assessed both short- and long-term effects of exercise on ADHD symptoms. The analysis also found that exercise was not associated with any adverse effects.

FIT TO WORK

An afternoon run is just the job when you want to be at your best

→ **WANT TO** become more productive at work? Go for that lunchtime run. Physical activity increases work productivity, according to a recent US study. Following 6,500 adults over a three-year period, the study sought to assess the relationship between physical activity and limitations in the workplace caused by health issues. It found that a two per cent increase in physical activity led to a 30 per cent decrease in workplace limitations and performance. Further proof that a healthy workforce is a better workforce.

HOT ON YOUR HEELS
A lunchtime run can set you up for an afternoon of blazing productivity.

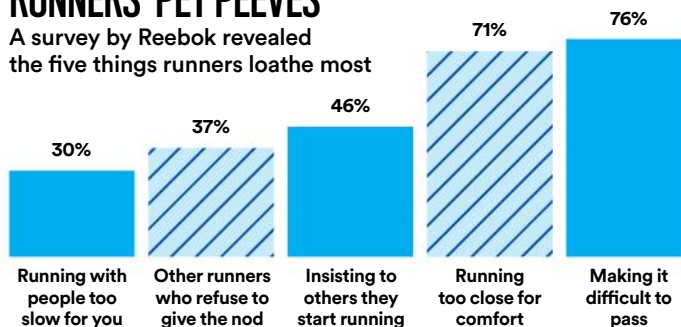


TWO

Months by which people who are overweight cut their life expectancy for every extra kilogram they carry.¹

RUNNERS' PET PEEVES

A survey by Reebok revealed the five things runners loathe most





GOING STRAIGHT

Good posture boosts confidence, wellbeing and your running. Physio Sammy Margo (sammymargophysiotherapy.com) shares her top tips to keep you in good standing

BBC

'Sitting at your desk make sure you BBC—put your Bottom into the Back of the Chair.'

MEETINGS

'Sitting in one position for long periods affects your posture. Stand during meetings and to make phone calls.'

WORK STATION

'Ensure your work station is ergonomically sound and think about investing in a standing desk. Make sure your screen is at arm's length and at a comfortable height for your eye line.'

WALK TALL

'Imagine there is a wall behind you; this aligns the ear directly over the shoulder joint, making you stand straighter.'

BED SENSE

'If your mattress is over eight years old, it will have deteriorated by 75 per cent and may cause you to have bad posture while you sleep. If this is the case, think about investing in a new one.'

HANDBAG

'Women often overfill their handbags, which can throw your back out of alignment. Empty your heavy bag of unnecessary items.'

30.8 MILLION *The number of sick days attributed to musculoskeletal problems (including back and neck pain) in the UK each year, costing the economy approximately £14 billion. Coughs and colds accounted for the most sick days (34 million).*

NO SLOUCH

This posture-training device attaches to your back and works with an app. Upright Go emits a gentle vibration when you slouch, prompting you to sit or stand with correct posture. It can also be put into 'tracking mode' to record posture data without vibrating. *Upright Go, £79.99, amazon.co.uk*



CHECK YOUR RUNNING FORM

To ensure you're running with the right posture, conduct a regular checklist, says 'The Run Doctor', Ed Kelly (therun.doctor.co.uk). 'Start from your head and make your way down. Asking these questions will help to make good running posture a habit.'



Are you looking straight ahead, not downwards?



Are your shoulders relaxed or tense and up near your ears?



Is your chest slightly raised so that you're running tall?



Are you leading from your belly button?



Is your cadence nice and snappy or are you dragging your feet?



Are your feet striking underneath your body rather than out in front?

100KM



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**RACE TO
THE KING**

RUNNING THROUGH ICELAND p27 + RUNNING MONSTERS p32

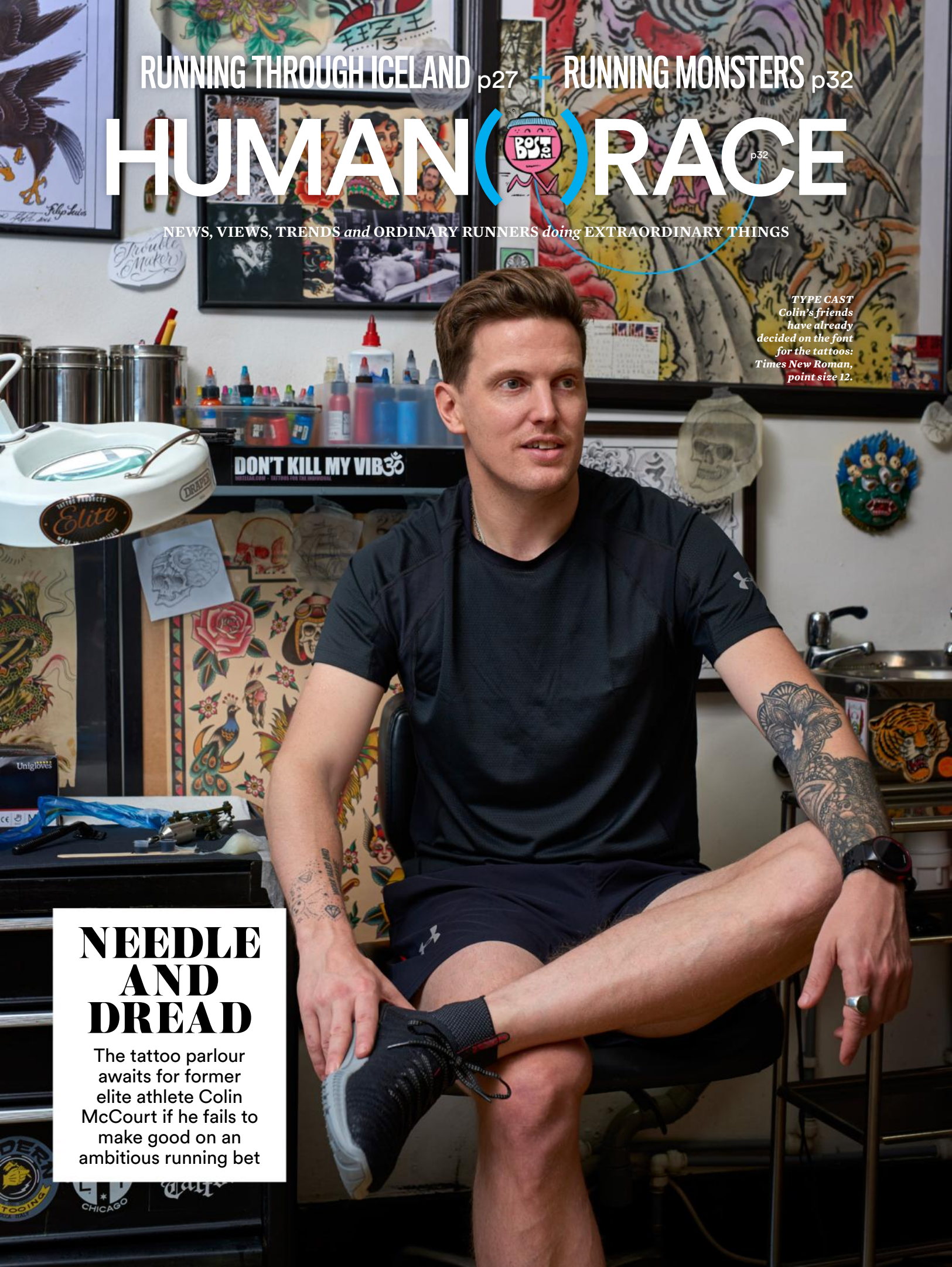
HUMAN (BOY) RACE

NEWS, VIEWS, TRENDS and ORDINARY RUNNERS doing EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

TYPE CAST
Colin's friends
have already
decided on the font
for the tattoos:
Times New Roman,
point size 12.

NEEDLE AND DREAD

The tattoo parlour
awaits for former
elite athlete Colin
McCourt if he fails to
make good on an
ambitious running bet





WHAT MOTIVATES YOU to run faster? The chance of bagging a PB? The hope of beating a local rival? For Colin McCourt, the stakes are somewhat higher. Should he fail to run a sub-16-minute 5K by midnight on New Year's Eve this year, he has to get the full names of 17 friends tattooed on his body.

There was a time when Colin, a former Team GB middle-distance runner, could have run a sub-16:00 5K in his sleep. Back in 2010, he won the European Team 1500m Championships, and has a 3:37 PB for the distance. But Colin was inconsistent, prone to poor races and patchy training. Having failed to qualify for London 2012, he dropped out of the sport completely.

'I went from being an elite athlete to working at Nationwide,' he says. 'The running was replaced by pizzas and PlayStation and so the weight piled on. At the start of this year, I weighed 94kg [15st].'

When Colin posted a picture of his new physique online, his old running friends couldn't believe it. 'They started messaging me, ripping the piss out of me,' he says. 'After a few hours, we got down to a bet: if I ran sub-16 in 2017, they had to pay me £1,700; if I failed, I had to get all their names tattooed on my body.'

Early on, Colin seemed destined for a date with the tattoo parlour. 'In February, I ran the Bournemouth parkrun in 24 minutes. My mates were thinking they were quids in.'

However, through an overhaul of his diet and a dedicated training schedule, Colin began to lose weight and gain speed. 'I cut out sugar, milk and snacking. That made a huge difference. I'd run 20 minutes in the morning and then walk with the baby for 30 minutes at night. Gradually, I began to build more and quicker running into the schedule.'

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

FAMILY VALUES

'My family has given me structure and focus. I wish I'd had that when I was an elite.'

LET IT GO

'I used to dwell on bad runs. Now I let them go and move on to the next one.'

IN IT TOGETHER

'Average runners and elites have more in common than you think. We all have the same reservations, the same doubts.'



STREET SMART
Colin says his new lifestyle has made him a more focused runner.

Perhaps the biggest change has been Colin's attitude to training. 'I look back and think how much smarter I could have been when I was a full-time athlete. Back then, I was guilty of believing that a week should be based around three immovable sessions, with steady running thrown in. Now I think that's stupid. You should run how you feel and take each day individually.'

This new approach is working. Now down to 74kg (11.6st), he's clocking up 50-mile weeks and believes he could run a 16:20 5K right now. However, shaving those remaining seconds off before the end of the year will be hard graft. 'There are still some old demons. I did a parkrun a couple of weeks ago and flew off the start line. I was 200m clear but then my legs just buckled and I dropped back. It's moments like that when you tell yourself, "It's not going to happen, mate."'

Whereas running was once Colin's priority, he now has a young family to consider. He says this has made him a more focused runner and someone who better understands other runners. 'I interact with people when I see them on a run, as I have

an appreciation of how difficult it can be. I never had that before.'

Still, isn't it easier for a natural runner like Colin to get fast again? 'It's easy to hide behind the idea that some people are natural runners and some people aren't. Trust me, when I started again I was right back at the beginning, with all the common aches and pains that go with it. Yes, I've run well before, but mostly I'm just working really hard in training.'

As for what he'll do next, Colin's happy to let the public decide. 'I'll turn it over to the people who've supported me on Instagram and ask them what challenge they'd like to see me take on. I just hope it's not an ultramarathon!'

And that's the thing about this story. It won't end on December 31, 2017 – whether Colin runs a sub-16 5K or not. It's bigger than that. This is a story of a runner reborn and a passion rediscovered. As Colin says, 'I'm in love with running again.'

Colin posts a one-minute Instagram vlog everyday, updating his followers on his training and also offering running advice: [instagram.com/colinmccourt](https://www.instagram.com/colinmccourt)





In other words

BY JOHN CARROLL

'THIS IS A DOWNWARD-FACING DOG, USELESS BIPEDS!'



W

hat can we learn from dogs? How to look good in a bowler hat while playing snooker? That chasing one's own tail, literally or metaphorically, is futile? Good to know, but I believe that an animal who prefers to sniff a bum than look at a face to work out who he's talking to is not a beast from whom we ought to expect much in the way of wisdom. But I was so wrong, for I have learned – or re-learned – three lessons about running from Buddy, a staffie cross who lives in our house.

Every morning, at about 6am, one of us takes him for a walk. When I've lost the rigged coin toss, gravity spills me down the stairs and as it does, Buddy drops from the sofa in the front room, nudges the door with his head and pads into the hall (if he emerged one morning dressed in striped pyjamas and carrying a guttering candle I would not be at all surprised).

As I slump on a bench, my dog stretches. First he performs a perfect upward-facing dog (and so he should), his back legs stretched out behind him and his chest pushed forward, his regal boulder of a head almost resting on his back. He will then stretch out with his front legs, his spine curving so deeply you could store a melon on it. His hindquarters sit proudly in the air: *this* is a downward-facing dog, useless bipeds! Meanwhile, I visualise the crank handle slowly turning in my brain and failing to catch.

Ritual complete, he sits, body vibrating with anticipation, while I put on his harness. Bending to do so is my first stretch of the day, and it's not really a stretch – it's just letting the weight of my sleep-clotted head carry my torso closer to the ground. Sometimes, I briefly nod off.

Once outside, my dog is alert and limber, cantering along while I'm dragged behind like a villain in a western who's been shot from his horse but has one foot caught in the stirrup. Sure, he does not spend half his

waking hours compressing his spine sitting at a desk, and, yes, he is younger than me (in dog years I am dead). But the fact is that he has stretched and I haven't. Lesson one: stretching is important.

During the walk in the dark, hilly park, my dog will periodically break into a run, a limb-lengthening gallop on uneven terrain, often over fallen branches. I have a choice: I can stand firm and brace for the jolt when he reaches the end of the long lead, or I can go with him. I almost always go with him, accelerating from a shuffle to a sprint in an alarmingly loud heartbeat, my muscles and lungs in instant chaos as they are sent into battle before they have finished basic training.

Twenty or 30 metres later he stops sharply. We walk a little and then he's off again. It's a frantic interval session, but I've not seen the training plan. Now I have to be alert, too, because it's still not light, the grass is wet with dew and if my dog sees a fox he'll be into the bushes while I'm still congratulating myself for pulling on both my running shoes. But here's the thing: by the time we return home I am fresh, loose and awake, and if I then run to work, it feels easy. Why? Because I have warmed up. Lesson two: warming up is a good idea.

You may be wondering why I run with my dog in tricky conditions, risking injury or, at least, lashings of indignity. Here's why: I have never seen an animal that seems to get as much joy from the act of running as a dog does. And when he looks at me over his shoulder, he seems to be saying, 'Isn't this just great fun?' Lesson three: running is fun.

On such days I reach the office feeling well disposed towards my colleagues. I greet them heartily, albeit in traditional human manner: dogs, after all, are idiots.

WHAT JOHN...

Discovered...

That doing a plank challenge for a month is not nearly as much fun as it sounds. And it did not sound fun to begin with.

Noticed...

A running top that seems as fresh as a spring meadow after being washed retains a grim underlying odour that reveals itself after even a short run-commute, especially when you stand next to someone in a shop.

Sam Murphy is away, but will return in the February issue

YOU'RE
AMAZING!



HANNAH BEECHAM
Founder of
RED January

A few years ago, Hannah Beecham's mum experienced severe depression. Running had already improved Hannah's wellbeing, so she thought it would be good for her mother. 'It empowered me and I hoped it might do the same for mum,' she says. 'So I signed her up for a race: the Midnight Marathon.' Hannah's mum completed the race and began using running to manage her depression. 'This inspired me to help others,' says Hannah. 'Most races happen in summer, when what most people need is a lift in winter.' The result is Run Every Day (RED) January, a month-long initiative encouraging people to boost their health. RED January now has participants from around the world. 'You don't have to be an athlete to take part,' says Hannah. 'Any form of physical activity counts.'

runeverydayjanuary.com



CHRIS COOPER
Supporting Kenyan
children

When Chris Cooper was struck down with double pneumonia, aged 29, he knew he needed to change his lifestyle. So he took up running and visited the famous Kenyan training location of Iten. But what he discovered on that trip – the living conditions, hunger and lack of hope felt by local children – drew him in a new direction. 'I couldn't just walk away,' he says. 'I thought I'd try to use the power of running to help these kids.' Chris's solution was Runners Heal, a clothing line that donates a percentage of its profits to feed schoolchildren. 'We've paid for more than 30,000 school meals,' he says. 'The running link continues, as all the meals are sourced from the farm of Kenyan marathon legend Mary Keitany!'

runnersheal.org



BY THE NUMBERS

TOM WHITTLE

27, LONDON, RAN THE LENGTH OF ICELAND

→ **TOM WHITTLE** is no stranger to an endurance challenge, having cycled the length of South America earlier this year. Still, even by his standards, his adventure in October was a tad ambitious: a south-to-north trek through Iceland on foot. It was made tougher still

when, a few days before flying out, a storm led to a bridge collapse, meaning Tom had to re-plot the route, running from north to south, against the wind. 'It was very tough,' he says. 'I was quite underprepared for the challenge and it was a shock to the system. It certainly wasn't a holiday!'

704.2K

DISTANCE RUN FROM THE NORTH TO THE SOUTH OF ICELAND.

one

Meltdown experienced. 'I began crying on day two – I thought I was going to have to give up.'

7,000

NUMBER OF CALORIES CONSUMED EACH DAY.

10 DAYS

13HRS

11 MINS

59 SECS

TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE THE RUN, BEATING THE PREVIOUS RECORD OF 12 DAYS.

15

Number of blood blisters developed during the trek.

3

Times the Northern Lights were spotted. 'The most surreal experience of my life.'

125

Kilometres tried on day nine. 'I collapsed at 65km. It's good to find your limits!'

Two

Number of hours of Tom's longest training run. 'I know, I was underprepared!'

£3,677

MONEY RAISED FOR CLIC SARGENT, IN MEMORY OF TOM'S NEPHEW, SONNY, WHO DIED FROM CANCER LAST YEAR.

5,902

Metres climbed. 'I was walking through snow on days three and four.'

Tom was fuelled by Rolla Granola: rollagranola.com



LETTER OF THE MONTH



DOORKNOB DIY

Last October, I started my fourth round of IVF. As well as eight injections in my stomach every day, they threw in a ninth – into my bum cheek. Sadly, the IVF wasn't successful. After grieving, all I wanted to do was run. But that ninth injection had made my bum incredibly sore! Two seconds into the run, I had to stop.

When I put pressure on the area, the pain eased – but running with both hands on my backside wasn't conducive to efficient running. However, it gave me a thought: if I could find something that I could attach to me that put pressure on the area, I might be able to run. The next day, my husband strapped two doorknobs to my bum with gaffer tape. I took one step, two steps...it was working! My two doorknobs and gaffer tape became as essential as my trainers. I ran with them in Paris, Monaco and Barcelona. Round six of IVF is beginning this month, and the pain will start again. I'm praying that, in nine months time, I'll be running with my door knobs, gaffer tape and maybe, just maybe, a buggy.

Katie Baker, via email.

JOIN THE CLUB

Thirteen months ago, I gave birth to my beautiful daughter. Three weeks later, she contracted meningococcal septicaemia. During a very scary hospital admission, she battled this terrible illness and survived. However, despite this, the impact the experience had on me as her mother knocked me hugely. I put on three stone in weight and this battered my self-esteem. I felt low and partly to blame for her illness. I was wrongly under the impression that running clubs were for the elite runners only. How wrong was I? I joined the Baddesley Badgers running club after it had been recommended by a colleague, and completed their 0-5K beginners programme in March this year. I have since gone on to complete the Great North Run. I just wanted to shout out to any readers that are worried about joining a local club to do their research and try it. It can really be life-changing! My confidence has soared and I have a fantastic network of new running friends.

Jenna Shaw, Atherstone



Jenna Shaw is a changed woman since she started running

CORRECTION:

On page 15 of *RW December* we stated that *Lo-Salt* contained 1,040mg of sodium per teaspoon. In fact, it contains 681mg per tsp, less than all standard salts.

when I was 40 years old. I had trained hard for a year, running every day in Richmond Park, but couldn't get a place in the London Marathon. So I put an old number on my T-shirt (from a half marathon I'd run) and ran London anyway. At the end, I explained to the lady at Westminster Bridge that I wasn't officially in the race. She just said, 'Oh, you deserve it anyway' and gave me the medal. I'm still running at age 75.

*Pearl Mitchell,
Kingston-upon-Thames*

RUNNERS OF THE WORLD - BE LIKE CYCLISTS AND GIVE US A SMILE

I agree with Matt Hale's thoughts about acknowledging others when running (*Letters, RW, December*). I always acknowledge runners and cyclists as I run, and Matt is right: cyclists are more sociable. When running in a group I find that the group is acknowledged, but when I run on my own it happens a lot less. The ones who tend not to bother are the headphone wearers who appear to be wrapped up in their own world. So come on, all runners, give each other a smile, raise your hand in acknowledgement. It costs nothing and makes us all feel that we are doing something we enjoy.

Nigel Radcliffe, Stockton

SNAP CHAT

Your best pre- and post-race pics. What a difference a run makes...

#RWBEORE
ANDAFTE

'Before, with shades, after (very obviously), without' – **SJL**



'Before and after Budapest Marathon' – **Sally Newing**



'The Bright10. Can you tell which is before and which is after?' – **Alex Wong**

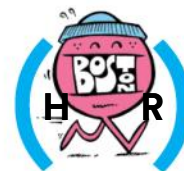


'Apprehension followed by relief' – **Heidi Race To 40**

Next month: #RWsummitfever. Pics of you at the top of your favourite hill

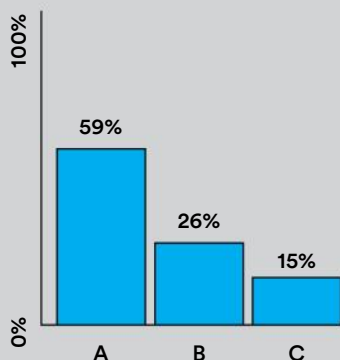
NOT-SO-YOUNG PRETENDER

Talking about your feature *Pulling a fast one* (*RW, November*), I ran my first marathon in May 1982,



THE POLL

'Alakazam, alakazoo: if the running genie could grant you just one wish, what would it be?'



A: To never be injured again. 'I would have continued to run steadily over the past three years and dipped under 3:15 for the marathon.'

—@TheGreenMacaw

B: To never gain weight. No comments! Too busy dieting, presumably.

C: An unlimited running shoe budget. 'I'd open a sports shop and sell my unlimited supply of shoes!'

—@DanielKennedy81

THE GEAR'S TOO DEAR

As an avid subscriber to *Runner's World*, when the December issue dropped through my letterbox, I was quite excited about the winter gear special. I need winter gear and always like recommendations from other runners and experts alike. I skipped straight to the article but was extremely disappointed. Why? Yes, the article was full of great gear but only if you have a high level of disposable income. I would have been a lot more satisfied if the items on show represented the entire price range of winter gear rather than the expensive side. Some of us runners are on a tight budget that has to cater for race entries, club fees, fuel and new running gear. Some lower end entries would not have gone amiss. Please, please repeat the article with some slightly more affordable gear.

Andy Goreing, via email



Rob Cooper will never forget the races he has run

RUN FOR COVERS

Great little piece on shirt stories (RW, November). To cherish my running memories, I convinced my mother-in-law, an avid quilter, to work her magic with my running shirts. The result was amazing. My running clubmates still ask if she will do commissions – unfortunately, I think it was a labour of love. My four-year-old daughter – and 12-minute-mile runner – has this on her bed! Hopefully, my running inspirations will pay off!

Rob Cooper, Liverpool

RUNNING THE RED SEA

Having done no exercise for over 15 years, I have been inspired this year to not only start running but also to undertake a significant challenge. My daughter goes to a special

school, The Redway School in Milton Keynes, which teaches and cares for over 100 children with a variety of issues and disabilities. One of the other parents is undertaking 17 in 17 – that is, 17 endurance events in 2017 to raise funds for the school. Inspired by this, I have decided to run the equivalent of the length of the Red Sea, 1,398 miles, over 18 months, approx. 20 miles a week. A tough challenge from a standing start. I am nearly six months in, and nearly 500 miles completed. I blog a bit about miles covered etc on Facebook, redsea4redway, and would love for folk to join me on my journey.

Wayne Preston, by email

WE ASK, YOU ANSWER

WHAT'S THE GREATEST LESSON RUNNING HAS TAUGHT YOU?

'If you can run to the top of any hill on a run, no matter how tired you are, you can take on anything in life. Picture a troublesome thing in your life as that hill. Then conquer it.'

— Eleanor Abrahams-Burrows

is my drug. In a mad kind of way, running has saved my life.'

— Simon Coombes



'That I'd no idea I had it in me. Didn't start till I was 57, now 69. Did my first of three marathons at 65 and have won several age-graded race prizes. I feel like I've been given a precious gift late in life, just so grateful.'

— Sylvia Ross



'I gave up drink and drugs about six years ago and now running

'That the Vaseline handed out at a marathon isn't an energy gel.'

— Geoff Shaw

'That not being good at something is no reason to stop doing it. And that the attitude you develop by doggedly continuing to do something you're rubbish at can influence the rest of your life in a fabulous way.'

— Hayley Wakenshaw

OUR WORLD

RW staff, putting themselves in the picture, for better or worse



Creative director Wayne Hannon bottles getting an 'RW Forever!' tattoo at the Human Race shoot



Section editor Rick Pearson takes the role of unofficial 4:00 pacer at the Chester Marathon

WHAT'S INSPIRED OR ANNOYED YOU? THE WRITER OF THE WINNING EMAIL OR LETTER RECEIVES A PAIR OF SAUCONY HURRICANE ISO 2S, WORTH £135



33 Broadwick Street, London W1F 0DQ Email letters@runnersworld.co.uk Tweet [@runnersworlduk](https://twitter.com/runnersworlduk) Facebook [runnersworlduk](https://www.facebook.com/runnersworlduk)



Tonky Talk

BY PAUL TONKINSON

'IT WAS SWEATY FUN OF THE HIGHEST ORDER'



There are, it seems, a lot of rules in running that people get stuck on. Never run hard two days in a row, that kind of thing. Or, only increase mileage by 10 per cent a week. Do some core work – that's another one. These are all based on sound values, and they mean well but sometimes they don't relate to the real world, in which you just ran 20 more miles than you did last week, you haven't planked in 10 months and you've got a two-race weekend coming up. All I'm saying is, let's not make ourselves slaves to orthodoxy. We are, all of us, an experiment of one in the glorious smorgasbord that is the running experience.

Don't set off too fast – that's a big one. The wisdom of a negative split is often stressed. Again, good sense. The feeling of slicing through the field on a negative split is a rare and welcome joy. It usually happens for me during a 'training' race or if I'm running with other people. If I'm on a PB hunt it's very hard not to set off at least slightly too fast.

The build-up to the Victoria Park 10K had been busier than usual. It had been a summer of financial straits – an urgent need to get some wedge in meant lots of gigs and travel. I'd said yes to all offers of work. It actually turned out to be refreshing on a fundamental level. Less disposable income meant fewer choices. Fewer choices meant less time spent choosing, which led to more mental clarity. I felt sharper generally. In the week before the race I was in Dubai, and all my running was done on a treadmill. Instead of surrendering to the tedium, I asked myself: what can a treadmill give me? What it gave me was two hour-long runs with at least 30 minutes on a five to six per cent incline at a steady pace, followed by another 30 of fartlek efforts and tempo surges, peppered with the odd flat-out sprint.

It was sweaty fun of the highest order and gave me confidence going in to the race. I was in that narrow window of being undertrained but starting to feel strong. Last year I notched 39:45 on the wonderfully flat,

fast course. This year, with no racing at all, apart from a disastrous road relay, I began to feel hopeful. I was not fit enough to start slow and finish strong but I was feeling daft enough to start too fast and hold on.

I'm not advocating idiocy: let's not sprint like lemmings for the first corner, drowning in lactic acid. I'm suggesting that for shorter races, a quickish start can be a good idea. Just pushing it more than you normally would for the second quarter of the race. You might ask – what does it give you? Well, it tells your body it's in a race. It brings a degree of pain nice and early; your body adapts to pain, anyway. It also puts you in a running group you don't usually run with. At Victoria Park I ran the first 3km with clubmates who are faster than me. Foolhardy, yes, but also fun. I started to lose contact soon after but kept them close until halfway and it made me, perhaps, see myself as a better runner than I am. This, in turn, made me fight harder when I began to be overtaken by runners. My psychology, I feel, suits being chased rather than chasing. The agony of hanging on. The leaden-legged race to the next corner, a quick furtive glance back before attempting a surge into the next stretch. They shall not pass!

Of course they did pass. But not in droves – and I fought every overtake. Because that's another thing a faster start gives you: a time cushion to protect. I went through the half in 19:20 and, yes, I slowed a bit in the second half to finish in 39:20, but it was still a PB, one that came from nowhere. After that experience, I'm wondering whether we shouldn't all be setting off a little faster. Give it a go in your next race – you might surprise yourself.

RUNNERPEDIA

Derange of motion (n)

When you're not quite as flexible as you think you are, with disastrous results.

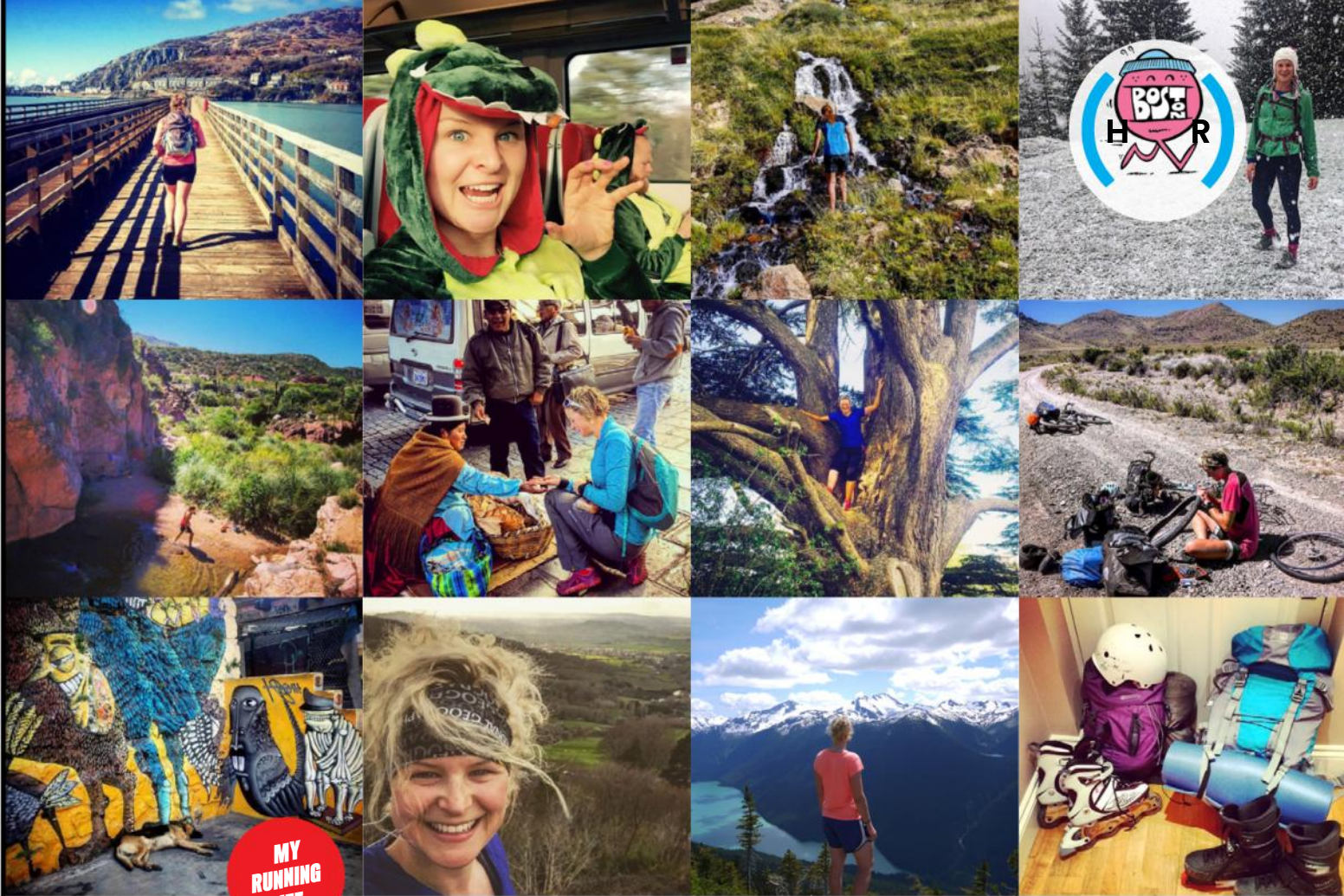
Chip time (n)

Time for chips. See also 'now'.

Gate analysis (n)

What a farmer does when his livestock escapes.

Check out Paul and fellow comedian Rob Deering's running podcast, **Running Commentary** – available on iTunes and Acast. @RunComPod



MY
RUNNING
LIFE

'RUNNING IS NOT ABOUT SPLITS'

ANNA MCNUFF, SERIAL ADVENTURER, 33, GLOUCESTER

→ **ONCE UPON A TIME**
Anna McNuff
 represented Great Britain at rowing. Dogged by injury she retired from the sport in her mid-twenties and began darting around the world in search of endurance challenges. She has now written a book, *The Pants of Perspective*, about her latest great adventure, a 2,000-mile run across New Zealand.

THE THING I LOVE MOST ABOUT AN ADVENTURE IS THE UNPREDICTABILITY. Although I'll have a rough idea of the route and the end goal, I don't know

what's going to happen five miles down the road.

IN NEW ZEALAND, I WOULD BREAK DOWN MY DAY INTO 10K CHUNKS. In my head, I was only ever running 10K at a time. If I hadn't, I would've freaked myself out – running 2,000 miles is a long, long way. 'Only 1,991 miles to go, Anna!' I think I would have cried.

IT ALL STARTED WITH RACE TO THE STONES. It's 100km and I did it on no training. I'd read [Chris McDougall's] *Born to Run*, become fascinated by the Tarahumara Indians and convinced myself I too

could run hundreds of miles at a time. I lost eight toenails on the day. It took me 13 and a half hours to complete and I've never been in so much pain. The following morning, I wrote an email to myself, beginning with, 'Dear Anna, never do anything that stupid again.'

MY PARENTS BOTH ROWED FOR GREAT BRITAIN IN THE 1980 OLYMPICS. I rowed for quite a while, too, and that gave me a tough mind-set and a good set of lungs. But rowers are notorious for being quite bad runners: we're cumbersome and used to sitting on our bums to do exercise.

I LOVE RUNNING IN FANCY DRESS. I've done Hadrian's Wall dressed as a Roman soldier, and the Jurassic Coast dressed as a dinosaur. Next, I really want to run the West Highland Way dressed as

ANNA'S ADVENTURE CHECKLIST

JUST START
 Tell some friends, put £20 a week in a bank account – anything that tips you from 'this is just an idea' to 'this is absolutely happening'.

DON'T OVER-PLAN
 Eighty per cent of your planning will go out the window. Plan to the point where you feel safe, but don't overdo it.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF
 Realise you're capable of more than you think. We all have survival instincts. Have confidence in yourself.

a Highland cow. I'm trying to find new ways to learn about Britain while having a bit of fun.

I DON'T OWN A GARMIN. And I'm only on Strava by mistake. I had so much of that kind of thing in rowing – watching numbers on the dial – that, for me, running is not about splits. Rather, I use it as a way to get places.

THE MORE WOMEN WHO GET OUT THERE, THE BETTER. My target audience for the book is incredibly capable women who are just slightly lacking in a bit of self-confidence. I feel like the tide is turning, and more women are doing these kinds of challenges, but we have to keep the momentum up.

The Pants of Perspective, (Rocket 88, £9.99) is out now. Follow Anna on Instagram @annamcnuff



FACE TO FACE WITH RUNNING'S MONSTERS

A New York City artist takes creature discomfort from our sport



→ **KEVIN LYONS'** monsters are everywhere. They've been on murals from New York to Paris to Japan, across bottles of German Warsteiner beer, on the backs of snowboards and, since last summer, threaded into the performance fabric of socks from the apparel company Stance.

After stints as a designer at Nike and global creative director at Urban Outfitters, the 48-year-old illustrator has turned the grinning, grumbling, cartoonish creatures from doodles for his daughters into his own artistic style. Between collaborations with leading fashion and running brands (including illustrations for *Runner's World US*), Lyons logs up to 60 miles a week.

'Running is very much a part of my creative regimen,' he says. 'It clears my mind and allows me to think clearly about something.'

He once made a stark choice between running and art. A 4:30 miler by age 12 and a six-time Maine state champion in track and cross country, he passed on a college athletic career to attend the Rhode Island School of Design. Lyons now balances marathon training – he has just run the Philadelphia Marathon, his 13th 26.2 – with his creative endeavours. Here he illustrates the demons that haunt him along the way.

Qualifying for Boston

'Like many competitive runners, this was my ultimate goal when I first started running marathons [in 1999]. I qualified three years in a row. I was once a sub-three-hour marathoner, but qualifying at my age, feels harder and harder. Still, like most runners I know, I am always conscious of where I am in relation to qualifying, even if I know I can't hit it. Turning 50 will be a new standard and a new hope.'

Getting older

'Every year something gets a little slower. You have to listen to your body more. Soreness lasts longer now. Some days I have to back off a little, especially in the first mile. It's also a lot of work: sports therapy, massage, deep-tissue acupuncture, foam-rolling every night. Yoga has been a saving grace, opening up my hips so I'm not running so stiff and square.'

Running in Paris

'Since I started collaborating with Paris-based boutique Colette, Paris has been a frequent destination. At first it was hard to run there as I was new to the city and I had to adapt to the cobblestone streets. A friend from Paris Running Club showed me an amazing route and it's now my favourite city to run in and still maintain my mileage. This spring I'll run my first Paris Marathon.'

Having a creative career

'Every day is different; sometimes I have to pull all-nighters. And I do murals, which are taxing. I'm on a lift for 12 hours a day, reaching, using different muscles. I make decisions about my training depending on the project I'm working on. Sometimes running has to be sacrificed for the work – though my girlfriend will tell you my work is often sacrificed for the run.'



THE ART OF NOISE
Kevin Lyons, artist, runner and a man in dire need of a portable music player.

WORDS: CINDY KUZMA PHOTOGRAPH AND ARTWORK: KEVIN LYONS

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO *NOT* RUNNING

**Jumping off the hamster wheel doesn't make you a wimp
- science proves it'll help your body get stronger, faster.
Here's how to hold back so you can sprint forward**

BY TED SPIKER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEVI BROWN





THE RUNNER'S CHECKLIST IS A LONG ONE:

- ☐ TRACK AND TEMPO RUNS.
- ☐ LIFT AND LUNGE.
- ☐ BUY NEW SHOES.
- ☐ CHARGE WATCH.
- ☐ DO THE STINKY LAUNDRY.

Basically, there's an awful lot to get done. So when you see the word 'rest' pop up on your schedule, it's tempting to skip past it and look for the next 'real' task. Really, why would you do nothing when there's always something to cross off that long, long list?

The answer to that question is very simple: *not* running is just as important as fitting in that long weekend run or that Tuesday speed session. Rest days help to strengthen your body, sharpen your focus and reinvigorate your spirit so that you actually want to keep training.

'Rest is not a four-letter word,' says Dr Kevin Vincent, director of the University of Florida Running Medicine Clinic in the US. 'The big reason you need it is recovery and recuperation. Every time you run, your body has to adapt to get stronger.'

That's because when you run, you aren't just building your stamina and strength; you're also breaking your body down, causing a tiny amount of tissue damage with every step. And allowing yourself time to recover

afterward is what makes it possible for you to come back better next week, next month, next race.

'As much as athletes focus on their volume of training and the speed at which they do workouts, what they do outside of running is equally important to becoming stronger and more resilient in the future,' says Dr Adam Tenforde, assistant professor of physical medicine and rehab at Harvard University, US, and a former elite runner.

Dr Bonnie Marks, staff psychologist at New York University's Sports Performance Center, agrees. 'If you don't have time to recharge, it can lead to staleness and general apathy about training.'

In other words, rest right and you'll run better, avoid time on the physio's treatment table, stay motivated and gain more reward from your running. Fail to rest properly and you'll slowly – or sometimes rather rapidly – fall apart. Follow these training tweaks to optimise recovery and build a stronger, and more rested, you.

WHY REST MATTERS

Whether you're strictly a recreational runner or training more regularly and seriously, there's value in taking at least one day off from your training each week – even if you're deep into a run streak (see *What if I'm a Streaker?* on page 41). That day off is when your body uses nutrients and undergoes biological processes and hormone cycles to rebuild itself, says Tenforde. Still got ants in your runderpants? Here are four more reasons to chill.

Your muscles bounce back

When you run (or do any kind of exercise), you create microscopic tears in your muscle fibres and your body likes those about as much as you like trying to open a sweaty gel packet after 15 miles. So it responds by rebuilding your muscles stronger, in preparation for the next session. Sounds like a good deal, but there's a catch: that response only happens with adequate time off from exercising. Vincent says that, depending on the length and intensity of your workout, your body needs a minimum of 36-48 hours to properly reboot. Without it, your body has no opportunity to rebuild and strengthen muscles; they just continue to break down, and that negates all the hard work you've put in.

You avoid stress fractures

If you're trying to sidestep an injury (and if you're not, you may be reading the wrong magazine), rest is crucial. Contrary to what ill-informed naysayers will trot out, running is actually great for your bones – the impact stresses the bone tissue, and just like a muscle, that increases cell turnover and forces the bone to remodel with stronger structures, says Vincent. 'But if you run today, tomorrow and the next day, it never has time to fully repair.' Eventually, ➔

DO I NEED MORE TIME OFF?

Sometimes you can tell. Like when you can't walk down the stairs. Other times, it's less obvious. If you're wavering about taking a break, Vincent suggests asking yourself these three questions:

1 Did my last few runs feel harder than usual, even though they were the same training paces and distances as previous ones?

2 Do I feel less motivated to run today?

3 Does running feel more like a chore than something I enjoy?

▶ If you answered yes to any of the above, you should consider more rest.



WHAT'S IN A DAY OFF?

While most people relish the idea of a day to do absolutely nothing, runners aren't always too good at making it a reality. We surveyed nearly 2,800 readers about their rest and recovery habits. How do you compare?



TRAINING BREAKS

35% NEED TIME TO
RECUPERATE
AFTER EVERY RACE

38% ONLY BREAK WHEN
BURNT OUT (USUALLY
EVERY FEW RACES)

27% ARE ALWAYS
THINKING ABOUT
THE NEXT MEDAL

26%

can be found
watching
Netflix and
relaxing

51%

skip the
formal
workouts,
but still go for
a long walk
with a friend



15%

take an easy
fitness class
or go for an
easy run

8%

scoff at the
very idea of
a rest day

PREFERRED CROSS-TRAINING

No. 1

Relaxing walk or hike
on off days

No. 2

Solo strength-training
at the gym

No. 3

A sweaty cycling session

**DAYS
OFF PER
WEEK**

35%

TAKE
1
DAY
OFF

36%

TAKE
2
DAYS
OFF

22%

TAKE
3
DAYS
OFF

7%

TAKE
0
DAYS
OFF

you could be looking at a stress fracture – and a lengthy spell out of action.

Tight tendons are protected

Tendons are connective tissues that hold muscle to bone, so they work constantly as the body moves. But blood doesn't get to them easily, so they take longer to repair than tissues that get a more plentiful supply, says Vincent. If they don't get that much-needed time, the constant pounding can cause chronic damage, such as tendinitis – inflammation from overuse.

Your brain has time to chill

Running is a form of stress relief, but when you lace up, it actually increases the levels of the stress hormone cortisol in your body. Why? 'The body doesn't know if you're running away from danger or running for fun,' says Vincent. That cortisol bump can cause mood issues, irritability, sleep problems and other health issues if stress levels are chronically high, says Marks. Think of it like a scale: overtrain, and you've tipped too far in one direction; schedule regular rest days, and you'll bring yourself back in balance.

BACK OFF– NOT OUT

A lot of runners worry that time off can cause them to regress, but that's not necessarily true. Jason Fitzgerald, coach and founder of Strength Running, says you can take a week off and be fine. That's why most sports doctors suggest scaling it back for one to two weeks after each big event. (Example: four to five days of light activity – such as walking – then a week of strength, core work, flexibility and short runs to loosen up.) Follow this advice and you'll enjoy these benefits.

You'll fine-tune your body

There's a big difference between being totally sidelined and being hampered – aka feeling

Tweak Your Routine

OK, YOU'RE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE WHY OF TIME OFF, BUT YOU NEED A LITTLE MORE INFORMATION ON THE HOW. RATHER THAN RUN, TRY THESE OPTIONS.

- 1 Go low**
With your impact, that is. Incorporating low-impact exercise (such as swimming, cycling, rowing or the elliptical machine) allows you to get the aerobic benefits you're after without taxing your bones and tendons as you would by running. If you have access to a pool, swimming is one of the best options (try aqua-jogging for running-related benefits, or lap swimming if your legs need a break). 'It has zero impact and being in a cool pool is soothing,' says running coach Dr Magdalena Donahue.
- 2 Grab a ball**
When you play tennis, social netball or just kick a football around in the back garden with the kids, you form more well-rounded muscles and bones, which reduces your risk of injury. 'When you're running, everything is linear, so your bone gets stronger in one plane of motion,' says Vincent. 'By doing something with lateral, back-and-forth movement, you strengthen in all planes.' You'll have fun, too.
- 3 Make friends with your sofa**
Rest days don't mean you have to veg out all day – in fact, Sarah Lavender Smith, author of *The Trail Runner's Companion* (Falcon Guides), says you should always try to move a little – but there's nothing wrong with taking a few hours to relax. Just do it on the day before your long run, not after. 'It's a mistake to go on a long, depleting run and then overeat and lie around the next day,' says Smith. Doing so causes feelings of lethargy, bloat and a feeling you're undoing your hard work.
- 4 Play computer games**
Studies have found that playing computer games can help control anxiety before performance, and one piece of research even discovered that players needed less recovery time after a stressful event. Researchers aren't entirely sure why this is the case, but they theorise that by offering a way to escape to an alternative reality, computer games work as a calming mechanism to decrease stress.
- 5 Sleep more**
Not only does a good night's kip combat mood issues and fatigue, but Fitzgerald says your duvet time is also the time when your body gets the most work done during its repair process. Plus, some research shows that poor sleep quality may be associated with loss of bone density, putting you at risk for developing stress fractures. (See? It all comes full circle.)
- 6 Meditate**
Science shows that this practice can help improve performance, ease symptoms of pain and boost your breathing. Marks suggests lying on the floor with your eyes closed, focusing on breathing from your belly – not your chest – for at least five minutes. (A good way to check if you're getting this right is to place a book on your tummy – if the book rises, you're breathing the right way.) If you struggle with staying that still – or your kids confuse your meditation time with human-trampoline time – opt for a quiet walk surrounded by nature or download a meditation app you can use at work.



WHAT IF I'M A STREAKER?

We're not the ones to tell you to break a #RWRRunStreak to catch up on your box-sets, but be aware of intensity. If you're heading out for an easy mile to continue your streak, don't worry about a rest day. But if intervals and speedwork are part of your routine, 'recovery is much more important to fit in', says Dr Bryan Heiderscheit, director of the University of Wisconsin Runners Clinic in the US.



discomfort without major pain. If your body gets some proper R&R, it's more likely that the problem will heal instead of turn into a fully fledged injury, says Fitzgerald.

Your protective systems reset

When you fail to rest, you are, in effect, telling your body's inflammatory process to be on high alert. That process is protective, yes, but when it's in overdrive from constant running, it will backfire – putting your body in a chronic state of inflammation that increases your risk of picking up infections and other illnesses, says Kate Mihevc Edwards, an orthopaedic specialist at Precision Performance in Atlanta, US. Taking even a one-day run holiday will reduce the inflammation and lower your odds of being struck down by illness.

You can acknowledge growth

There's real value in flipping through your old training diaries or your historic Strava data and seeing how far you've come, says running coach and two-time US Olympic Marathon Trials qualifier Dr Magdalena Donahue. 'You need to see what you've done, what worked and what didn't, and let your brain relax,' she explains. 'The pause helps you come back a lot more energised and focused.' Plus, it's always great to look back on the runs you actually smashed...

You'll stay hungry

If you're constantly churning out the miles like a hamster on a wheel, that desire to do better, which originally burned so strong, can dwindle. Call it burnout, loss of mojo, whatever you like, but coming back from it can be a slog. Scaling back helps you maintain your hunger to train and improve, so you don't have to mentally start over at square one, says Fitzgerald.

Fuel Your Recovery

YOU ALREADY KNOW ALL ABOUT WHAT YOU NEED TO EAT (AND DRINK) ON THE DAYS WHEN YOU RUN. BUT WHAT ABOUT ON DAYS OFF? HERE'S HOW TO ADJUST TO A SLOWER PACE

1 Don't change too much

While many runners think they need to tighten their grip on calorie intake on a rest day, that's not really the case. 'It's not necessary to restrict energy intake,' says Dr Stephanie Howe Violett, a running and nutrition coach and winner of the Western States 100 ultra race in 2014. 'That's when most recovery and adaptation occurs, and proper nutrients are important to facilitate those processes.' Instead, try to tune in to your hunger cues and opt for food quality over quantity.

2 Space out calories

Many people stack their calories towards the end of the day, meaning they eat a light breakfast and lunch and then go supersize at dinner time, says Tenforde. But that depletes

your energy and makes your body more susceptible to breakdown. A steady supply is the best strategy, so if you must go light on your first two meals, balance it with nuts or fruit in between.

3 Fuel with micros


Carbohydrates, protein, fibre – those are the macronutrients you need to fuel a strong recovery. But runners also need micronutrients such as calcium, vitamin D and iron to replenish the body. Eating whole foods – lots of fruit, vegetables, and meat or beans – will help cover your micronutrient bases. Violett says you should aim for about half of your plate to be full of vegetables, whole grains and fruit. Then add a serving of high-quality protein and top with fat (better if it's unsaturated) to make sure you get essential fatty acids

that also aid in your recovery.

4 Hydrate

Rest days are a great time to pre-hydrate, as starting a run dehydrated is as much fun as losing a toenail, says Violett. That doesn't mean downing a gallon of water in one go – just be mindful about your intake over the day (and check that your wee is a light-straw colour to see if you're on track).

5 Enjoy that beer

Violett says it's no big deal to indulge in a cheeky pint, but it doesn't exactly fuel your recovery. Going for a 'recovery' beer after a tough workout? Eat a solid meal first. Going straight for the booze can hurt the body's ability to restock glycogen stores, and your muscles may not recover as quickly. Now turn the page for six great recovery meal options... 

DASH AND DINE

THESE QUICK POST-WORKOUT MEALS FROM NUTRITIONIST MATTHEW KADEY PACK THE PERFECT BLEND OF NUTRIENTS TO HELP YOU RECOVER AND COME BACK STRONGER



Chicken caprese pitta pocket

A carb-protein hit slows bone breakdown after hard exercise.

- 1** pitta pocket, halved
- 2 tbsp** pesto
- 100g** sliced rotisserie chicken, skin removed
- 50g** halved cherry tomatoes
- 35g** mini mozzarella balls (bocconcini)
- 2** basil leaves, torn
- 2 tsp** balsamic vinegar

Spread pesto inside pitta pockets. Stuff with chicken, tomatoes, mozzarella balls and basil. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar.

2

Tuna melt crackers

Tuna is high in muscle-building protein and its omega-3 fats will help reduce post-run aches.

- 10g** rocket
- 90g** roasted red pepper
- 90g** albacore tuna
- 2** rye crackers
- 2 tsp** fresh lemon juice
- 45g** grated cheddar cheese

Stack equal amounts of rocket, roasted red pepper and tuna on top of crackers. Add lemon juice and top with cheese. If desired, microwave crackers on

high for 30 seconds, or until cheese has melted. For an extra kick (and to rev your metabolism), add a few drops of hot sauce.



Cheesy avocado bagel

Bagels and cottage cheese provide the ideal carb-protein combo for repairing muscle and restoring glycogen. The avocado's vitamin C lessens the oxidative stress following tough workouts.

- ½** avocado, sliced
- ½** bagel, toasted
- 60g** cottage cheese
- ¼ tsp** smoked paprika
- 1** thick slice tomato
- 1** small handful basil leaves
- Flakey sea salt to taste

Fan or lightly mash avocado on bagel half. Spread with cottage cheese and sprinkle with paprika. Top with tomato slice, basil and touch of salt.

3



Jerky chickpea snack mix

Replace the salt lost through sweat with jerky) and fight muscle inflammation with the antioxidants in tart cherries.

30g beef or turkey jerky
60g roasted chickpeas
2 tbsp roasted almonds
2 tbsp dried tart cherries
1 tbsp roasted pumpkin seeds

Shred the beef or turkey jerky, then toss all ingredients in a bowl.

4



5

Curry egg salad cucumber boats

Cucumber is packed with water to help you rehydrate, and the curcumin in curry has anti-inflammatory properties for faster recovery.

2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
70g plain Greek yoghurt
1 tbsp chopped almonds
1 tsp Dijon mustard
½ tsp curry powder
¼ tsp cayenne
1 small cucumber, sliced lengthways in half
 Salt and pepper to taste

In a bowl, mash together eggs, yoghurt, almonds, mustard, curry powder, cayenne and a pinch of salt and pepper. Scoop out seeds from cucumber halves and stuff with egg salad.

**Ricotta fig toast**

The creamy cheese is high in protein, while figs help replenish potassium for better muscle function.

120g ricotta cheese
½ tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp orange zest
1 thick slice wholegrain toast
2 dried figs, sliced
1 tbsp shelled pistachios
1 tsp honey

SNACK WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF FINISHING YOUR RUN TO SPEED RECOVERY

Mix ricotta, vanilla and orange zest. Spread mixture on toast and top with sliced figs, pistachios and honey.

**SECRET STASH**

NO TIME FOR FOOD PREP? KEEP THESE SNACKS IN YOUR DESK, GYM BAG OR CAR FOR A QUICK RECOVERY BITE

STEALTH PROTEIN GELS

Each berry-flavoured 60ml sachet contains 20g of protein to help your muscles repair. **£35 for 14**, secret-training.com

TRIBE CHIA & CACAO NIB BAR

You get 10g of rice protein in every 58g bars, as well as dates, honey, chia seeds, sea salt and cashew nuts. **£28 for 18**, wearetribe.co

VIFIT SPORT RECOVERY BAR

Packs 20g of protein, plus vitamin D, potassium, magnesium and calcium to aid recovery. **£27.48 for 15**, vifitsport.com

CLIF BUILDER'S BAR

Tastes like you're treating yourself, but you're also treating your body to 20g of complete protein and essential amino acids. **£2.49**, runnersneed.com

GO BITES HAZELNUT & CHOCOLATE BAR

Each 36g pack has two small balls with nuts, dried fruit and dark chocolate. **£1.99**, hollandandbarrett.com

Is the **PRESSURE** of comparison with others *sapping the joy* from your running? Time to find more rewarding **'-ment'** goals, says sport psychologist Dr Josephine Perry

Those sporting memes that pop up on Twitter and Facebook reminding us that 'comparison is the thief of joy', or that we must not 'measure ourselves against

someone else's ruler' are spot on. But they are hard to remember when you have just had a bad run or race. Not only do we fear not living up to our own expectations, but we can also dread judgment and comments from running friends. In fact, one of the biggest concerns for runners I see in my sport psychology clinic is not that they may miss race goals, but that they will be judged by others for not hitting them and questioned about why. It can suck so much joy out of their running.

The problem with being a runner in the social media age is that there are so many ways to compare ourselves with others that it can be hard to avoid doing so. Not just after races, where results can be posted up minutes after you cross the line but, if you use an online tracker such as Strava or Garmin Connect, then after every session, posting an instant, accessible comparison to thousands of others. Research I conducted on marathon runners found that 93 per cent have a GPS watch they use at least every few days. At least once a week, 84 per cent upload their runs to an online tracker, nearly three quarters post or discuss runs on Facebook groups and a third are posting them on Twitter or commenting on an online forum.

It was clear from my research that there is a huge benefit to this online interaction. It counteracts the loneliness that can come from an often solitary sport, helping us feel part of a running community. Runners valued this interaction, but they were also painfully aware of the downside – the continual insight into how others are doing and the inevitable comparison that comes with that. Many reported that it was making them jealous, lose their love of running and pushing them

7 WAYS TO STOP YOUR MEMES FROM SAPPING YOUR GOALS



to work harder than their bodies could take, causing injury. Runners in my study reported having loved a run until they saw how it compared with others when uploaded onto Strava, or they burnt out trying to fulfil online challenges they had signed up for.

One way to avoid all this is to hide away and join the four per cent of runners in my study who don't track their runs. If you're sick of comparison, you can avoid races and you can stay off social media, creating your own non-competitive running bubble. Some runners do this and it works well for them. But for many of us, the goals of racing push us to achieve more than we would on our own, tracking our running gives us data to help us

TO MOVE MENTAL POSTS

improve, and separating ourselves from the running community would deprive us of some fantastic fun and support.

Another approach that many sport psychologists advocate is to set goals that focus on the processes of running, not the numbers you create. Finding a process or, as they are also known, a 'ment' goal to focus on helps you concentrate on the bigger picture and keep perspective. As a result, rather than getting hung up on what anyone else is doing, we become focused entirely on our own improvements.

Here, six runners who used to run for the numbers explain how shifting their focus has helped them to stop comparing themselves with others and put the joy back into their running.

ILLUSTRATIONS: TOMMY DOYLE

Achieve(ment) GOALS

THE PROBLEM: If you are a long-term runner and have come to realise that your fastest days are already behind you, or you feel you will never be quicker than you are at the moment, then it can be hard to keep motivating yourself to get out there and work hard. Fun goals that relate to something important in your life can give you the kick-start that you need.

A CHANGE OF FOCUS



THE RUNNER WHO SOLVED IT:

Rebecca Slack was racing well into her 40s but she was finding it harder and harder to get faster – and she didn't want to compete half-heartedly. 'I was done with chasing PBs,' she says. 'I wanted to stay fit but have fun and enjoy myself in the process. So I decided that road-running races were out and trails were in. I wanted to enjoy the scenery, not just get from A to B as soon as possible. I loved the idea of working towards a 50-miler for my 50th birthday.'

Slack planned to pass the miles by thinking of what she did in each year of her life but on the day she enjoyed the scenery and camaraderie so much she totally forgot. 'In ultras I found the sense of community really heartwarming,' says Slack. 'I'm going to do more adventurous challenges in the years ahead but none of them will have time-based goals attached. I shall be wanting to get value for money for my entry fee from now on, having rushed through all my races in the past!'

SET YOUR ACHIEVEMENT GOAL:

Do you have any major life milestones peeking over the horizon, such as a big birthday or anniversary? Picking a race that matches an element of that can keep you motivated but also push outside of your comfort zone. This will give you something to get excited about and a non-time-based goal to focus on. ➔

Move(ment) GOALS

THE PROBLEM: Sometimes we fall into a rut with our running. We follow the same plan we've always followed, a social recovery run on Monday, speedwork on Wednesdays, hills on Fridays, long run Sunday... To break out of a rut you need to switch things about and do something completely different. Sometimes that will be to ignore the traditional routines and focus only on the movement of running.

THE RUNNER WHO SOLVED IT:

At 37, Roger Barr had plateaued with his running and couldn't seem to get faster. 'I knew I had to do something different, really different,' says Barr. 'I knew that run efficiency comes from run frequency so I was interested to see if I could run for a year without getting injured and tick off each day. In the past I'd run purely to chase better times so, for a whole year, I just focused on just one goal; running for at least 30 mins every day. I put no pressure on myself to run fast. I didn't pick up a single injury. After about four months I could tell I was in the shape of my life so I started racing and I had my best ever year, setting PBs from one mile to the marathon.'

SET YOUR OWN MOVEMENT

GOAL: Think about the rules and routines you have set around your running. For each of these routines, ask yourself three questions: 1) Why do I do this? 2) What does it do for me? 3) What could I do instead that will help me move better? Then rewrite your training plan.



Fulfil(ment) GOALS

THE PROBLEM: While it is true that logging a lot of solo miles can be calming and therapeutic, it can sometimes be a lonely undertaking. But running for others, or to help others find the love of running that has given you so much, can give you a whole new perspective and connect you to a great new community.

THE RUNNER WHO SOLVED IT: Khara Mills used to run for PBs, but

changed her focus after a period of illness that meant she couldn't run at all for about six months. 'When I started running again I realised how much I'd missed it, but also that the results didn't make any difference to how I felt,' says Mills. As a result, she looked for ways to use running to give her a feeling of fulfilment. She turned to parkrun, GoodGym and the Mini Mermaid Running Club.

'The community aspect is just a wonderful thing,' says Mills. 'Running to do good by helping out in community gardens/centres, mulching in parks, or clearing canal-sides or any of the varied jobs that GoodGym

gets involved in during group runs in is a brilliant workout and a lot of fun.'

Volunteering with parkrun is an important part of helping to keep the events going, and I love it. And the girls I get to work with at Mini Mermaid are truly an inspiration. Not always running hard and chasing PBs can help you stay free from injury and illness, and you'll meet some great people and have some laughs. Running for fulfilment has given me more balance in my running, and in all aspects of my life.'

SET YOUR FULFILMENT

GOAL: Think about which groups of people you'd like to help: for example,

Enjoy(ment) GOALS

THE PROBLEM: We runners often use our sport as a way to deal with stress. If we enjoy it and are (relatively) good at it, we can get into a mindset of being a 'racer' chasing PBs. We don't exercise, we train. We don't eat, we fuel. And after a while we find this mindset is not only failing to reduce our stress but actually becoming an additional pressure.

THE RUNNER WHO SOLVED IT:

For Ian Marling, running has always been synonymous with health. Having suffered serious physical illness in his childhood, and depression and anxiety in his 20s, he says that getting back to running always felt like 'home'. At one point Marling got into cycling but obsessively chased PBs, leading

to burnout. 'My choice to run was to escape the pressure of goal-chasing, allowing me to just run, instead of train,' says Marling. 'My runs allow me a chance to practise mindfulness, focusing on my breath and being in the moment. If one run is slower because I need a bit of rest, or am tired from a bad night's sleep, there are no worrying implications about a training plan going awry or no longer being on track towards a specific goal.'

'Each day is a new opportunity to explore how a run might feel, without contributing to any sort of training progress. I have rediscovered the intrinsic joy of running without drowning it in a sea of pressure.'

SET YOUR OWN ENJOYMENT

GOAL: Write down the reasons you run. Strip out all the extrinsic reasons; medals, praise etc. What's left are your intrinsic motivations; the reasons you love the process of running. Use these to set out the way you approach your running in the future. →



children, novices, the homeless, those with serious illnesses or the elderly. Then do some research on which charities and groups near you incorporate running in some way. Could you marshal at a charity's fund-raising running event or volunteer at parkrun? Maybe you could set up a Mini Mermaid (minimermaidrunningclub.org) group to help young girls develop their confidence through sport, garden through GoodGym, become a run leader for homeless women, or run for those who are unable to run themselves (see our feature on this subject, page 50).



RELATIVE VALUES

The percentage of runners using technology to track and compare their running at least once a week



GPS **94%**



Strava/Garmin **84%**



Facebook **72%**



Twitter **38%**



Online forum **34%**



Whatsapp **24%**

Environ(ment) GOALS

THE PROBLEM: We can focus so much on the outcomes of races and getting faster and faster that we forget to notice where we are running. And recent research from Barry University in the US confirmed that the environment we run in has a major impact on how much we enjoy our running. The researchers found that choosing beautiful environments to exercise in can make you that much more eager to get out and run.

THE RUNNER WHO SOLVED IT: In 2010, Sarah Russell, a competitive runner and then member of the GB Age Group Duathlon team, was struck down with peritonitis and a perforated colon. She needed immediate life-saving surgery to remove part of her bowel and, over the following two years, a further four major abdominal surgeries, including the fitting of a permanent colostomy bag. Russell says that once she was given the all-clear to run again, her initial goal was to get back to being the athlete she'd been before.

However, as soon as she started training she knew she needed a different perspective. 'I hated living by the watch and putting pressure on myself,' says Russell. 'I had no interest in racing and I realised I was on a new journey. So, instead of chasing Ironman goals and PBs, I started looking at events that offered spectacular views. My first marathon after my illness was the Jungfrau Marathon in Switzerland. It was the most empowering and incredible experience of my life, and the time didn't matter to me one bit. Since then I've done 12 more marathons and various ultras and stage events. Next year I plan to run 120 miles in

the Transrockies [a six-day team event in Colorado, US]. I'll probably be last, but I doubt anyone else is doing it with a colostomy bag!'

SET YOUR ENVIRONMENT GOAL:

Grab an atlas, a pen and some paper. Look through the atlas and scribble down every place that gets you excited. Then answer three questions: 1) Where have you always wanted to visit? 2) Where gets your heart racing? 3) Who would you love to explore it with? Then go online and search for races there. Even if it will take you years to save or train for it, having that goal at the end can bring a new and exciting dimension to your running.



THE STORY IS YOURS TO TELL

Whatever goals we focus on we can still worry that others judge us by the times we produce. If you find yourself fearing judgment by others, the key thing to remember is you do not owe anyone else any information. You choose what you share with people. Each race you run is your race and your story, to be told as you choose. Your story does not have to be about the time. Choose your story in advance so you feel confident answering any questions in the way you want to.

HOW DID YOU DO TODAY?

'My goal was to thank every marshal – I managed that so I'm chuffed.'

'I loved racing in our club vest. It made me so proud.'

'Great, thanks. Did you enjoy it?'

Develop(ment) GOALS

THE PROBLEM: If you are normally a very goal-orientated runner, then avoiding goals completely could negatively impact your motivation. Having a PB to aim for has probably been very helpful to keep you focused on improving your running over the years. So, rather than ditching your 'number goals' completely, think about modifying them to help you create personal or sporting development goals, rather than simply speed ones.

THE RUNNER WHO SOLVED IT: Charisa Clarkson had raced as a professional triathlete for six years, so she was always chasing PB or

placing goals. She felt she needed a break from the intense pressure that came with her sporting career, but still wanted to develop her running to improve her efficiency, so she switched to a focus on heart rate. 'For about 10 years I chased the elusive sub-three-hour marathon in vain – 3:05 was the closest I got – and eventually I switched to running based on heart rate to escape all the paces and numbers I'd focused on,' says Clarkson. 'Instead, as I trained and got fitter, my perceived effort became easier. Watching heart-rate numbers was a new and different thing for me to focus on and it becomes fun to watch over the weeks as your

A CHANGE OF FOCUS

body becomes more efficient. It removes the focus from pace and shifts it onto more-efficient running, or just running for the joy of it, but still gives me a bit of a fun goal to focus on, which is great, because I am quite goal oriented. The body is a complete system and there are many ways to improve without just focusing on pace.'

SET YOUR DEVELOPMENT GOAL:

Pick just one element of your running – for example, form, mental strength or efficiency – that you want to focus on for a period of time and research everything you can about how to do that. Set your goals for the year focused only on that process and measure how well you improve that element of your running rather than your pace or race finish times. RW



WHO
DO
YOU
RUN
FOR?

A Facebook group with more than 40,000 members connects runners with the special needs community across 28 countries. It started because a stranger needed motivation to run, and a man with Down's syndrome was happy to give it to him

—
BY KIT FOX

PHOTOGRAPHS
BY HANA ASANO

Tim Boyle needed a reason to run. Michael Wasserman wanted someone to run for him: a friendship began.



Tim Boyle ran for many things when he first started in September 2012.

First, there was the girl. They had recently broken up. She was a runner and while they were seeing each other he had never quite understood why she would lace up her running shoes and go outside to brave the frigid winter mornings. But after the breakup he decided that proving to her that he could run a half marathon might take some of the sting out of their ended relationship. He gave himself six months to train for a race that he knew she had already signed up for, hoping he'd bump into her at the finish line to show her that, yes, he could run, too.

Also, there were his lungs. They'd been abused for 17 years by a two-and-a-half-packet-a-day smoking habit that started after he finished school. He couldn't sit through a film in a cinema without having to go out to light up. His first packet was nearly empty by 5am, when he arrived at a dairy distribution plant to start his job delivering milk.

'I was tired of having tobacco consume every aspect of my life,' says Tim. So he gave up, on August 7, 2012. The next month, he took the \$300 (£230) he normally used for cigarettes each month and went to a running store to buy shoes and clothes.

He ran for fresh-cut grass. He could smell it on his first three-miler near his home in Crookston, Minnesota, a town of 8,000 in the northern United States. In the middle of the loop, while crossing a bypass, he remembers seeing mowers trimming the lawn. He breathed deeply. 'It's one of my favourite smells,' he says. 'That's when I fell in love with running.'

And he started running for his mental health, too. He was diagnosed with depression in 2007, after attempting suicide. He swallowed 51 pills and then he called the ambulance himself, but not to save his life. 'I was worried that what I had taken wasn't enough,' he says. 'I wanted to get my stomach pumped so I could put a gun to my head.'

Instead, doctors convinced him to go to therapy. Five years later, he hoped running could help him cope with the demons that sometimes still surfaced.

FINDING INSPIRATION

There are a thousand little things we choose to run for: the smell of a fresh-cut lawn, to prove something to an ex, to earn a medal. And a thousand more big things: to fight an addiction, to lose weight, to cope with depression. Find the right combination of motivators, and running becomes a habit, a necessity. It can change your life.

But then it starts to rain, or snow and the thermometer dips below freezing. Nobody is mowing their lawn and your knees ache. All you really want, desperately, is to light up and order a takeaway. All of a sudden, one of the things in your life, big or small, can convince you to get out the door.

In November 2012, Tim Boyle ran out of things to run for. Desperate for motivation, he started googling inspirational quotes. He found a dark grey image with a silhouette of a tree behind a poem in white letters. It read: 'I run because I can. When I get tired, I remember those who can't run, what they would give to have this simple gift I take for granted and I run harder for them. I know they would do the same for me.'

Tim reposted the photo to his Facebook profile. The first person to comment was a man named Michael Wasserman, who wrote, 'You can run for me anytime.'

Mary Wasserman will never forget the day she visited a state mental institution as a high school volunteer in the late 1950s. She remembers the noxious smells, the sights and sounds



FIND THE RIGHT COMBINATION OF MOTIVATORS, AND RUNNING BECOMES A HABIT, A NECESSITY. IT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE



Tim meets Michael Wasserman for the second time since they became friends in 2012.

of suffering. More than half a century later, she finds the scene difficult to describe. 'It was one of the most horrible things I've ever seen,' she says.

Mary gave birth to a boy, Michael Wasserman, on November 7, 1961. Back then, there were no in utero tests to determine if your baby had Down's syndrome, and Michael was diagnosed after he was born. He weighed just four pounds and had hazel eyes.

'He was just beautiful,' says Mary.

When the doctors recommended that she give Michael up to institutional state care, she refused. Despite knowing Michael would need a lifetime of support, she was adamant she was not going to send her son away. She brought him home on Christmas Eve.

Michael had challenges with verbal communication, but he smiled a lot – an infectious grin that was so broad and bright it seemed to consume his entire face. He smiled when he got a glass of water or when he met new people or when he danced, which was often.

Seven years after Michael was born, Eunice Shriver Kennedy founded the Special Olympics. Michael signed up, competing in the softball throw and swimming. And he ran. The 50- and 100-yard dashes. He made friends with everyone he met, graduated from a special-education school and reminded Mary every day why she'd brought him home.

His smile didn't fade, but Michael slowed down in 1983. He told his mother he could no longer walk. After visiting a range of specialists, he was diagnosed with bilateral bone-on-bone hip dysplasia – a debilitating condition that painfully forces the hip joints out of alignment.

To treat it, doctors had to experiment. The surgery Michael needed was completely new. They re-broke his bones in several places, rebuilding the joints so he could walk again. Which he did, in 1986. His recovery is literally a textbook case; surgeons around the world still consult his procedure when studying the condition.

But he wasn't just able to walk. After several surgeries and 17 months of daily physiotherapy, he could dance and he could run again. He competed in the 50-yard dash at the Special Olympics in 1987 and won a medal. He attended an orthopaedic conference, where, in front of hundreds of surgeons, he ascended and descended 28 steep steps in the amphitheatre. He received a standing ovation. ➔



What began as a friendship between two men has blossomed into an international phenomenon.

But Tim and Mary insist this is not the case. Tim sent weekly, sometimes daily, updates about his training to Michael (Mary would help Michael read and respond to the messages). Michael would send Tim updates about his pain management and painting. They became fast friends, albeit very long distance ones.

Tim sent Michael the finisher's medal from his first 5K. And he has sent most of his race medals to Michael since.

During several low points throughout Tim's life, when the depression begins to creep back to the fringes of his consciousness, he has turned to Facebook to cope. After his diagnosis in 2007, he discovered a Facebook page about Down's syndrome. Seeing the stories from thousands of people with the condition put his own life in perspective. Their joy over the smallest things boosted Tim's own mood.

After the experience of completing a race for – and then building a relationship with – someone who couldn't run, Tim started thinking that there may be other people who might want to do the same. So he once again turned to Facebook. With Mary's permission, he created the page 'I Run for Michael.'

STARTING A MOVEMENT

He invited fellow runners to join the group, and Mary helped him invite people from the special needs community. Tim started a not-for-profit organisation with the same name as the Facebook group, but they did not want the attention to focus only on Michael. They decided to match each runner with a different person with special needs.

Runners posted updates to their 'buddy', filling them in on their training. Buddies posted back, updating their runners on surgeries and life accomplishments. More than 500 people joined in the first month, and more than 15,000 in the first year.

'This group could be 40 people or it could be 40,000 people, Michael doesn't care,' says his mother. 'What he cares about is that people are motivated, encouraged and happy.'

And that is exactly the point of the group, says Tim: bringing strangers together who would have never met otherwise, to motivate and encourage each other, whether they are training for a marathon, undergoing surgery, finishing an Ironman or learning how to use a wheelchair.

'I still have trouble getting through that story without tears,' says Mary.

He was mobile for 24 years and 24 days. But in 2009, he sat down and once again told his mother he could no longer walk. He was living with Mary and her husband, Albert, in Aptos, California. Unfortunately this time, surgery was not an option.

Three years later, Michael and Mary browsed through the Facebook page they had made to share his story and auction his art for charity – Michael's latest passion was self-expression via bright, abstract canvases.

It's there that they stumbled on a post from a man who was looking for some new motivation to run. Mary helped Michael type the message: 'You can run for me anytime.'

That's brilliant, that is exactly what I will do, thought Tim. So he contacted Michael and Mary through a Facebook message: 'I want to be your legs,' he wrote. 'I am going to dedicate all of my training miles and my next race to you.'

At first, Mary was wary of the unusual offer. The special needs community is very tight-knit, and she is, naturally, cautious when people who don't directly know Michael want to become involved with his life. Plus, she didn't really know what this all meant – dedicating miles to her son.

'It means, when I get tired and want to quit, I think about him in his wheelchair and the fact that he is not able to get up and run,' says Tim. 'It is no longer about me.'

The challenges that Michael faces every day put Tim's pain in perspective. It wasn't the smell of fresh-cut grass or fighting his nicotine addiction or even coping with depression that got him to the finish line of his very first race – a 5K in February 2013 – it was completing the miles for Michael.

The whole concept appears, at first, to be somewhat tenuous, the more cynically minded might even describe it as exploitative. This is, after all, a man with perfectly functioning legs who is using a stranger with Down's syndrome, who, in the real world, lives nearly 2,000 miles away, as a sort of totem to achieve his own personal goals.

'I WANT TO BE YOUR LEGS,' WROTE TIM. 'I AM GOING TO DEDICATE ALL OF MY TRAINING MILES TO YOU'

WHO THEY RUN FOR



ALICIA JENKINS

29-year-old physiotherapist assistant

RUNS FOR: Evelyn (Evi) Pemberton, a seven-year-old with cystic fibrosis
MATCHED: September 19, 2016

'When I go to races, I write "I run 4 Evi" on my leg,' says Jenkins, who posts Pemberton a medal, T-shirt and other goody-bag swag after every race. 'We haven't met in person yet, but I already feel like she is family.'

'The light in Evelyn's eyes when she talks about Alicia is magical,' says Pemberton's mother, Samantha. 'Knowing Alicia is running for Evelyn helps her push forward.'



SCOTT MAYES

45-year-old sales rep

RUNS FOR: Maya Owens, an 18-year-old with mitochondrial disease
MATCHED: October 7, 2013

'When I'm running longer distances, I think, Why am I out here?' says Mayes. 'But no matter how much this hurts, Maya goes through so much more than I'll ever go through. That inspires me to keep going no matter what.'

'It was such a huge moment for her – feeling the wind as he ran, feeling like she was part of the race and crossing the finish line,' says Holly, Maya's mother, about the day Mayes pushed Maya in a race in 2014. 'She says it was the best day ever.'



JEN FRANCIS

43-year-old school cross-country coach

RUNS FOR: Jackson Fox, a seven-year-old with cerebral palsy
MATCHED: May 2, 2013

'It is something that's bigger than me. There is so much more to running for somebody,' says Francis.

'The programme is not just affecting Jackson and it's not just affecting Jen – it's affecting our whole family and making us more active,' said Jackson's mother, Angela. Witnessing Francis' love for running inspired Jackson – who doctors once said would never walk or talk – to compete in two triathlons. And the family of four have completed several 5Ks together.

It takes roughly six months for a runner to match with a buddy (there are about 4,000 people on the waiting list). To sign up, visit whoirun4.com

In less than five years, the I Run for Michael organisation has matched more than 20,000 runners with 20,000 buddies – most of them children, all of them with a disability that prohibits them from running or, in many cases, even walking. It's an extraordinary achievement in such a short time.

Scrolling through the Facebook page has a therapeutic effect – it acts as an instant mood booster, every new post bringing a big smile. They are all displayed to the main feed in the group, so every member can read them. The posts are personal. Genuine. It's like having access to the letters from 40,000 pen pals.

and does not allow requests, because he wants strangers to develop a relationship and learn about each other without previous knowledge. But, he says, many of the pairings take their newfound digital friendship off Facebook through in-person visits, attending races together and sending each other birthday gifts or finisher's medals. A few runners have even got tattoos of their buddy's name.


'This is so much more than running: it's mental, it's emotional, it's an attachment,' says Tim. 'Running is just a catalyst to form a relationship.'

He and Michael now keep in touch about once a week. They've met twice.

'I can't begin to quantify – or even qualify – what this has done for me,' says Tim. Five years ago, he was desperate to find something to run for. Fresh-cut grass wasn't doing it. Neither was his desire to get healthier.

Instead, he ended up finding someone to run for. And that might be the paradox at the heart of the whole idea, says Mary. Michael didn't actually need someone to run for him. Instead, he wanted to encourage someone, motivate them. To make their life happier.

He's ended up doing exactly that – for Tim Boyle and for more than 40,000 others.

In Michael's bedroom, on a wall near his bathroom, he's posted a photo of Tim after a race. Mary says that each time he passes it, he touches Tim's face. He smiles. 'Buddy,' he says. 

Tim is a rigorous moderator. He bans people if they discuss politics or post anything hateful. And he does not allow links. Though many runners have created fundraisers for a charity that helps their buddy, Tim does not want the group to be inundated with posts asking for money. He wants them to be uplifting and motivating. There are a lot of exclamation marks in the posts, as if the runners are anxious to communicate the importance of the runner-buddy relationship to them, and as if they want to emphasise the contact.

'Hi Avery! I had a killer headache today, but I was still able to get our workout done. How was speech on Tuesday? I hope you did well?'

'Hi Daniel! The baby and I ran three miles for you this morning. How has your week been? Mine's been crazy hectic, as always!'

'Hey Gavin! I just saw your mom posted about you getting a swing! That's awesome buddy...even at my age I enjoy a good swing! We got 12 miles in this morning!'

Most of the buddies are children, so their parents respond – posting pictures of a medal they just received from their runner, updating the group on a doctor's visit or sharing photos of a new life milestone.

'When you have a child with disabilities, your world is isolated,' says group member Sue Allen. Her six-year-old son, River, has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair. 'You are constantly going to the doctor.'

Allen, like Mary Wasserman, was initially skeptical of the concept behind I Run for Michael. But she signed up River after seeing the encouraging, heartfelt posts. Her son matched with a runner called Jodi Stoner in 2014.

'I love it because you make this connection where you give and they give, and it is just a beautiful thing,' says Allen. The community, she says, has expanded her and her son's world outside of just the context of special needs.

Stoner has actually visited River multiple times, and pushed him in a specialised wheelchair during races. Tim says that's fairly common. He intentionally makes matches random,

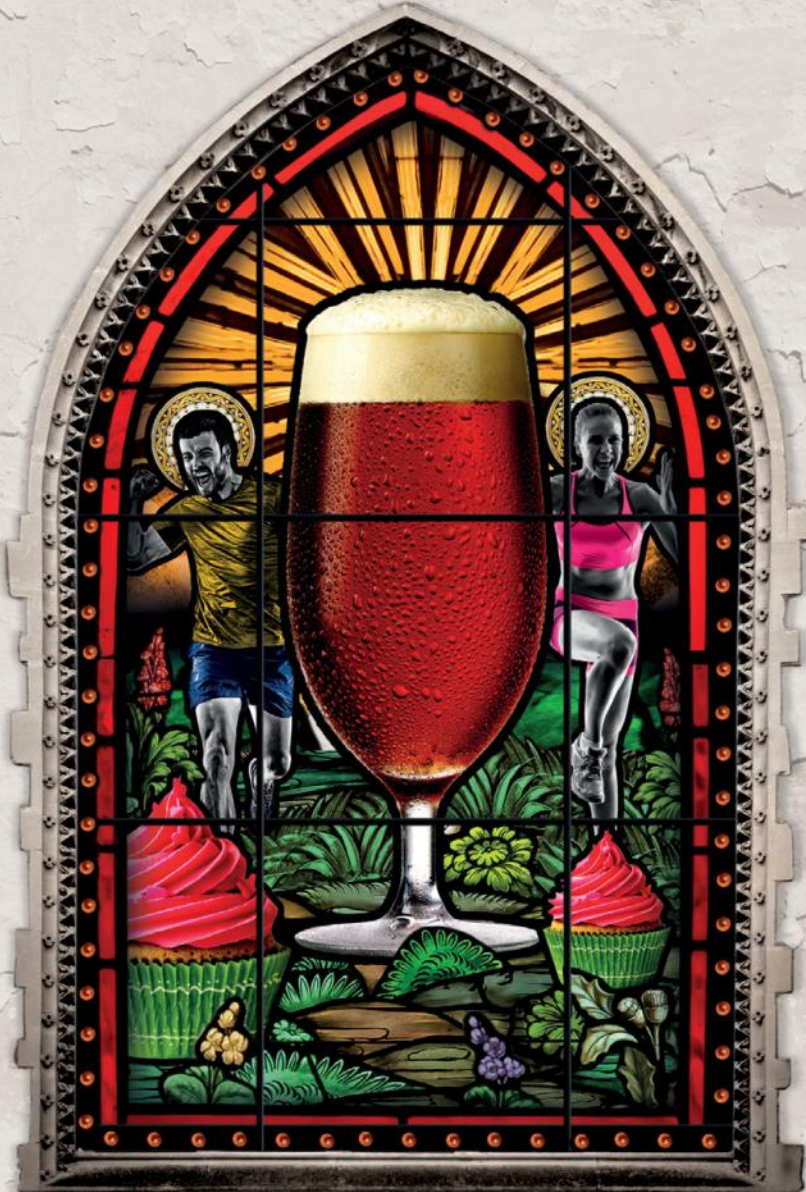
The

12

commandments
of running etiquette

AND LO, AT THE CREST OF A HILL REP, THE RUNNING GODS SPOKE GRAVELY UNTO
RUNNER'S WORLD AND DID LAY DOWN THE LAW. AND ON THAT DAY THE RULES
OF RUNNING WERE ETCHED IN STONE AND THE GODS WERE WELL PLEASED...





Unwritten rules govern our lives. Not reading another person's texts. Not tousling the hair of strangers. Not smearing yourself in goose fat and bounding naked through a train (that might be a

written one, come to think of it). Running is no exception. In fact, it can be worse. Whether you're in a race, training with a friend or group, or just taking a solo spin round the park to let off steam, a complex web of unspoken social mores applies. And heaven help you if you flout them. An outsider may not spot the transgression, but that means nothing: the slighted never forget.

So here, to ensure you don't get yourselves in any hot water (on trains or anywhere else), are the 12 unbreakable commandments of running etiquette.

01 THOU SHALT NOT SIT ON MY ARSE TO MAKE THINGS EASIER

Tuck in behind the runner in front for a while and you have your own pace-setter, motivator, navigator and, if you're close enough, mobile windbreak. They, on the other hand, have the sensation of dragging a heavy load behind them. A heavy load that's breathing heavily or, worse, groaning with exertion. It can turn even the most zenned-out runner into a raging loon. Correct protocol? Take it in turns to, in Tour de France parlance, 'do a pull on the front,' or drop back/overtake. 'But you were running at EXACTLY my pace,' won't cut any ice when you're confronted at the finish line by the infuriated owner of the tail you gated.

02 THOU SHALT SHARE THE CONVERSATIONAL LOAD

We've all run with someone like this: monosyllabic social pygmies in normal life, they morph into Parky or Paxo once the

trainers go on. Penetrating question after penetrating question. You indulge them and suddenly you're gasping for air by mile two. It's not on. The conversational pace should be set by whoever's struggling the most and scrupulous attention should be paid to equality of response time. And people, please, closed questions only. 'Did you get that work report finished?' – good. 'What do you feel were the underlying socioeconomic drivers for Brexit?' – bad.

03 THOU SHALT RESPECT THE RUNNING DYNAMIC

Think of a trot with an established running pal as being like a date with a long-term partner: familiar patter; cursory warm-up; the sweaty main event; a general sense of satisfaction. It's not earth-shattering, but it is comfy. But what's this? One of you has invited Anna from work. WTF? Anna's got better kit. Anna's chat is fresh. Anna can run a six-minute-mile pace without dry retching. The special relationship is broken.

04 THOU SHALT GREET OTHER RUNNERS APPROPRIATELY

Running is inclusive and that shared endeavour needs to be acknowledged. Yes you're in the zone – but the other runner is nearly dead on their feet and it doesn't stop them from managing a chirpy 'morning'. There is also a vital equation to follow here: the warmth of the greeting should be inversely proportional to the volume of runners. If it's a wildebeest-migration-style lunchtime city run then it's acceptable to use the near-imperceptible eyebrow raise. Forest trail in the Outer Hebrides? Ten-minute chat, exchange of email addresses for correspondence and, maybe, a hug.

05 THOU SHALT NOT ASK TO SHARE SUPPLIES

A runner's water bottle is sacred. It contains their painstakingly mixed elixir, warmed through movement and their own body heat to the optimised temperature for consumption, and measured out to the micro-millilitre. The same goes for whatever sachets, or lumps of cling-filmed gunk they've squirrelled away. 'What? No... of course you can have some.' That's what they'll say. What they're thinking is, 'Did anyone actually see the two of us arrive at this dense area of parkland – and would anyone notice just the one of us leaving?'

06 THOU SHALT HAVE A PINT (OR GLASS OF WINE)

Recreational running, at its best, is a sociable enterprise. You've done the training, shed the sweat, faced the

hardship together. So it's only right that this be followed by a measure of indulgence. Take your lead from the most indulgent in the group (OK, maybe the next one down). Cake with coffee at the warm-up pit stop? Pastries for all? A cheeky second in the pub while you pore over split times? Make that a round. It shouldn't need to be said that ordering a water, filling in your race diary, then heading home for an anti-gravity treadmill warm-down, an ice bath and an early night in your altitude tent embarrasses both yourself and the wider group.

07 THOU SHALT BE HONEST ABOUT TRAINING

'I've done literally no revision.' Remember that line, so often trotted out before an exam? You may have thought you'd heard the last of it at your geography A-Level but you'll hear it often in the context of training. Then, mid-race, that sly hustler of a friend/geography A-level A-star student will accelerate up the slope, making you look bad and feel worse (you've done lots of training). You must always come clean about your race preparation. If you've been tapering for six months with a strict diet of Domino's and Ben & Jerry's, that's fine. So, too, if you've spent a month in a warm-weather training camp pacing Mo Farah in his 8x800m reps. Both must be declared.

08 THOU SHALT BRAG ONLY A LITTLE ABOUT A RACE

A fair chunk of what we do in life and so, yes, in running, is about what we can be seen doing or say we've done. Which is no bad thing. But let us tell you a tale. We've completed a number of races, punched out a few ultras and spent a fair amount of time talking about it (mostly because we were asked but, in fairness, not always). Then, one day, we happened to find ourselves in the presence of a certifiable race bore – you know, that someone who has done more, far more. We recognised the 'aw-shucks' contrived modesty; the 'that wasn't even the hardest part of it' hyperbole; the cranked-up sense of peril; the palpable unwillingness to relinquish the floor. And we were bored. Really bored.

09 THOU SHALT RESPECT THE INJURY

Treating a training run as a zombie evacuation (you go down, you're dead to me) may result in some pleasing Strava stats, but it's not going to endear you to the friend with the fast-ballooning ankle and (now) chronic frostbite you've left behind. As a rule, treat the statement 'You go on ahead, I'll be fine' with the same pinch-of-salt caution as a partner saying 'Please don't worry about getting me a birthday



present'. Wait, it's a race? In that case, every man and woman for themselves.

10 THOU SHALT NOT WORSHIP ANY FALSE IDOLS

Who doesn't love the bling – but it's possible to love those finisher's medals a little too much. Flaunting yours in the pub afterwards is to be encouraged. But once you've scrubbed up, washed the remnants of the race off yourself and changed into civvies, it becomes a tiny bit weird to still have a chunky lump of metal swinging from your neck. Consider, too, the display thing. A spotlight, walnut-and-mahogany trophy cabinet in your front room may be proportionate to the pride and satisfaction you feel at having completed the challenge. But the dispassionate observer only sees something that looks like it has come out of a Poundland novelty box being treated with the reverence of the FA Cup. Medals should be tossed in the sock drawer (or at least on a shelf in the spare bedroom).

11 THOU SHALT NOT (OVER)PIMP ONE'S RUNNING GEAR

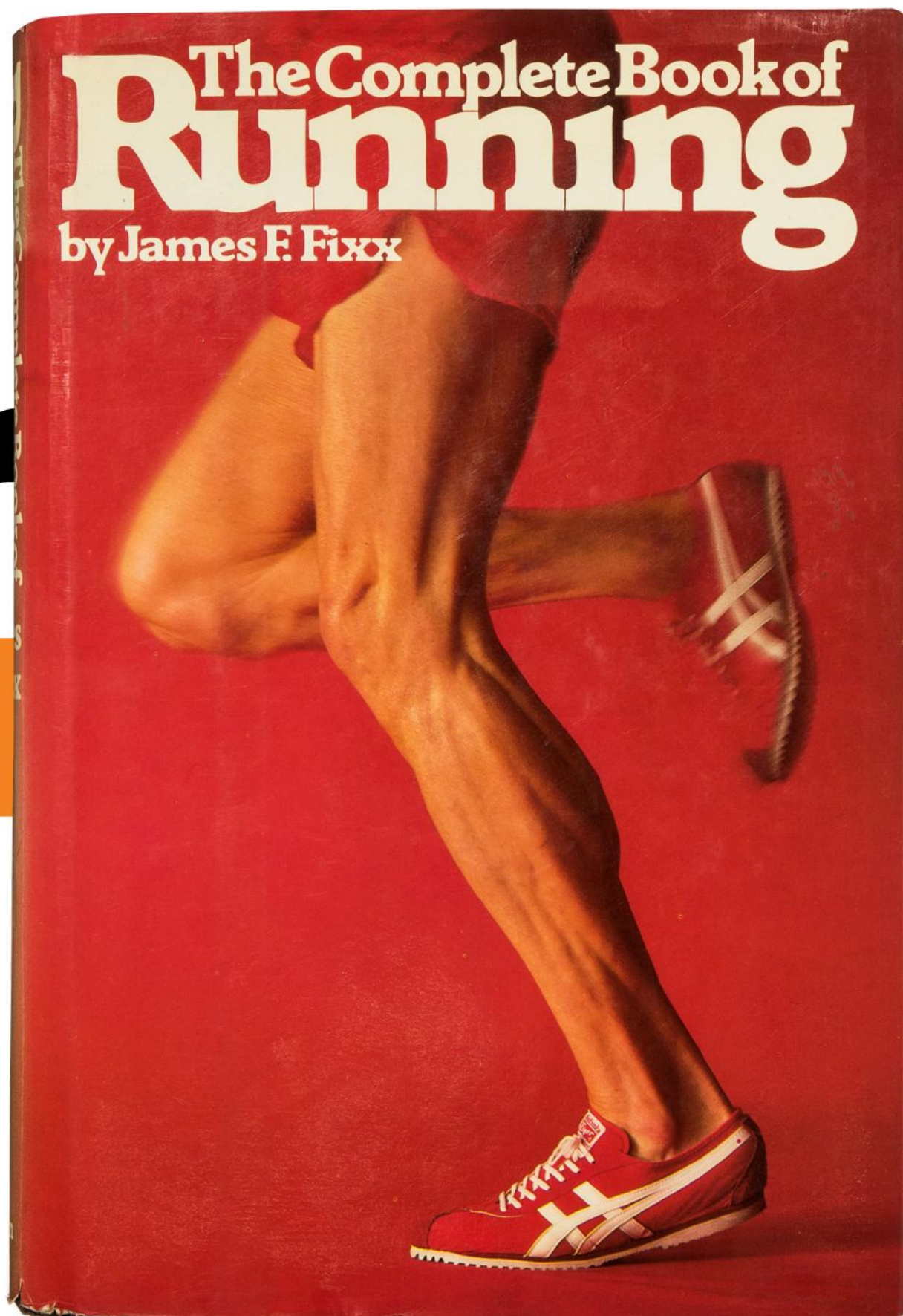
Everyone needs new kit from time to time. Trainers wear out, vests get frayed, repellent jogging bottoms get 'accidentally lost' by partners with less passion for running and more commitment to basic hygiene. Incrementally updating that running wardrobe is fine. What is less so, is turning up to a training run looking like an escapee from a NASA R&D equipment laboratory: running shades with in-ear, voice-activated virtual personal trainer; smart trainers with Bluetooth connectivity, heart-rate monitor and cadence tracker; million-mile battery-less head torch with magnetic motion activation. Your running mates are going to have a field day when, with you weighed down by your new clobber, they leave you trailing. While still wearing their work socks.

12 THOU SHALT NOT RUN VESTLESS

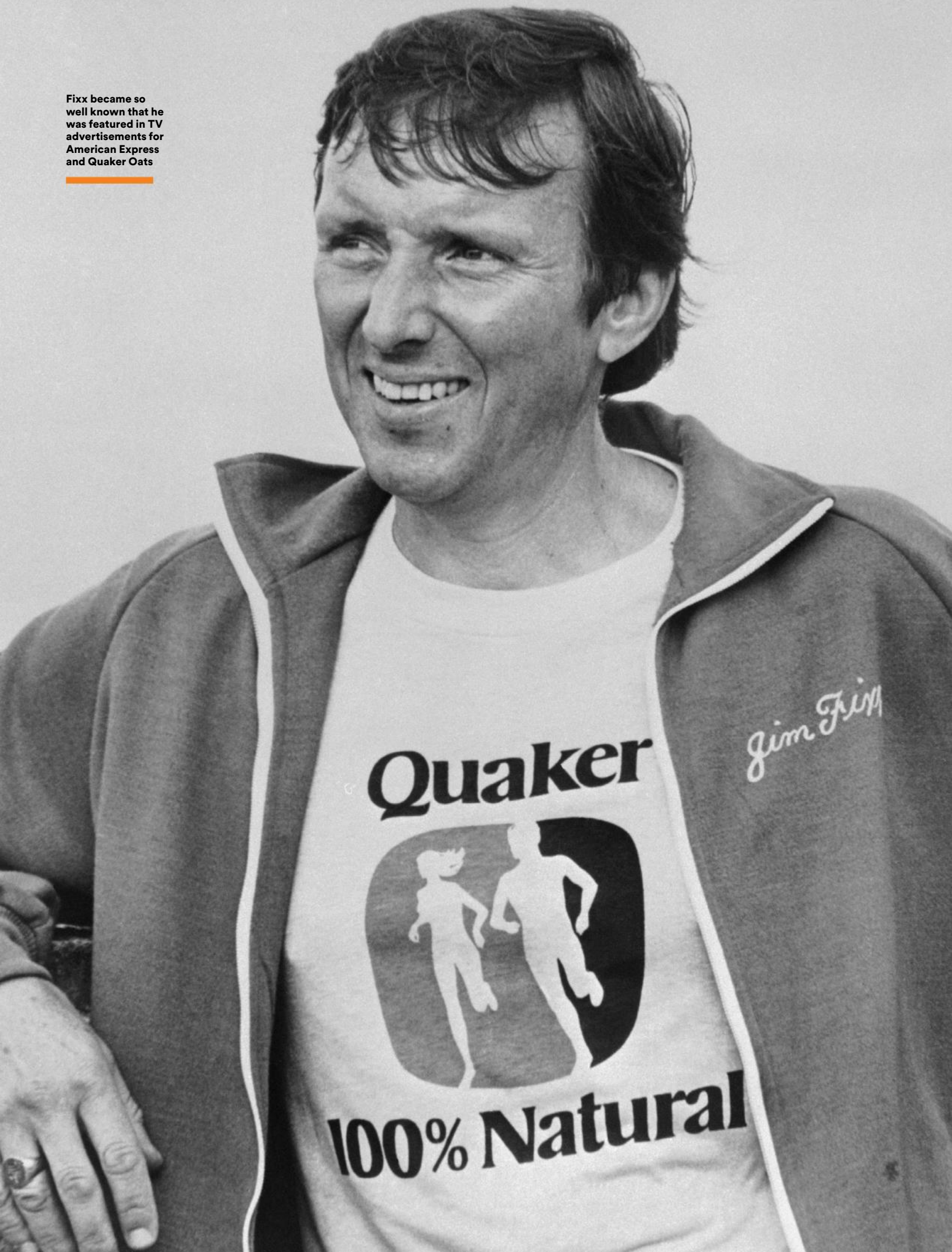
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The Leade of the Pack

The Complete Book of Running is 40.
Here we celebrate the influence of
its author, Jim Fixx, on our sport



Fixx became so well known that he was featured in TV advertisements for American Express and Quaker Oats



The story of running is punctuated by a series of inflection points, those moments when history takes a turn

The book contains meticulously researched advice based on scientific studies and expert knowledge, supported by personal anecdotes and carried along by an unbridled enthusiasm for the good running can do for the mind, body and soul. It struck a chord with a legion of readers who were keen on the idea of being a runner, but lacked any notion as to how they might go about joining this growing movement.

First steps

The 280 pages of *The Complete Book* not only demystified running, but were written in such a way as to let the reticent runner know that there was a new life waiting once they'd got through those early, breathless miles. Fixx spoke from a position of authority on that last point, because he then was a living, breathing testament to running's transformative capacity – a point that would later become a source of tragic irony.

Fixx worked in publishing, which, in the 1960s and 1970s, meant an occupation filled with long lunches, boozy meetings and cigarette smoke. The book's first-edition jacket cover explains: 'When he started running several years ago, Jim Fixx weighed nearly 220 pounds [15st] and breathed hard just thinking about exercise. Today, at 159 pounds [11st], he has been declared medically fitter than most college athletes, has competed in – and finished – six Boston Marathons, has won the Connecticut 10,000m championship in his age category and has run the equivalent of once around the equator.'

If you're a runner, you can probably recall with perfect clarity the moment you became one. For Fixx, the trigger was a calf injury he had picked up while playing a tennis match with a friend. The enforced break from his exercise regime – which could have been labelled patchy, at best – provided some much-needed time for introspection. Fixx decided he wasn't quite ready for the knacker's yard just yet, and as soon as his sore calf permitted, he started running. Having only previously encountered running in basic training during his time in the army, those first runs were performed in military-style footwear. He wrote: 'Army running was all I knew. I laced on a pair of heavy boots, went outdoors and started shuffling slowly along the sidewalk. I saw no sign in doing so that I had begun to change my life, yet this is exactly what was happening.'

A move from New York City to the suburbs followed, as did an end to his two-packs-a-day smoking habit, a decision to start running daily and the discovery of an upcoming five-mile race advertised in his local newspaper. Fixx entered, trained hard – and finished last.

'I was discouraged and mystified,' he wrote, 'Just why had I done so badly? I had tortured myself with all that training, and I was plainly not the fattest, oldest or clumsiest runner in the race... A friend loaned me some copies of a magazine called *Runner's World*. I began to learn what training was.' What followed was not only the development of a deeper understanding of how to improve as a runner, but also how the benefits it offered could be more than just physical. ➔

from its well-worn path. In terms of our sport, think of the extension of the 1908 London Olympic Marathon route so that the race finished in front of the Royal Box, a decision that gave birth to the now definitive 26.2-mile distance. Or the moment American Kathrine Switzer became the first female finisher of the Boston Marathon, in 1967, prising open the door for women to compete in a race distance they had been considered – by the men who made the decisions, at least – to be incapable of running, for reasons that ranged from the patronising to the idiotic. Much more recently, there's Christopher McDougall's 2009 book, *Born to Run*, which encouraged many runners to investigate whether less could be more when it came to their footwear. But long before McDougall met the Tarahumara running tribe of Mexico, a book had a seismic impact on the evolution of our sport. Published in 1977, James F. Fixx's *The Complete Book of Running* has been cited as one of the major initiators of the first 'running boom'. It sold more than a million copies. Such was its impact that Fixx toured the US, appearing at races and on TV shows alongside other luminaries of the sport. Legendary coach and writer Hal Higdon wrote: 'He had helped launch the running boom, and the boom launched him to a level of celebrity so great that American Express featured him in a TV commercial.'

QUICK FIXX

How much of Fixx's advice is still relevant? Coach Martin Yelling (yellingperformance.com) looks at some of his key messages

'It's wasteful to train for just one race and then let all your hard-won conditioning evaporate. Plan to make running a daily habit.'
MY: 'The point about not doing anything after a big race you've trained for is still bang on. But ➔'

'I was calmer and less anxious. I could concentrate more easily and for longer periods. I felt more in control of my life,' said Fixx of the metamorphosis he found himself undergoing. It was this enlightenment, this discovery of the whole package running had to offer, that formed the basis for the book Fixx would go on to write.

Compartmentalised into three sections, with subdivisions in each of those, *The Complete Book* is well ordered and incredibly comprehensive. 'There was also that dynamite red cover,' wrote Higdon in *The Runner* magazine, 'which literally leaped off bookstore shelves, daring baby boomers who had gained too much weight to buy it. The well-formed legs on the cover were those of Jim Fixx himself.'

But as the book hits 40, how has it stood the test of time? Despite the intervening decades, much of the advice remains sage and useful for runners of any level, though there is also some that has not aged so well. With our GPS watches we can smile a nostalgic smile at the passage explaining how to measure runs by hopping in your car to drive the route you just completed.

The suggestion that if new runners don't want to invest in the kit, a cut-off pair of jeans will suffice as shorts in the early stages seems like a bad steer in a world now wrapped in moisture-wicking fabrics.



daily? I think Jim was being a bit enthusiastic.'

'Increase your weekly running mileage very gradually in order to give your body plenty of time to adapt. Too quick a change produces fatigue and injuries.'

'That stands today, but it's not solely about the body. Too much, too soon can risk injury and ruin your motivation.'

'Don't attempt interval training until you've laid down a solid foundation of long, slow distance. It's hard work and can easily cause injuries unless you're in top shape.'

'I don't agree. You can use intervals to build strength from early on. That might initially mean just some mixed-pace running. Then you need to think about how you'll progress your high/low intensity mix.'

'Basic speed is an inborn quality, one that can't be greatly influenced by training. You're fast or you're not. What you can improve through training is endurance.'
'There's some truth to that in terms of your muscle-fibre makeup. Some people are born with more fast-twitch muscle fibres, so they're more suited to shorter, faster running. And aerobic endurance trainability is greater than speed anaerobic trainability, but the latter can be improved through training.'

'You must demonstrate to your brain that certain things are going to be required of it – among other things a toughness that doesn't fold under pressure →'

MUCH OF THE ADVICE REMAINS USEFUL FOR RUNNERS OF ANY LEVEL

And in the chapter dedicated to women, there's a slightly ham-fisted address to what he describes as the 'Great Bra Controversy' and some advice that can most kindly be described as 'of its time', when Fixx turns his attention to the jibes received by women runners: 'Ridicule is something you quickly learn to deal with...Just accept the fact that some people are going to make such derisive remarks as 'Hey honey, if I catch you, can I keep you?''

Prophet and loss

In the context of what would happen to Fixx less than seven years after his book took the running world by storm, the chapter on running after a heart attack is oddly affecting. Going by the risk chart accompanying that section, Fixx would have scored at least a four out of six – six being the highest risk on the scale – for his chances of suffering a heart attack himself. His father had died following a second heart attack, aged just 43, and Fixx's history as a sedentary, overweight smoker seemed to contribute to a perfect storm alongside that sort of family history – a storm that, according to Higdon, had been brewing in Fixx's chest for some time.

'Around 1980, according to [Fixx's] second wife Alice, Fixx staggered inside after working in the yard, face drawn. She claims: "Jim had the classic symptoms of heart trouble....He was sweating, short of breath, nauseated, pain in the chest. After it passed, he just went about his work."

Other similar episodes are described by Higdon, who also pointed out that Fixx never underwent a stress test, the kind of examination in which he would have been asked to run on a treadmill to ascertain how his heart was performing as the speed ramped up.

There may also have been a feeling within him that he had beaten his unfavourable odds, having already outlasted his father and discovered a sport that would keep him fit and healthy. 'But in changing lifestyles,' argued Higdon, 'Fixx had merely moderated, not eliminated, his risk.'

On July 20, 1984, a passing motorcyclist found Fixx dead at the side of Route 15 in Vermont. He was wearing just his shorts and shoes. He was 52. *The New York Times'* obituary didn't get beyond its opening paragraph without highlighting the irony in the manner of his death: 'James F. Fixx, who spurred the jogging craze with his bestselling books about running and preached the gospel that active people live longer, died of a heart attack Friday while on a solitary jog.'



Left: Fixx out for a run in Connecticut in 1977, the year his book was published. Above: Fixx at his home in Hardwick, Vermont, in 1979. His *Second Book of Running* was published in 1980.

And so, from a legacy purely based on the thousands – if not hundreds of thousands – of people his writing inspired to start running, Fixx's story has continued to have that asterisk against it. The godfather of running, and the champion of its benefits, ran himself to death. However, it's a picture that glosses over those alarmingly obvious hereditary and lifestyle-related risks Fixx was burdened with long before he dug out those old army boots.

A few days after his death, a columnist for *The Washington Post* wrote an article headed *The Jim Fixx Neurosis: Running Yourself to Death*, positing the theory that, alongside the sage advice in his original book and its follow-up, *Jim Fixx's Second Book of Running*, in 1981, were 'advice and beliefs that may have hastened Fixx's death and, I am convinced, may hasten the death of other runners.'

The author placed Fixx in a group described by researchers as, 'those for whom running is a compulsive drive that pre-empts fulfilment in

Fixx's autopsy had shown that three coronary arteries were 90, 85 and 70 per cent blocked. The problem with heart disease, stated the *Times*, was that the first symptom can sometimes be sudden death.

or fatigue. This is why [Emil] Zátopek used to hold his breath repeatedly until it hurt.' 'Correct. Research shows that when you've been exposed to tough situations you're better able to deal with tough situations, so as well as training your body for the unpleasant, you've got to train your mind.'

'Just as you can do too little in training, you can also do too much. Your body needs time for repairs after a hard workout. Rest periods are an essential part of training.'

'Spot on. The key is to view rest as training. With no rest, adaptation won't take place. Downtime is vital.'

other life areas or who run to the point of inflicting physical damage on their bodies'.

This idea was in direct contrast to the thoughts of Fred Lebow, father of the New York City Marathon, who took the view at the time that, had he not been a runner, Fixx may have succumbed to a heart attack five years earlier. This was supported later by Fixx's son John, who was told by the coroner his father would have died 10 years earlier if his heart hadn't become so strong from his running. These days, the advice from the British Heart Foundation is that physical activity can help reduce your risk of heart disease even for those with a family history of the condition.

So running was not the villain in Fixx's tragic, untimely death; rather, it gave him a new beginning and more years in which to enjoy his life and his newfound passion. He used those years to write a book that spread that same gift to millions of others. Large swathes of Fixx's 40-year-old doctrine remain relevant when it comes to guiding a new runner through their journey to fitness. It's a testament not only to his understanding of his craft and diligence as a writer, but also to the simplicity of a sport he was so evidently in love with.

The science of running may have moved on, but its soul remains the same, and you'll find it leaping from every page of the book that prompted people in their droves to follow Jim Fixx outdoors, and to start shuffling along pavements across the world. **AW**

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COACH

REACH *your* PERSONAL BEST



82 ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Reframe running setbacks by focusing on the notion that you can improve through effort

NO LIMITS

*To see what you're
really made of, push
yourself to your limit
– and then see if you
have something
left to give.*





THE SECRETS TO A BREAKTHROUGH race may lie in unexpected places. Most runners dissect their long runs, interval workouts and nutrition, but the *best* runners look beyond those metrics to reach their full potential. That was the key takeaway from researching our new book, *Peak Performance: Elevate Your Game, Avoid Burnout and Thrive with the New Science of Success*.

Although one of us (Steve) coaches elite athletes and the other (Brad) writes about sports science, we discovered novel ways to optimise athletic performance by interviewing world-class artists, intellectuals, entrepreneurs and musicians. By studying physiology, psychology, sociology and philosophy, we uncovered strategies that can help all athletes succeed. What follows are seven of our favourite discoveries, all backed by the latest scientific research.

THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MARATHONERS

To run your best 26.2 this spring, you'll need to do more than log miles and complete key workouts. These strategies will help you create a mindset that's primed for success

BY BRAD STULBERG AND
STEVE MAGNESS

1 FIND YOUR PURPOSE

A well known sports-science theory says the brain shuts down the body long before it reaches its physical limits. But new science shows it may be possible to transcend this – if you stay inspired. For a recent study, researchers used brain scans to see what happens when people are presented with threatening messages. In individuals who were asked to reflect on core values (eg, to be a good spouse or parent) prior to receiving such a message, their underlying neurology became more receptive, moving them toward the challenge instead of going into protection mode. The more we think about our beliefs, the better we rise above in-the-moment concerns and disconnect from our perceived limits.

APPLY IT Set a goal beyond 26.2 miles, raise money for charity, dedicate your race to a person or join a team. Your purpose needn't be complex: it can be as simple as 'to inspire

my children to live a healthy lifestyle'. When the going gets tough, reflect on your purpose to power through to the end.

2 AIM FOR THE SWEET SPOT

When psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi was studying how the best performers continually improve, he noticed they all pushed themselves to their limits, and perhaps just a bit beyond – a 'just-manageable challenge'. These challenges manifest when you try something that makes you feel a little out of control but not anxious. Any less of a challenge and you'd think, 'I've got this.' Any more of a challenge, however, and the feeling of your heart-beat pounding in your ears would make it hard to focus. You're after the sweet spot: when the challenge is on the outer edge of your current skills. ➔

APPLY IT Select a training plan (see p75) and time goal that are just outside your comfort zone. This might mean building from 30 miles a week to 40 or 45. While you shouldn't blow up (well, not often), you should struggle to nail your hardest training sessions. An online race-time calculator can help you find a just-manageable goal: plug in a recent race result (preferably for a half marathon or 10-miler) to estimate what you might achieve in the marathon.

3 WARM UP BODY & MIND

If your brain's in a funk, your body will follow: research conducted by exercise scientist Samuele Marcora found that even subtle mood influencers can alter performance. In one study, Marcora flashed either happy or sad faces on a screen as well-trained cyclists pedalled all-out. Those who were exposed to happy faces performed 12 per cent better than the sad-faces group. His findings support years of evidence that athletes tend to perform best when everything is clicking in a race *and* their wider lives.

APPLY IT Try to boost your mood heading into hard workouts and on race day. Listen to your favourite music, go for a quiet walk, or spend time with family or friends. In the week leading up to your marathon, minimise life stressors: avoid (to the best of your ability) people who drag you down, choose comedies over tear-jerkers or horror films, and get the rest you need to feel 100 per cent on the big day.

4 CHOOSE LESS

Having a workplace 'uniform' – eg Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's grey T-shirt and hoody – is common among high-performing people. Why? According to a theory proposed by psychologist Roy Baumeister, we have a set amount of mental energy to use each day. Initial research on this theory focused on self-control – how resisting temptations early in the day makes us more likely to give in later – but scientists found that making decisions also wears us out. Studies found that if subjects were asked to choose between consumer goods (eg shampoo brands) or given no choice, those asked to choose did less well on later tests of physical stamina and problem-solving. The researchers concluded that even with simple things, 'making many decisions leaves a person in a depleted state'.

APPLY IT If you can, work with a coach. You won't burn energy planning your training – you can shut off your brain and just do the workouts. Even though both of us [Brad and Steve] know a lot about running, when we're training hard, we work with coaches for this reason. The night before your marathon, lay out your gear, commit to a plan for when you'll depart and have a prerace meal ready. Automate as much of your training and race day as you can to conserve mental energy for running your fastest.

5 PRACTISE CALM CONVERSATIONS

When pain sets in during a hard run, everyday runners may think, 'This hurts and I've got a long way to go.' Such thoughts can lead to tense muscles and an elevated heart rate, which affect performance. But instead of panicking, the best runners have in their minds a calm conversation: 'This is starting to hurt. It should. I'm running hard. But it is going to be OK.' Separating pain from suffering in this way also promotes recovery: research has found that after hard training, elite athletes' heart-rate

variability – an indicator of recovery – returns to baseline far faster than that of recreational runners. This shows that elite athletes can transition from stress to rest better than non-elites.

APPLY IT When doubts creep in, practise calm conversations. As your effort and pain levels increase, don't distract yourself or fight them. Instead, practise accepting them: remind yourself that pain is a sign that you're doing the work that will make you faster.





6

REFRAME RACE-DAY NERVES

At the start of an Olympic event, few of the athletes appear to be anxious. Contrast this with any local 5K, where runners trying to go sub-25:00 stress over racing toward a finisher's medal they'll receive regardless of their performance. It's not that pros are immune to stress – they just know how to channel it effectively. In a study of elite and non-elite swimmers, researchers used a survey to

HAVE A WORD
How your body responds to pain during a hard run or race depends on what you tell yourself.

measure stress before a major race, and then asked each athlete if they viewed stress as beneficial or harmful. Before the race, both the elite and non-elite swimmers experienced the same intensity of cognitive and physical stress. The difference was that the non-elites viewed stress as something negative to try to quiet, while the elites interpreted the stress as an aid to their performance.

APPLY IT Recent research has shown that 'forcing' yourself to calm down can be disadvantageous: when you try to suppress nerves, you are telling yourself that something is wrong. It takes emotional energy to fight the anxiety – energy that could be better spent on racing. Instead, know that the sensations you feel prior to your marathon are neutral: if you view them in a positive light, they are more likely to have a positive effect on your performance.

7

FOLLOW STRESS WITH REST

US elite runner Bernard Lagat takes a rest day at the end of every hard training week – an uncommon practice among pros. On those days, the five-time Olympian engages only in activities that relax and restore his body and mind, such as massage, light stretching and playing with his kids. He also takes a five-week break from exercise at the end of each season, a practice that has helped his career stretch on for almost 20 years. Many of us believe that if we're not always working hard, we'll fail to thrive. But if we never take 'easy' periods, we are never able to go full throttle.

APPLY IT Stress plus rest equals growth, which we call 'the growth equation'. Too much stress leads to injury or burnout; too much rest leads to a failure to improve. So, follow hard days with easy ones and plan regular rest days (one to three per week). After a few hard weeks of training, take an easier, step-back week. And schedule a longer break (at least 10 days) from running after your marathon.



Adapted from *Peak Performance: Elevate Your Game, Avoid Burnout and Thrive with the New Science of Success*, by Brad Stulberg and Steve Magness (Rodale).

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PEAK 26.2 PLAN

For runners who log at least 30 miles per week (including a long run of 10+ miles)

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
1	Easy 5	6 miles hills + strides	Rest or XT	Easy 5	Easy 4	10	Rest	30
2	Easy 5	7 miles hills + strides	Rest or XT	Easy 5	Easy 4	12	Rest	33
3	Easy 5	8 miles hills + strides	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 3	14	Rest	36
4	Easy 6	5 miles straights/curves + drills	Rest or XT	Up-tempo 6	Easy 5	10	Rest	32
5	Easy 6	400s: 8 x 400 metres (7 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 5	14	Rest	38
6	Easy 6	Yasso 800s: 6 x 800 metres (7 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 4	16 with up-tempo last 6 miles	Rest	39
7	Easy 4	400s: 10 x 400 metres (8 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 7	Easy 4	18	Rest	41
8	Easy 7	5 miles straights/curves + drills	Rest or XT	Up-tempo 8	Easy 5	12	Rest	37
9	Easy 6	Miles: 4 x 1 mile (7 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 5	Half marathon	Rest	37.1
10	Easy 5	Yasso 800s: 8 x 800 metres (8 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 5	18	Rest	42
11	Easy 6	5 miles straights/curves + drills	Rest or XT	Up-tempo 10	Easy 4	20	Rest	45
12	Easy 7	Miles: 5 x 1 mile (8 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 5	15	Rest	41
13	Easy 5	5 miles straights/curves + drills	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 4	18 with up-tempo last 6 miles	Rest	38
14	Easy 5	400s: 12 x 400 metres (9 miles total)	Rest or XT	Easy 6	Easy 5	15	Rest	40
15	Easy 4	Up-tempo 5	Rest or XT	Easy 5	Easy 4	10	Rest	28
16	Easy 3	5 miles straights/curves + drills	Rest	Easy 4	Rest	Easy 3	Race	41.2

● Block out at least one day of total rest each week – Sunday is good if you like running long on Saturdays. Or vice versa.

● Save mental energy by having a speedwork day ('Track Tuesday'), a long-run day and a rest day – and sticking to it most weeks.

● Sustaining (and then gradually increasing) a tough pace requires you to avoid 'freakout moments' and have a calm conversation in your mind.

● A tune-up race is a good place to test out what you'll wear and eat on race day – and to practise reframing your nerves as excitement.

YOUR FIRST DAY

Manchester
Race Day 8/4
Start Training 18/12

Brighton
Race Day 15/4
Start Training 25/12

London
Race Day 22/4
Start Training 1/1

Rock n Roll Liverpool
Race Day 20/5
Start Training 29/1

Edinburgh
Race Day 27/5
Start Training 5/2

Key

EASY Conversational pace. **HILLS + STRIDES**

Log the distance on a hilly course, or do repeats – at a comfortable effort – between a mile of warm-up and cool-down. Finish with six 100m strides, accelerating to 5K effort, holding it for 5-10 secs, and gradually decelerating. Recover between each. **XT** Easy cardio workouts such as swimming or cycling (30-60 mins).

LONG RUNS Conversational pace. **STRAIGHTS/ CURVES + DRILLS** Warm up with 2-mile jog, then do dynamic stretches: leg swings, walking lunges, high knees, bum-kicks: 10 of each on each side. Then 4 laps of a track (surge on straights, recover on curves). No track? Run 1600m on level ground, alternating fast and slow

every 100m. Cool down with 2 miles easy. **400s AND**

MILES Warm up with 2-mile jog, then do dynamic stretches and a few strides. Run 400s at 5K pace, recover with 200m jog. Run mile repeats at 10K pace, recover with a 400m jog. Cool down with 2 miles easy. **UP-TEMPO** Warm up with 1 mile. Then run each mile a bit faster, working up to between marathon and half-marathon pace for final mile. **YASSO 800s** Warm up with 1-mile jog, then do dynamic stretches and a few strides. Run each rep at marathon time (eg for a 4:00:00 marathon, run reps in 4:00), recover with 400m jog. 1-mile cool-down. **HALF MARATHON** Spend first 3 miles easing into goal pace; maintain it for 10.1 miles.



THE FAST LANE

TRAINING ADVICE FOR PEAK PERFORMANCE

BY ALEX HUTCHINSON

THE HUNGER GAINS

Reap the benefits of low-carb workouts without feeling awful



TO EAT, OR NOT TO EAT? For runners heading out early in the morning, that really is the question. And for

the last few years, the answer has often been 'don't'. Forgoing food is a form of depleted training, and a tactic runners have been using for years to enhance their performance.

The idea is simple: start a run in a fasted or low-carb state. This way, your muscles are already low on the carbs that supply energy, forcing your body to store more carbs in preparation for another run and, in turn, get better at burning fat.

There's one big problem, though. Running on empty is hard – so hard that, in the past, researchers have seen little evidence that it makes runners faster overall (though it does enhance cellular adaptation that can lead to improvements such

as revved-up fat-burning capacity). This is why scientists are testing a new protocol that seems to offer it all – high fat-burning capacity, better glycogen stores and faster splits.

It's dubbed 'sleep-low training'. To start, rather than run in the morning, you sleep in, eat normally all day, then do a fully fuelled hard interval workout. You go to bed without replenishing carbs (protein is OK), letting your body adapt while you sleep. The next morning you do an easy-paced, fasted run.

The results have been impressive. In one study, 11 triathletes improved their 10K time by 2.9 per cent after three weeks of sleep-low training, with three fasted sessions per week. Another 10 triathletes trained the same, but timed their meals differently: lots of carbs after evening workouts and breakfast

before morning runs. The latter group did not improve their times. A follow-up study with cyclists shortened the protocol to just six days, and still the fasted athletes saw a 3.2 per cent improvement.

If you're training for a goal race, experiment with sleep-low training blocks two or three weeks in advance, repeating the two-day cycle three times. You can vary the details of your interval workout, but aim for a total of 20-40 minutes of fast running in blocks of at least 3:00 to deplete muscle-glycogen stores. Example: a ladder workout of 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 5:00, 3:00, with 1:00 to 2:00 recovery.

The goal isn't to restrict overall carb intake. In each study, the sleep-low and control groups ate the same amount of carbs (6g per kilogram of body weight); the only thing different was the time they ate them. So on carb-free-dinner days, compensate with carb-heavy meals earlier in the day. The goal is metabolic flexibility: rather than choosing between burning carbs or fat, your body learns to do both.

Alex Hutchinson is a former elite athlete and the author of *Which Comes First, Cardio or Weights?* (William Morrow)

DO IT

Try incorporating sleep-low training into your own routine with this two-day cycle:

DAY 1 > Eat normally during the day, including a carbohydrate-rich snack. Do a long interval workout after 5pm, such as 5:00 hard with 1:00 recovery, 4-8 times. Afterwards, eat a dinner that contains few (or zero) carbs, and down a protein shake so you avoid muscle loss.

DAY 2 > Wake up and get out onto the road for a steady one-hour run before eating anything. (Some research shows enhanced fat-burning kicks in after the hour mark.) Don't expect to feel great during the session. Have your breakfast when you get back and eat normally for the rest of the day.



WEATHER, BEATEN
Don't let the cold conditions get in the way of your training: use the time to iron out the kinks in time for spring.

BODY WORK

Winter is a great time to focus on problem areas, develop flexibility and improve form, says Greg McMillan



I USED TO THINK OF WINTER as the time of year when my running suffered: less daylight, much more rain, occasional snow – you know what I mean. But now I see it as the ideal time to injury-proof myself and develop strength in specific areas so that I am ready for faster racing in the spring, summer and autumn. After all, I'm inside more, so why not work with this reality, instead of against it? Use this valuable time to establish and refine a routine that will last throughout the year. Here are the four areas that I always address in my winter routine:

1 FLEXIBILITY/MOBILITY

As we run, the soft tissue in our legs stiffens. This is a positive training effect, as the stiffer tissues help to store energy, then return it to help propel us with less effort. But stiffness can go too far, causing dysfunction that, if not corrected, may lead to injury. So every runner needs a flexibility routine to help keep soft tissues from getting too tight. While the research is inconclusive on the value of flexibility in preventing injury, I find that when I consistently work on my flexibility, I feel better training and have fewer injuries. My experience has been that active isolated flexibility is the best for runners and can be used before and after sessions, though I tend to

work on flexibility after my runs. Experiment to see what works for you. Create a 'quick' routine for when your schedule is tight and a 'full' one for those rare days when you have plenty of time.

2 STABILITY

Running, at its simplest, is about holding your trunk (core and hips) stable while you move your arms and legs. The more stable you can hold your trunk while your arms and legs are doing their thing, the more efficient you'll be. Many therapists believe that an unstable trunk is a leading cause of injury from the feet to the hips. And a growing body of evidence points to the hips as a primary cause of running injuries, so it's vital runners strengthen

their hips. The more injury-prone you are, the more you need to work on hip strength and mobility. Gaining this stability is easy and requires just a few exercises. There seem to be as many trunk stability exercises as there are runners. Again, find ones that challenge you and that you enjoy doing – you're more likely to stick to them.

3 INJURY AREAS

We all have a weak spot – an area that often gets injured or threatens injury. For me, my hips (weakness) and calves (tightness) are my areas of concern. For my training partner, it's his plantar fascia. I suspect you have a problem area as well. Develop focused injury-proofing for that area, and don't let up. Don't work on it only when it's a problem. Spend time on it year-round. Let's commit to strengthening those at-risk spots. For most of us, two to four exercises two or three times a week, along with stretches and massage, could help susceptible areas become more resistant to injury.

4 RUNNING FORM

Have you seen yourself run? You should. All of us could benefit from cleaning up our running form. Better form may not only help prevent injury, but may also hold off fatigue in training and racing. Winter is a great time to work on running form. If the weather is too unpredictable for a run, substitute some running-form work. Select drills that work for you and do them regularly. You'll be surprised how much you can improve your arm swing, body position and running motion in just a few weeks.

Greg McMillan is a USATF-certified coach.
mcmillanrunning.com



THE STARTING LINE

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS FROM
AN EASYGOING COACH

BY JEFF GALLOWAY



FIT AND FESTIVE

Make time for even a few miles this Christmas



LIFE CAN GET IN THE WAY of running at any time of the year, but the festive season is especially challenging. Whether you're hosting dinners or attending parties, a busy social calendar leaves less time for logging miles. If you're struggling, make your mantra 'something is better than nothing', and try these tactics for keeping your routine intact.

PLAN AHEAD

If you look at your weekly running schedule, you will probably find times when other obligations are less likely to get in the way of your training sessions. For many people, that's first thing in the morning. If it's before the sun rises, plan to run in a safe, well-lit area or hit the treadmill.

REFRAME

Think of your run not as an item on your to-do list, but as an activity that will de-stress you. Even a short run can improve your attitude and prepare you to tackle a busy day. You have to take care of yourself before you're fully able to take care of others, and exercise is a great means of self-care.

GO FOR FIVE

Lacking motivation? Tell yourself you only need to run for five minutes. Once you're out there, you may want to go longer. If not, run for five minutes and head home – it still beats doing nothing.

TRY A WALK

If running didn't require changing and showering, it would be more time-efficient. You can get around both those steps by walking, and you can also include friends and family. Walking doesn't deliver all the benefits run-walking does, but it helps you maintain some fitness when you're stuck for time.

Jeff Galloway is a 10,000m Olympian and well-known coach who promotes the run-walk method.

You asked me Jeff answers your questions

How much must I run to avoid starting from scratch in 2018?

Ten to 15 minutes three times a week will keep your body adapted to the movement of running, though doing less than usual will cost you some fitness. If you're not going to meet your quota, don't let it become a slippery slope – every day presents a fresh opportunity to get in a mile or two.

How can I keep my diet under control over the festive season?

Track your food intake with an app or notepad. If you tend to eat more when you're stressed, try heading out for a run (or walk) as soon as you start feeling overwhelmed. (See *Holiday Trimmings*, p80.)

THE EXCUSE

I have relatives visiting, so I can't go for a run until they're gone

Beat it

Set your alarm for 30-45 minutes earlier than usual and get out the door before others get up. This way, you don't have to sacrifice your run or time with your family. Lay out your clothes and shoes the night before to make the transition out of bed as smooth as possible.

PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF

Got a target in mind for the new year? Lay the groundwork now for future running success



IF YOU'RE EYEING a new distance, a time goal, or your first hilly or offroad race, it's never too early to start building a base and injury-proofing your body. 'The more you'll have to step outside your comfort zone, the longer your window of preparation should be,' says exercise physiologist Adam St Pierre. 'Think of it as training to train.' Here's what to do before your plan officially starts, depending on your goals.



GOING LONG? BUILD CONSISTENCY

If you are training for your first marathon or half marathon, **your priority now should be to build a strong aerobic engine** – strengthening your heart and lungs so they can carry oxygen to your muscles with greater efficiency and multiplying fuel-burning mitochondria inside your muscles. To do that, run often, mostly easy, says St Pierre. Get accustomed to running four to six days per week for as little as 20 minutes. Glance at the first week of your training plan – the most conservative marathon plans start at four runs and 16 miles per week, with a long run of six miles – and then work your way up to that well before Day One. To further bolster your base without burning out on running, try cardio cross-training on a rest day, says Olympic runner Malindi Elmore, a coach with the Run SMART Project. Aerobically, swimming for one hour is like running for 45 minutes, and cycling for an hour is like running for about 30 minutes, she says. 'You get aerobic benefit without additional stress on your bones and joints.'



GOING FAST? SHED POUNDS

Excess weight increases the muscular work and oxygen required to maintain a given speed, says St Pierre. The longer the distance, the more of a liability an extra pound can be: the general rule is you'll run one minute slower per extra pound for the marathon. Even in the 5K, a 160lb (11st) runner could shave 1:12 off a 25-minute PB by losing 10 pounds, according to the book *Build Your Running Body* (Experiment), co-authored by masters coach Pete Magill. However, getting too skinny can hurt your performance, particularly if you start to lose muscle, says sports nutritionist Lisa Dorfman. While every runner has his or her own sweet spot, she recommends aiming for a weight in the normal range for your height, with 17-22 per cent body fat for women and 14-17 per cent for men. To get there, add high-intensity running, like fartleks or short intervals at a fast pace, to burn more calories and build muscle. And if you diet, don't overdo it – a deficit of more than 250-500 calories in a day can leave you feeling sluggish.



PUSHING LIMITS? GET STRONGER

Whether you're training for a hilly half marathon, your first trail race or a fast 5K, **strength and stability in your glutes, hips, hamstrings and quads is essential**, says St Pierre. Start working on these areas now and you'll be less prone to injury once you start adding serious speedwork or varying terrain during your training. Three times a week, do three sets of 15-20 squats, 15-20 lunges and 15-20 glute bridges before you run. (These exercises can be done after your run, if you prefer, but doing them before loosens your hips and keeps you from skipping them when you're tired after a hard or long run.) If your target race entails a lot of downhill, start incorporating some declines (on softer surfaces, if possible) into a run or two per week, focusing on keeping your body perpendicular to the ground, taking quick steps, and avoiding long, jarring heel strikes. To develop the balance and ankle stability required on a trail's uneven surface, incorporate single-leg squats or barefoot hops into your pre-run routine.



2 KEEP YOUR OFFICE STOCKED

Desserts are loaded with sugar and fat, and are generally low in nutrients. So when your workmates bring in cake, turn to a drawer (or work fridge) full of healthy snacks. Try full-fat Greek yoghurt, fresh veggie sticks and hummus, a piece of fruit and a small bag of mixed (unsalted) nuts. And keep the office goodies out of arm's reach – in one study, the average person ate four sweets a day when they were placed six feet away, but nine when they were within arm's reach.



3 HAVE TREATS...

After a run you need to restock your muscles with glycogen and help them recover with protein. This is a good opportunity to satisfy your sweet tooth. Reach for desserts that have health benefits: antioxidant-rich rhubarb crumble, for example. Your appetite tends to be suppressed for a short time after a workout, making you less likely to overeat post-run.

4 ...BUT NOT TOO MANY!

If you're logging more miles this winter to offset the holiday spread, you have a little bit of wiggle room for an extra treat. But running a 5K doesn't earn you the right to eat an entire pan of brownies. Research has found that even highly active people gain weight during the festive season. Fill up on fruits, veggies and lean protein after your run.

1 PREPARE FOR THE PARTY

Have a healthy mini meal an hour before you go. Aim for about 250kcal, with 15g protein and five to 10 grams of fibre, such as a spinach salad with chicken and cranberry relish. Filling up makes it easier to resist the sausage rolls.



HOLIDAY TRIMMINGS

Ten tips to help you navigate the food festivities and still fit into your running shorts

EVEN IF YOU RUN EVERY DAY in December, you're not immune to weight creep. People usually overestimate how many kilos they pack on over Christmas, but most of us do put on a little weight. It doesn't have to be that way. Here's how to make it through the eating-and-drinking-and-eating-more season without waistline regret.



The average holiday dinner contains 3,000kcal. Get your run in early and take a walk later.

5 BUILD THE PERFECT DINNER PLATE

At your next festive meal, divide your plate into quarters: fill half with fibre-packed veggies, a quarter with lean protein such as turkey and a quarter with nutrient-rich carbs such as sweet potatoes or stuffing made with wholegrain bread. For dessert, fill half a small plate with fruit and half with your favourite sweets – no piling high!



7 EASY ON THE BOOZE

Yes, there are some health benefits to having the occasional glass of red wine (it's good for your heart) and dark beers contain vitamins and minerals. But alcohol is high in calories (seven per gram) and it can lead to dehydration. Try to limit your intake to one or two drinks per day, and alternate them with water.

served themselves 31 per cent more ice cream when using oversize bowls compared with smaller bowls. And pour drinks into tall, skinny glasses – research shows people are likely to pour 30 per cent more liquid into squat glasses.



6 DRINK UP

Water, that is. When you're running in the cold, it's all too easy to become dehydrated because you're not drinking as much. And it's even easier to mistake thirst for hunger. Rather than holding a calorie-crammed cocktail or a fully loaded dessert plate, keep your hands (and stomach) full with a calorie-free glass of still or sparkling water (with a slice of lemon, for that touch of elegance).

8 SWAP IT

Toast your holiday cheer with a light beer instead of sweet wine to limit the calories. When you top your turkey, cranberry sauce has 80 fewer calories than gravy. For dessert, fruit is your best bet. Steer clear of pie.

9 TRICK YOURSELF

Use smaller plates. What looks like a normal portion on a large plate can, in fact, be huge. In one study, even nutrition experts

10. BE A HEALTHY HERO

Bring a dish that you would feel good about eating. You can't go wrong with a veggie side dish like Brussels sprouts or a salad packed with healthy grains such as quinoa, roasted root veggies and kale.

RUN IT OFF

One mile burns about 100kcal, fewer if you're smaller. Plan your mileage accordingly

1 MILE

120ml eggnog
110kcal

3 MILES

1 mince pie
300kcal

10K

1 slice pecan pie topped with 100g vanilla ice cream
640kcal

HALF MARATHON

170g roast turkey, baked sweet potato with butter, 120g coleslaw, 190g macaroni and cheese, 1 scone
1,300kcal

MARATHON

170g roast beef, 120g green bean casserole, 325g mashed potatoes with gravy, 200g stuffing, 1 glass red wine, 1 slice of cheesecake with scoop of ice cream
2,468kcal



A pixel art illustration of a marathon race. The path is a winding, multi-colored ribbon (yellow, teal, pink) against a light blue background. Several runners in various colored outfits are at different stages of the race. There are obstacles like a large blue wheel with a red flame-like trail, a large green monster-like creature, and a large yellow structure resembling a lighthouse or a monument. A red arrow points down towards the text box.

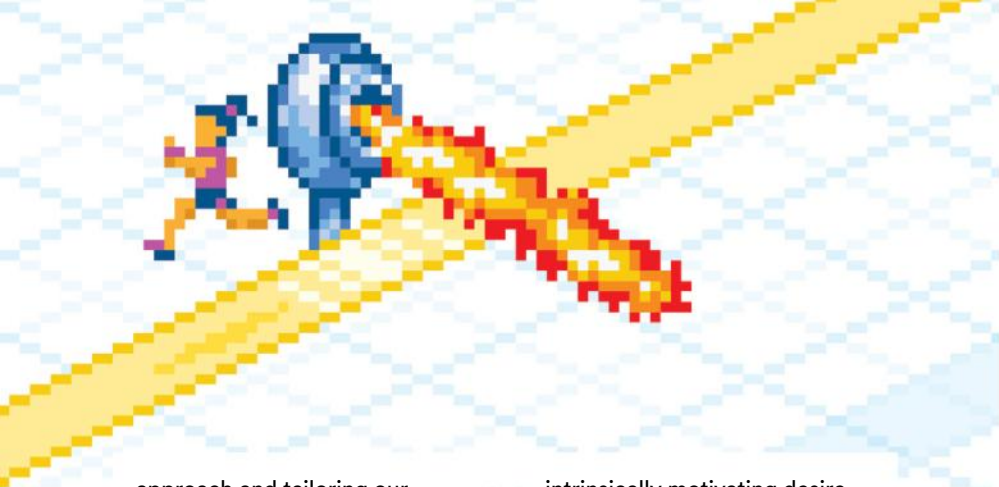
BACK IN THE GAME

When you see challenges where you once saw failures, you're more likely to succeed

FIRST-TIME BOSTON MARATHONER Rachel DeBusk, 54, was fixated on setting a personal best in the race. 'I even used my time goal in my computer passwords,' she says. But when race-day temperatures rose into the mid-70s, she missed her mark. After a day or two of moping, DeBusk rallied: she identified skills and attitudes she could develop that would help her the next time she faced a similar situation.

Sports psychologists call this a growth mindset, the belief that talents can be developed, and it harnesses the power of 'not yet' thinking. Carol Dweck, a professor of psychology at Stanford University, US, was inspired by students who, upon receiving a grade of 'not yet' (instead of an 'F') on material they hadn't grasped, embraced the fact that they were on a learning curve and then steadily improved. For Dweck, the key to success is in how they view learning: students who believe talent is innate may underachieve when they experience setbacks, while students who believe they can develop skills and knowledge often perform better.

Society sells us the idea that some individuals are outlandishly talented – and yes, a few of them are – but most of us can improve gradually, by identifying weaknesses in our



approach and tailoring our training to address them. Setbacks are inevitable, but it's how we frame those setbacks and recurring problems that spells the difference between eventually reaching our goals and accepting less than our best.

Sports psychologist Dr Troy Moles created the 'GPS' (Growth, Process and Specific Skills) method to help athletes develop an optimal performance mindset: identifying a positive and

intrinsically motivating desire to improve (growth), focusing on what is within your control (process) and targeting a skill to work on. 'Growth mindset is simply an adopted belief that you can improve through effort,' says Moles. 'It allows athletes to deliberately focus on skills in their training and races that can improve their performance. They're focused on growing a mental, physical, technical or tactical skill that will then help them get the outcome they desire.'

Change your mind

How to reframe negative self-talk to reflect a growth-oriented mindset

INSTEAD OF 'I just can't run in hot weather.'

TRY 'During my next race build-up, I want to do some long treadmill runs in a warm room to practise hydration, fuelling and pacing in conditions that are not normally ideal for me.'

WHY? You've identified an opportunity for growth as a runner (you haven't practised running in hot weather) and you've identified an action you can take (acclimatisation) to prevent a previous setback from recurring, and to become mentally stronger.

INSTEAD OF 'I'm getting slower every year – why can't I place as high as I used to in races?'

TRY 'Getting slower might be inevitable as I age, but I can alter my goals to stay motivated. For my next race, I choose to practise running an even pace instead of trying to beat a bunch of younger runners.'

WHY? Extrinsic motivation, such as wanting to defeat an opponent, is less likely to lead to success, says Moles: it depends on the actions of other people. Instead, focus on a process-oriented goal that is within your control.

INSTEAD OF 'I always hit the wall in my marathons.'

TRY 'I want to have the energy to finish strong. To prepare for my next event, I will try taking in fuel earlier and more slowly during both long runs and race-pace workouts.'

WHY? If the same setback 'always' happens, that pattern may point to a solution, says running coach Rachel Scheiner. For example, if hitting the wall is always preceded by nausea, you may not be digesting gels well at race pace. Practise different fuelling tactics in training to determine the best strategy.

GET DOWN ON IT

How to use the foam roller

The foam roller is not a 'silver bullet for at-home therapy', says sports chiropractor Richard Hansen. He warns that incorrect use can cause muscle damage. Here are his tips on using the foam roller effectively:



ROLL FOR RECOVERY

Rolling an injured area can aggravate damaged muscle tissue, particularly in the first few days after the injury. The foam roller is more effective at assisting recovery. It stimulates blood flow, breaks up scar tissue and helps increase the muscle's range of motion.



KEEP IT LIGHT

Aggressive rolling feels good, but it can override your pain sensation. If that happens, it's possible to use too much pressure. 'It's better to under-work tissue than overwork it,' says Hansen. Avoid bony areas and places where tendons attach. If you're dealing with IT-band issues, work on the middle area, not the insertion points of the knee and hip tendon.



TIME IT

Hansen recommends using the foam roller after your workout rather than before. Begin by lightly rolling an area for 30 seconds, then gently stretch the area for 10 seconds. You can repeat that cycle up to three times on each body area.

CANCER RESEARCH UK LONDON WINTER RUN

FEBRUARY 4TH 2018



A composite image of the London skyline, including St. Paul's Cathedral, the Shard, the London Eye, and the Gherkin, partially submerged in a sea of large, white ice floes under a blue sky with geometric patterns.

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www.LondonWinterRun.co.uk



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RUNNER'S WORLD



GEAR

GIVE YOURSELF THE EDGE



1

2



GEAR OF THE YEAR 2017

Equip yourself with the right kit and you could boost your chance of a PB. Here's our look at the best gear and gadgets from the last 12 months, along with Team RW's picks of personal favourites

1. Ultimate Direction Jurek FKT Vest

Backpacks are not something to skimp on and this model is worth the investment. Designed by trail ultramarathoner Scott Jurek, it's cleverly configured, beautifully crafted, durable, very roomy and doesn't shift on the move. £110, wigggle.co.uk

2. Björn Borg Multi Collage Pro Shorts

We're not so much highlighting these specific pants as much as lauding the whole BB range, which is extensive, colourful and so comfy the RW team fights over the ones that are sent in. £25, bjornborg.com/uk

3. Nike Zoomfly

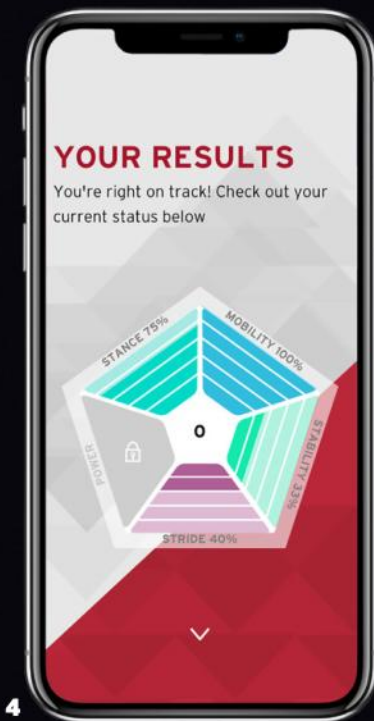
The consumer version of the shoes Eliud Kipchoge wore to try to break two hours for 26.2 miles last May. For once, the hype is justified – it's a brilliantly fast shoe for races up to half marathon. £129.95, store.nike.com

3



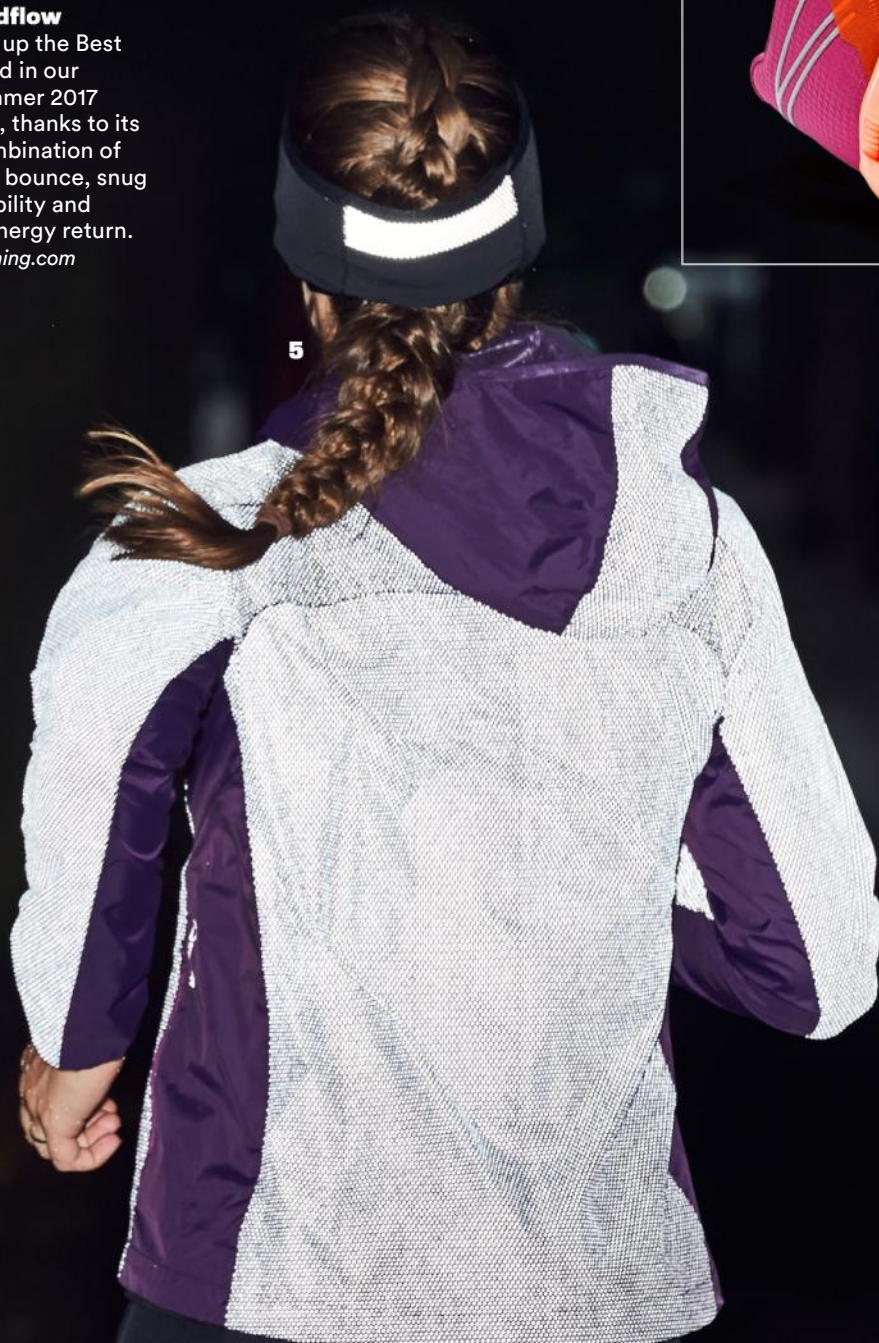
4. Saucony Stride Lab App

Think of this as a virtual biomechanics lab on your phone. It takes you through a series of tests and assessments before providing a customised training plan that will help you reach your running potential and address weak areas. Free, app store



5. Dhh Run Reflective Jacket

One of the best jackets we've found for high-grade visibility – it's covered in thousands of reflective dots, so you need have no concerns about being seen at night. Great value, too. £45, wiggles.co.uk



6. On Cloudflow

This picked up the Best Debut award in our Spring/Summer 2017 Shoe Guide, thanks to its dreamy combination of low weight, bounce, snug fit, breathability and awesome energy return. £120, on-running.com



7. Asics Gel Cumulus 19

One of the most popular mass-appeal shoes on the market. Updates for version 19 included a snugger heel fit, fewer seams, less weight and a plusher sockliner. Our testers loved this shoe. £120, asics.co.uk



8. NordicTrack C990 Treadmill

A reliable treadmill with two standout features: the belt cushioning can be adjusted to suit how heavily you land; and the web-enabled touchscreen lets you run – virtually, at least – the streets of any city in the world. £1,199, fitness-superstore.co.uk



9. Garmin Forerunner 935

If you've got the money to spend on this top-of-the-range multisport watch, you won't feel short-changed. It does almost everything except make your dinner, and with maximum accuracy and minimum fuss. £469.99, garmin.com



10. JBL Under Armour Wireless Headphones

Excellent sound quality, extremely rugged, sweat-resistant and – this really will be music to your ears – they don't fall out on the run. That's why they won our head-to-head group test in May. £119.99, uk.jbl.com

11. Skulpt Chisel Body Composition Tool

This home-use body-fat analyser works out not just where your fattest bits are, but also the site of muscular weaknesses or imbalances, and the accompanying app gives you advice on how to fix them.

£79.99, amazon.co.uk

11



12. Mizuno Wave Rider 20

New midsole foam and literally turning the famous wave plate on its head were risks to take with such a popular shoe, but fans of the brand loved it. A perfect high-mileage shoe for neutral runners.

£120, mizuno.eu



13. Oakley Cross Range Prizm

These might seem expensive (well, they are) but when you consider the fact that they do the job of both sports and leisure sunnies (you just swap out the arms) they suddenly become a lot more cost-effective.

£185, uk.oakley.com



14. Injinji Trail 2.0 Socks

Funky-looking toe socks that, being honest, we wear just as much around the house as we do out on the run. They're extremely comfortable and have extra-strong elasticated cuffs to limit slippage.

£17.25, feetus.co.uk



15

15. Hyperice Vyper Vibrating Roller

Deep-ridgedged, super-hard and, er, vibrating, this is not so much a foam roller as it is a bona fide instrument of torture – in a good way. It charges by USB and is perfect for when you need to raise your recovery game a couple of notches.

£169.99,

live-on-the-edge.com

16. Hoka One One ATR Challenger 3

Held in the hand these trail shoes feel as if they wouldn't stand up to much ill treatment, but with them laced tightly on your feet you can tackle almost any offroad surface with impunity. They're stable, low-slung and crunch almost anything underfoot.

£115, hokaoneone.eu

16

17

17. LifeVenture Trek Towel

This really should be a permanent addition to your race-day bag. It's soft, fleecy, compact, packs into its own net bag and absorbs up to nine times its own weight in moisture. Nobody sweats that much, surely.

£20, amazon.co.uk

STAFF PICKS

What compelled Team RW to overuse the thumbs-up emoji this year? We tested a lot of gear, kit and gadgets over the last 12 months, but for various reasons, one item stood out for each of us, whether it offered perfect postrun pampering or was the piece of kit that made a long run feel a little easier



KERRY MCCARTHY

Commissioning editor
**BETTER YOU
MAGNESIUM
BATH FLAKES**

£7 for 250g,
betteryou.com

After a long run I sling some of this in the bath. It never fails to relax my muscles and it leaves me feeling chilled.

18. Salomon Elevate 1/2 Tight

Yet another example of how proficient Salomon is at turning out mid-priced kit that punches well above its weight. These tights are soft, stretchy, breathable, constructed with minimal seams and have a flattering, adjustable waistband. £40, salomon.com/uk

19. Tribesports Engineered Tee

Tribesports is one of a small number of high-end brands making kit that justifies a fairly hefty price tag. This is typically understated, beautifully crafted and supremely comfortable. It's simply a joy to wear on the run or even casually. £55, tribesports.com

20. Oofos Ooah Slide Recovery Flip Flops

These are quite possibly some of the least aesthetically pleasing items of footwear we've ever seen, but they're indecently comfortable. Stick them on after a long run and suddenly the 'Ooah' in the name will make sense. You see, looks aren't everything. £40, oofos.co.uk



18

19



20



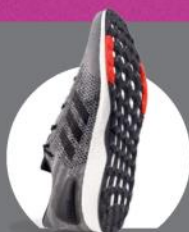
GEORGIA SCARR

Deputy digital editor
GARMIN VIVOSPORT
£169.99, buy.garmin.com
The Swiss army knife of activity trackers: among tons of functions it measures heart rate, counts reps/sets and its LiveTrack function can send run-tracking details to family and friends.



RICK PEARSON

Section editor
GU ENERGY FLASK
£15, guenergy.co.uk
For those looking to create their own gels (my tip: honey, banana, raisins and chia seeds), this soft flask is the ideal vessel. It has a twistable nozzle and carries up to five servings.



ANDY DIXON

Editor
ADIDAS PUREBOOST DPR
£109.95, adidas.co.uk
All the cushioning of Boost but in a lighter, faster-feeling package. They look so good I don't know whether to run in them or wear them in the office.



JOE MACKIE

Deputy editor
ASHMEI 2 IN 1 SHORTS
£90, ashmei.com
A semi-compressive merino wool inner liner delivers support and comfort, and the light, ventilated nylon outer layer offers style and modesty. Great length and cut. In short, perfect.

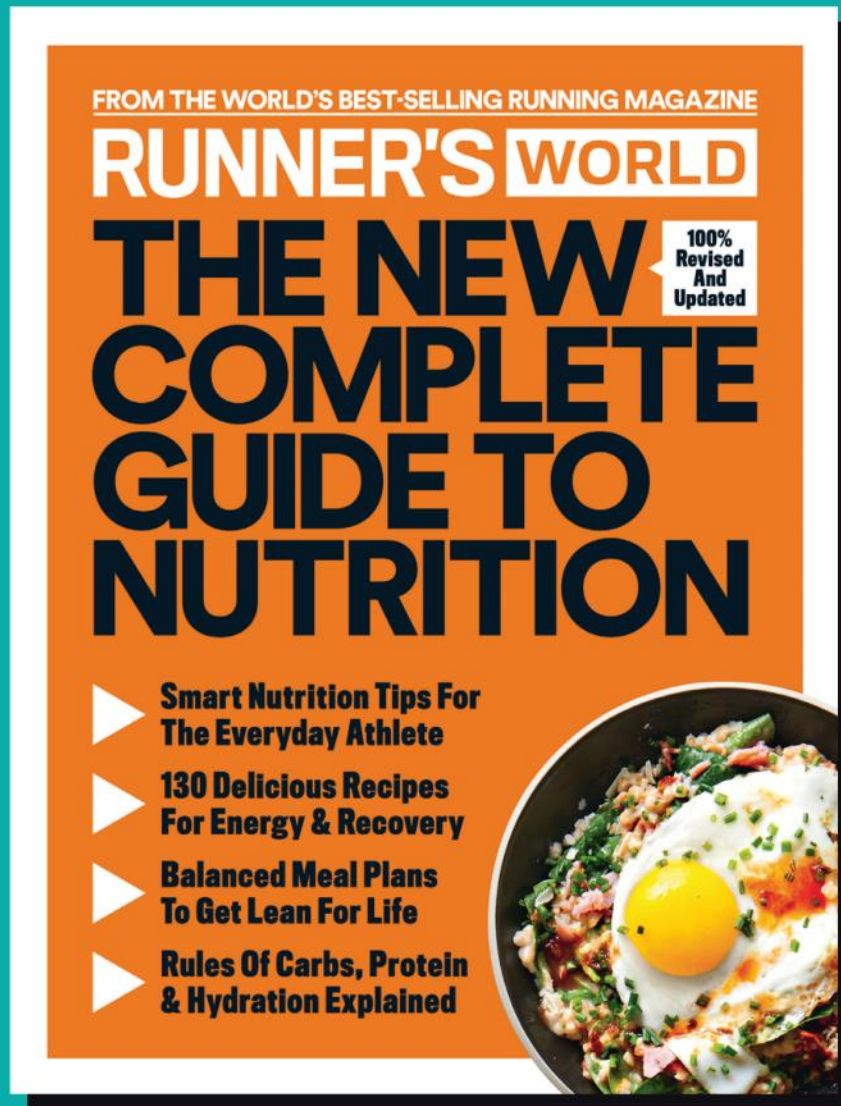


JOHN CARROLL

Chief sub editor
CAMELBACK CIRCUIT VEST
£74.99, upandrunning.co.uk
This hydration pack saved me on two very hot half marathons. Lots of pockets, sits low on the back and is a hugely reassuring presence.

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For runners, a nutritious, balanced diet is the key to lasting energy and proper recovery. In this book you'll find all you need to fuel your life and your running. With *The New Complete Guide to Nutrition* you need never be short of kitchen knowledge or inspiration again!

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WE HAVE GIFT-OFF

Smart, thoughtful pressies for the runner in your life (even if that's you)

1 Dock & Bay Yoga And Gym Towel From £12, dockandbay.co.uk Thirty per cent of the material in these is from recycled bottles. They come in three sizes, they are highly absorbent, quick-drying, don't retain nasty niffs and come in their own net bag. **2 Hotel Chocolat Supermilk Pure** £3.85 for 50g, hotelchocolat.com The closest thing to guilt-free choc – no added sugar or additives and it's made from 80 per cent St Lucian cocoa. **3 Speedo H2O Active Ultra Fizz Backpack** £53, speedo.com A 22-litre race-day kit bag that, with its waterproof, anti-odour and quick-drying construction, is perfect for housing smelly kit. **4 Pulsaroll** £99.99, pulsaroll.com Static foam rollers are so last year, dahling. This rechargeable one has four vibration settings, a three-hour battery and will get deep inside fatigued, knotted muscles. **5 Run Angel** £89, runangel.com A brilliant safety device: this wrist-mounted alarm emits a deafening sound and alerts family and friends by SMS and email to your exact whereabouts. **6 Stance Holladaze Socks** £9.99, shore.co.uk Festive footwear that's perfect for any Christmas outings – these socks are also technical, featuring cushioned soles, arch wraps, anti-blister weave and minimal seams. **7 Urbanista Boston Headphones** £69.99, uk.urbanista.com Water-resistant, sweat-resistant, durable, wireless Bluetooth headphones that will stand up to the rigours of hard training. **8 Sundried Running Gloves** £20, sundried.com Made from bamboo, these gloves are sustainable, antibacterial, touch-screen sensitive and have long cuffs. **9 Bacon Express Toaster** £49.95, cuckooland.com It looks like a toaster and acts like a toaster – only you put bacon in it. The fat gets squeezed out the bottom, making your post-training booty a tad healthier. **10 Acuswedemat** £85 + £15 shipping, acuswedemat.com A one-size-fits-all mat covered in hundreds of tiny pressure points. Lying on it pre- or post-workout can help improve circulation, recovery and sore muscles. **11 Garmin Forerunner 30** £129.99, garmin.com This watch is at the lower end of the Garmin range, but you still get highly accurate GPS, wrist-based heart rate, aerobic fitness tests and all the usual time, pace and distance metrics. **12 Under Armour Recovery Sleepwear** £160 (top & bottoms £80 each separately), underarmour.com Deeply comfy and the makers claim the bioceramic particles in the weave reflect body heat back to you as far infrared (FIR), to help to reduce inflammation and improve sleep.

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RACE

LET YOUR RUNNING LOOSE

A BIT OF A RUM DO

Jamaica's Reggae Marathon is one big party, finds RW's Caribbean correspondent Kerry McCarthy



IF YOU WERE HAVING A GANDER at the international race calendar you might notice a strange quirk towards the end of the year: September to January seems to feature rather a lot of Caribbean races. Whether this is down to a deliberate tourism strategy to lure runners who are looking for a bit of winter sun, or simply a case of me-tooism, there's certainly some pondering to be done when faced with the choice of races in Barbados, the Caymans, Montserrat, Nevis, Trinidad & Tobago, the Virgin Islands, St Lucia and more.

And while Team RW hasn't covered all these events in person, we have made our way – purely for Queen and country – round more than a few, so we can say with some authority that Jamaica's offering is among the very best that you can find in that part of the world.

In fact, as an example of how to know your audience and leverage

RACE RULES

The Reggae Marathon: frowning not permitted at any time.





your natural advantages, the Reggae Marathon should be used as a case study to tourist boards. When people think of Jamaica, certain familiar images and notions tend to pop into their heads. The organisers of the Reggae Marathon know this and have, over the past 17 years, carefully crafted an event that dives headlong into the realms of happily embraced cliché.

To start with, the focus is not on the actual running but, rather, on the full-throttle entertainment that surrounds the race – most of the locals remain baffled that anyone would want to run long distances in the heat unless a hungry wild animal was in pursuit.

For example, forget what you think you know about pasta parties. Whenever I read (or type) these words now, no longer do I think of clusters of runners mindlessly shovelling down plates of lukewarm sludge covered in watery ragu in a soulless exhibition centre. Instead,

I picture a beach shortly before sundown. Happy holidaymakers in trainers are sitting on the sand, clutching a cup of rum punch or a bottle of Red Stripe beer (or, in many cases, both) and watching a flaming orangey-red orb sink into the sea. Nearby, a steel band tinkles away and entertainers breakdance, stilt-walk and calypso their way through the crowds. There are half a dozen gazebos set up, where chefs from local hotels are cooking up pasta in huge iron skillets, competing to see what will be voted king of the carbs: carbonara, arrabbiata, bolognese, amatriciana, seafood, alfredo...the list goes on. There's also freshly baked bread, innumerable side salads, cakes, chocolate mousse...and yet more booze.

There are no limits on how many times you can go back for more, except those your own stomach imposes on you. The party goes on until around 10pm, when everyone

There are many ways to get involved in the Reggae Marathon, and all are equally valid (some are easier on the legs than others)

THE LOWDOWN

GET THERE

Delta flies from London Heathrow to Montego Bay, with one stop. Book a transfer from the airport via JUTA Negril (jutatoursltd.com)

STAY

Couples Swept Away (couplesresorts.co.uk) is the host hotel and also the location of the prerace pasta party. Prices from £212 per person.

SIGHTSEE

The Royal Palm Nature Reserve (jamaicatravelandculture.com) is ecotourism at its finest).

FUEL

Try the Rockhouse Restaurant (rockhouse.com).

WARM UP

Go to the beach: run.

THE RUNDOWN

The Reggae Marathon, Jamaica (2016 stats)

First man: Kota Taniguchi, 2:38:49
First woman: Karen Warrendorf, 3:39:15
Last finisher: 6:48:08
Number of finishers: 138 (2,813 in total over full, half and 10K)



Finishing stats
● 2-3hrs 2%
● 3-4hrs 20%
● 4-5hrs 35%
● 5-6hrs 41%
● 6-7hrs 2%

totters back to their hotel to get a few hours' kip before the hideously early rise for a 5am gun.

The race starts an hour before dawn so that runners can get in as many miles as possible before the sun and humidity both hit their straps, at around 8am. The route is a straightforward out and back along the coastal road that runs down the western side of the island. The way is lined with thick shrubbery and punctuated by the odd hotel as well as periodic views of the palm trees, golden sands and dancing blue ocean we all dream about when we're boiling the kettle for another Lemsip in the depths of winter. The vista was such that at one point I was compelled to chuckle, howl with glee and pat myself on the back for having the foresight to take up a sport that allowed me to experience such moments – a perfect runner's high.

The organisers had made a neat feature of the burnt-out cars dotted along the road – enormous speakers had been strapped to their roofs, with reggae music belting out from every one. Every so often, propped against a post, there'd be a board adorned with a Bob Marley lyric or aphorism, and elsewhere there were Rastas smoking massive spliffs and doling out lazy high fives or cheeky flirtatious comments, whichever they deemed appropriate. They were, presumably, not involved in the race in any official capacity.

As fun as it was, I was pleased to reach the finish line because I knew what was coming – another party on the beach, where men with cleavers chopped the top off coconuts, stuck straws in them and handed them to you as you let the warm, clear seawater run up and over your legs. From there, it was simply a matter of deciding if you would do the beach yoga before the massage on the sand, or vice versa, and how long you could reasonably leave it before switching to Red Stripe and heading a few metres further away to join the growing crowd of Lycra-clad runners from 38 countries dancing, drinking and fist-bumping their aches away in a seething mass of happiness.

2018 Reggae Marathon is on December 2.
visit reggaemarathon.com





HARDY ANNUALS

It may have been cold, but running singlets were very much in evidence

FREEZE YOUR BRASS OFF

A brisk pace is best on the Brass Monkeys Half, finds Scott Reeves

NOT MANY RUNNING clubs are brave enough to schedule a half marathon in the depths of winter, when weather conditions can cause mayhem, but York Knavesmire Harriers certainly know what they're doing, employing private gritters to make sure the Brass Monkeys Half – so named for obvious reasons – goes ahead come sleet or snow. As I stood on the exposed flats of York Racecourse, shivering in the minutes before the start of the race, I wondered how many of my fellow runners were also regretting signing up to this one in a fit of alcohol-fuelled gung-ho down at the pub.

The biting wind seemed to blow directly into my face no matter which way I turned, while a bitter, constant drizzle soaked me to the bone mere seconds after I had shed my elegant prerace bin liner. Thankfully, the organisers didn't hang around and the race started promptly at 10am

THE RUNDOWN

Brass Monkeys Half Marathon
Yorkshire
(2017 stats)

First man: Steve Hebblethwaite, 1:09:18
First woman: Tracy Millmore, 1:17:19
Last finisher: 2:54:47

No. of starters and finishers: 1,557 and 1,545 (99% finished)



Finishing stats
● 1:00-1:29 18%
● 1:30-1:59 54%
● 2:00-2:29 25%
● 2:30-2:59 3%

Pounding south, away from York, the congestion from the field of more than 1,500 gradually eased as runners found their rhythm. Just over a mile in we passed Bishopthorpe Palace, residence of the Archbishop of York – perhaps it was he who organised the divine break in the weather that occurred at this point. There may have been no sun, but apart from a little standing water in places, running conditions were temporarily ideal.

The village of Bishopthorpe – population 3,000 – was about as urban as it got on the route. The race is largely run on country roads, most of which are open to traffic beyond Bishopthorpe, but so few cars were about that it was easy to imagine we were running on closed roads. The only other village on the lollipop-shaped course, Appleton Roebuck, is the furthest point from the start and finish.

This is a scenic part of the world, although January probably isn't the

best time for spectating – there were few supporters out on the roads. On the plus side, this flat and fast route suits PB hunters. I soon found myself tucked in behind a trio of North Shields Polytechnic runners. I stayed there, doing a spot of crafty drafting, until mile eight, when they grew tired of my wheezing behind them and drifted effortlessly away into the distance.

So flat is the course that the bridge over the A64 York bypass, a mile or so before the finish, felt like climbing Everest – but I used the decline on the other side to carry me through to the end. I crossed the finish line back at York Racecourse at more of a trot than a gallop, but I still managed a 90-second personal best, which was very satisfying.

By the time you read this the 2018 event will probably have sold out – it tends to each year – so my advice is to set a calendar alert for when entries open for 2019. We all need a bit of prompting to stay focused during the cold months and the Brass Monkeys Half is an excellent midwinter option for your diary.

The Brass Monkey Half Marathon is on January 18. yorkknavesmireharriers.co.uk/brass-monkey

RACE NUMBERS

WILD NIGHT RUN

The key figures behind this after-dark race over Dartmoor*

68:27

COURSE RECORD, SET BY THE RACE DIRECTOR, CERI REES.

9.9

Race distance in miles. Less than 10 – be thankful.

300

The number of reflective ski poles used to help runners see where to go.

162

NUMBER OF STARTERS IN 2017.

2

Average temperature in degrees Celsius.

four

BOGS (NOT THAT SORT) THAT RUNNERS HAVE TO WADE THROUGH.

82

Number of muffins sold on race night last year.

25

LARGE FLASHING LIGHTS USED TO ILLUMINATE THE COURSE.

480

TOTAL METRES OF ELEVATION ON THE COURSE. ALL IN THE DARK. AND THE COLD.

24

Wooden bespoke medals handed out to age-group podium placers.



YOU SAID IT

Tadworth 10

A challenging two-lap 10-miler that starts on the Epsom Downs

● PROPER CARE

'Set-up, organisation and facilities were brilliant, with loads of free parking, proper toilets, hot postrace food and drink, and even a massage if you wanted one.'

— STEVE BURKE

● THE GOOD AND THE BAD

'This is my Marmite race, as I love the organisation and marshalling, but hate the mementos. In previous years I have walked away with gloves, bum bag and towel (all of which are in the loft). This year I left with a yellow hat to add to the collection.'

— MARK CLAWSON

● TAKE A BOW, VOLUNTEERS

'An always challenging event made tougher by grim weather. I must add my gratitude to the extraordinary volunteers who supported the race and did so with great cheerfulness.'

— IAN KEITH

● UPS AND DOWNS, MOSTLY UPS

'Good but tough due to the downhill parts being short. It felt like it was all uphill at times! Not a bad thing, though; a very good race to burn off some festive cobwebs.'

— CARPE DIEM

● MUDDY GOOD FUN

'An excellent 10-miler at a great venue, and brilliantly organised, although the late start at 11:30am means you're starving at the end. The course is a great mix of mud and tarmac; you'll be scrubbing your trainers when you get home.'

— DEAN SANDERS

Epsom, Surrey, January 7.
sportsystems.co.uk

*The 2018 race is on January 27. wildnightrun.co.uk

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WATERWAY 30

Race director Ronnie Staton guides you round this tranquil loop of rural Nottinghamshire

START 'This is a very personal race to me, as the route is the combination of two runs I often did along the Chesterfield Canal and River Trent,' says Staton. 'I realised I could join them up to create a 30-mile or, strictly speaking, 31-mile race. I like the distance because it's a good introduction for those who have never done an ultra before. When we launched it last year, many of the 200 places were taken up by first-timers who wanted to experience a different sort of challenge. The feedback has been good and lots of people who didn't know this area at all loved how tranquil it was here. You barely see anyone else, so it gives you a real sense of freedom in a rural setting.'

The 2018 race is on 27 January.
Visit hobopace.co.uk



START

Runners go off from South Wheatley, a tiny hamlet that lies six miles north of Retford. You set off along a farmers' track in a part of Nottinghamshire that's famed for its annual strawberry crop.

MILE 3

You reach the Boat Inn, which sits on the edge of the Chesterfield Canal, built by James Brindley, one of the foremost engineers of the 18th century. This stretch of water came to national prominence in 1978, when workmen carrying out maintenance on it literally 'pulled the plug', which caused its water to drain away.



MILE 6

The canal towpath is also known as the Cuckoo Dyke. It's a tranquil stretch that takes you along the water's edge. You'll reach the first feed station, at Drakeholes Tunnel.



MILE 10

You are still running alongside the canal through a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its distinctive birdlife. Cuckoos and kingfishers can be seen here.



MILE 18

Despite the rural setting, you can't miss the West Burton power station, which dominates the skyline; it has won awards as a stylish example of steelwork engineering.



All finishers receive a specially designed runner's vest to remember the race.



MILE 25

After leaving the path of the Trent, you climb Howbeck Hill, which offers views towards Sherwood Forest.

FINISH

After passing by Sturton-le-Steeple, the village where John Robinson (pastor to the Pilgrim Fathers) was born, you finish up back at South Wheatley village hall, where warm food and a warmer welcome await.



THE START LIST

Our selection of the best, fastest, toughest, quirkiest and most enjoyable UK races this month

HANGOVER CURE

Lamberhurst New Year's Day 10K

As well as taking you through the pretty Kent village of Lamberhurst, the route also passes the 14th-century Scotney Castle – so if the cold winter air doesn't take your breath away, the scenery will. If you like the idea but are still feeling too lazy to tackle a full 6.2 miles there's also a 5K option. Finishers will find a 'nip' of something tasty waiting for them at the finish.

Tunbridge Wells, Jan. 1, nice-work.org.uk

We asked readers:

What's your favourite race memento?

'My partner John – we met at the Benfleet 15.'

– Clare G

'The wreath that I got at Spartathlon'

– Kat Ganly

'The basket that your oysters came in for finishing the La Rochelle Marathon.'

– @running_french



FLUORO FUN

Brighton Glow Run

As if running along the seafront isn't bracing enough, here you get to do it in the dark while covered in fluorescent stickers and glow-in-the-dark bangles (provided as part of your entry). There's music, there's a huge neon starting arch and there will be groups of friends and families all having fun on the run.

Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, January 6, blitzrun.com

Wirral Way Half

This gorgeous trail race attracts more than 600 runners each year, all eager to soak in the views to be had across the Dee Estuary, as they trot along the Wirral Way Old Railway Line before finishing at the Wirral Country Park. An absolute feast for the eyes – and impeccable organisation to boot.

Merseyside, January 7, time2runevents.co.uk

ORIENTEERING

Mickleham Adventure Race Trail

A point-to-point event with a difference: armed only with a map (no compasses allowed), you make your way between checkpoints in the Surrey Hills, covering as many as you can in two hours. You'll run between seven and 15 kilometres depending on how many you find and how fit you are. Strategy and route are up to you – and don't forget to take the trail terrain and numerous climbs into consideration.

Dorking, Surrey, January 7, triadventure.co.uk



TIME TRIAL

No Walk in the Park 5K

If you live within striking distance, why not make this the first of 12 appearances at this event in 2018. It's a monthly time trial held round the outside of Queen's Park. It's a no-frills affair, which is why the entry fee is £3. Age-group prizes are awarded in December, based on the best performances over the whole year, and anyone who completes at least six runs will receive a commemorative technical T-shirt.

Chesterfield, Derbyshire, January 6, northderbyshirerc.jimdo.com



DOGGY STYLE

South West Canicross

A great chance for you and your four-legged friend to do some bonding on the move. Canicross refers to races where pooch and owner are harnessed together and compete as a team – in this case, a 5K trail course in Newnham Park.

Plymouth, Devon, November 11, fullysussed.co.uk



THE NIGHT LIFE

Petzi Night Runner

If you're planning a year of hardcore races, then start as you mean to go on and get this brutal little night-time 10K under your belt. The 7pm start means you'll need hi-vis kit and a head torch as you slog your way over the West Pennine Moors to the top of the 363m Rivington Pike – and down again. Invigorating is one word for it – but we can think of others...

Horwich, Lancashire, January 13, thenightrunner.com



Draycote Water Winter 10K

Part of a series of six races that are run once a month between October and March each year, this is a good old-fashioned blast along a flat, quick, traffic-free course around the fringes of Draycote Water reservoir. It's the perfect location for locally based runners to get a sense of their early-season speed – or the worrying lack thereof.

Rugby, Warwickshire, January 14, theraceorganiser.com

KILLER HILL

Mast Race 10K

If you're the sort of runner who doesn't enjoy the sensation that your heart might jump out of your chest at any moment, skip this one: 5K straight up Winter Hill followed by 5K back down again. Survivors of the ordeal say it's impossible to say which direction hurts more.

Bolton, Greater Manchester, January 21, time2runevents.co.uk

RW POLL
What's your favourite
surface to run on?*

52%

Road

39%

Trail

7%

Cross Country

2%

Treadmill



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race database,
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search over
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by location,
terrain,
distance
and more.



FAST AND FURIOUS

Fred Hughes 10

This old-school road-based 10-miler attracts almost 1,000 runners every year, each looking to run hard and post a respectable time. There are few bells and whistles, but then it's not the kind of race where anything other than the chance to run your backside off is what's required by the field. Take note: there's a two-hour time limit.

St Albans, Hertfordshire, January 21, activetrainingworld.co.uk

Gloucester 50K Ultra

If you're thinking about dipping your toe into the ultra-running scene, this race would be an excellent place to start. It's only (only!) 8km further than a standard marathon and is run on quiet – mostly flat – country roads around the outskirts of Gloucester, through the villages of Harefield and Colethorpe, among others. There are also marathon and half-marathon options.

Gloucestershire, January 21, beyondthelimitations.org

Benfleet 15

This'll be the 28th outing for one of the oldest races in the stable of the prolific Nice Work race team. The course is a stern challenge: 15 hilly, multi-terrain miles starting and finishing in Hadleigh Country Park, and taking competitors across the Hadleigh Downs and along the Canvey Island sea wall in between.

Hadleigh, Essex, January 21, nice-work.org.uk

Windsor Winter Half

One to bring your friends and family along to – they'll have ample opportunity to see you as you complete four and a half loops of Dorney Lake. It was the venue for

the rowing at London 2012, is flatter than a hen party in a nunnery and has been the scene of many a PB over the numerous races that are hosted here each year.

Berkshire, January 21, f3events.co.uk

TAKE IT EASY

Offa's Twisted Wayne Canter 2

If you'd prefer to ease your way into your year's racing activity, then why not head to this offroad event on the England/Wales border. You can run or walk a choice of routes (12.5, 16, 20 or 22 miles) and you must solve a series of clues along the way. Participants can either self-navigate or use one of the GPX track descriptions available.

Chepstow, Monmouthshire, January 28, southwalesldwa.org

Gransden Muddy Fun Run

If you live near Great Gransden and fancy helping Barnabas Oley School raise some funds, pop along to this one in your oldest kit (it's going to get filthy) and tackle one of the half marathon, 10K or 3K fun-run options. Cambridgeshire, January 28, muddy-fun-run.webflow.io



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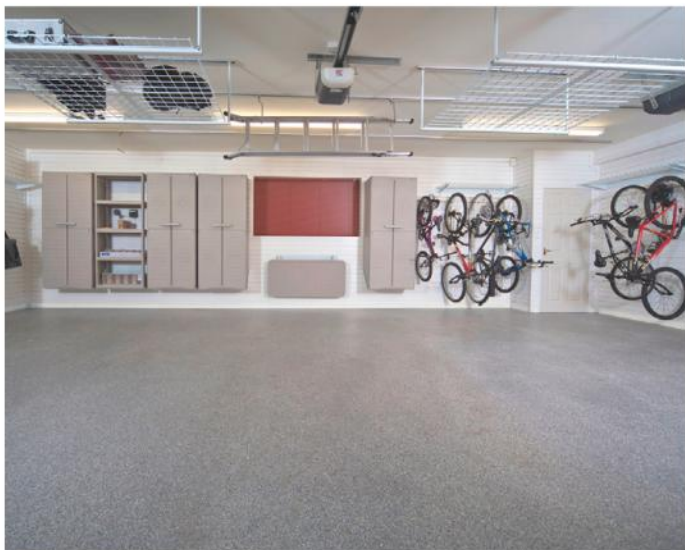
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KARLIE KLOSS

THE NEW YORK SUPERMODEL, 25, ON LEARNING TO LOVE RUNNING, BUT NOT TREADMILLS



GROWING UP, I WAS REALLY ATHLETIC and played every sport in the book, but I hated running. Each year in school, you were timed for a mile run. It was the worst day of the year.

THE FIRST TIME I really went for a run longer than four miles was

only three years ago, when I trained for a half marathon in Paris. I like to do things that take me out of my comfort zone, and the idea of running a half marathon was beyond scary and definitely took me out of my comfort zone.

● **Kloss is a model and TV personality. She ran the New York City Marathon, her first, on November 5, in 4:41:49.**

'The idea of running a half marathon was beyond scary and took me out of my comfort zone'

I HAVE A LOT TO LEARN about getting faster and controlling my pace.

SOMETIMES FANS NOTICE ME when I go for a run, but that's part of the fun. I'm quick, so they can't catch me.

IN PARIS, DURING FASHION WEEK, I went for a long run along the Seine. When I go on long runs in new places, I try to make the most of them. It's a great way to see a beautiful place.

I LOVE TO RUN IN THE RAIN. There's something really romantic about it, especially in New York.

I BRING MY SNEAKERS EVERYWHERE. If I need to be uptown or downtown, I will actually block out time to run the West Side Highway and go to appointments in my gym clothes. Sometimes, it's a faster way to get around New York City than a taxi.

I'M NOT INTO TREADMILLS. That's one reason why I waited so long to start running – a treadmill is not the most inspiring way to do it.

RUNNING A MARATHON is something I never dreamed I would do.

THE ENDURANCE FACTOR of long-distance running was something that challenged me. I convinced myself that I wasn't a runner.

I'M COMPETITIVE. If somebody is running faster, even a little bit, it makes me try to keep up with them.



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