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# RUNNER'S

WORLD

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TO BOOST PERFORMANCE p70

The Key Mineral  
For Runners  
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Can Running Keep  
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RW REPORT

## The Truth About Eco Shoes p52

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Photograph:

Jozef Kubica

Runner:

Hannah Lindemann

Hair & Make-Up:

Nuray Demir/Optix

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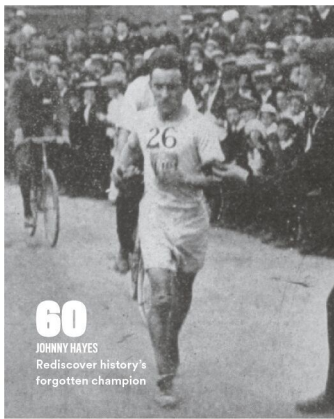
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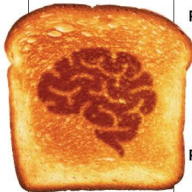
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**TOTES AMAZING**

Twenty-seven best gym bags for women, from classic duffels to backpacks and totes



# BEAUFORTAIN, SAVOIE, FRANCE

## THE LOCATION

Nestled in France's Savoie department, to the south-west of Mont Blanc, Beaufortain offers much of the adventure potential of Chamonix, but without the crowds. A favoured training ground of ultramarathon legends François D'Haene and Jim Walmsley, Beaufortain's peaceful trails explore a classic Alpine landscape of snow-capped mountains, scented pine forests, dazzlingly blue lakes and friendly mountain hamlets.





**THE RUN**

The Tour du Beaufortain is a fully waymarked trail that encircles the area, covering a little over 100km with over 5,000m of ascent. Staying high for much of its length, it's a mix of glorious mountain views and plenty of runnable terrain. Mostly snow-free between June and September, the route is usually completed over a few days, overnighing at refuges along the way. Alternatively, aspiring Walmsleys can tackle the full distance in one go as a self-supported challenge, or enter the Ultra Trail du Beaufortain, which takes place here each summer in July.

**RUNNER** Sim Benson**PHOTOGRAPHER** @jenandsim

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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Runner's World UK is published in the UK by Hearst UK Limited, House of Hearst, 30 Panton Street, London SW1Y 4AJ. Copyright ©, Hearst UK Limited, 2023. All rights reserved. ISSN 1350-7745. Published 12 times a year.

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## CONTACT US

**Address** House of Hearst  
30 Panton Street  
London SW1Y 4AJ

**Enquiries** Editorial enquiries  
[editorial@runnersworld.co.uk](mailto:editorial@runnersworld.co.uk)  
Advertising enquiries  
[hearst.co.uk/brands/runnersworld](mailto:hearst.co.uk/brands/runnersworld)  
General enquiries  
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# EDITOR'S LETTER



**LEGEND IS A LABEL** that's given out far too easily these days, but in the case of Haile Gebrselassie, it's more than justified. The Ethiopian is one of the greatest runners in history, with victories and world records in almost every

middle- and long-distance event. His terrific duel with Paul Tergat in the 10,000m at Sydney 2000 remains one of the great Olympic races. He later became the first runner to break the 2:04 marathon barrier in Berlin in 2008 – a huge landmark before the advent of carbon shoes. With his athletic career now behind him, Haile is still an ambassador for the sport, and his Great Ethiopian Run has done much to promote sporting participation in his home country. He reflects on his illustrious career and tells us what he really thinks about super shoes on page 46.

Elsewhere, on page 60, we pay tribute to another champion – but a less feted one. The American Johnny Hayes won the first modern Olympic marathon (and the first to be run over 26.2 miles) in London in 1908. But he did so after the race's original 'winner', Dorando Pietri, was disqualified for receiving help as he collapsed during the final stages. Pietri's drama is now generally better remembered than Hayes' victory, but you sense it probably wouldn't have bothered a man who was both incredibly gifted and yet humble – much like Haile.

**ANDY DIXON**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

@RW\_ed\_Andy

## CONTRIBUTORS



**DAVID SMYTH**  
The journalist and trail runner swapped the South Downs' chalk paths for the high-altitude forest around Addis Ababa to soak up Ethiopian run culture and sit down with the great Haile Gebrselassie to offer a unique insight into the man behind *The Legend* on p46.



**JOHN CARROLL**  
The writer, editor and regular *RW* contributor tells the remarkable tale of the Irish American Johnny Hayes, who was almost written out of sporting history for having the misfortune to win the first modern Olympic marathon. Meet *The Forgotten Champion* on p60.



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NUTRITION

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MIND +  
HEALTH

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# WARM-UPS

The TIPS YOU NEED to GET UP to SPEED



## Bound for glory

*Why you're only a hop, skip and jump away from faster running – even if you're already fit*

**FITNESS GAINS COME** relatively easy to begin with. But after this golden age of PBs, our progress tends to flatten.

So what can the already-fit do to become even fitter? Plyometrics training. According to new research\*, this type of exercise – which requires jumping, bounding and hopping – can make fast runners faster. Those in the study could run 5km in roughly 15 minutes and were divided into four groups: those who did polarised training (typically 80% easy running, 20% hard); pyramidal training (similar to polarised, but with slightly more moderate-to-hard sessions); or one

of these training models, plus once-weekly plyometrics. After the eight-week trial, the group who did pyramidal training plus plyometrics improved their 5km times by 1.6%, while those who did polarised training plus plyometrics improved theirs by 1.8%.

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ON A PLATE  
Carbon-plated  
'super shoes' may  
not work for all

## If the shoe fits

Carbon plates may only benefit runners of a certain speed, suggests study

**SUPER-SHOES ARE BEING** worn by runners of all speeds, but is there a bigger benefit for those at the front of the pack? A new paper\* looked into how shoe stiffness (from carbon plates) affected running economy in a group of runners of varying ability. The participants had their  $\text{VO}_2$  max – how much oxygen your body can use while exercising – measured and were then asked to take part in a five-minute treadmill run conducted at 75% of  $\text{VO}_2$  max pace (roughly the effort you can hold for 11 minutes). Researchers concluded that 'high-level' runners gained some benefit from the shoes but 'medium-level runners did not'. In fact, around a third of the runners exhibited lower running economy in the super shoes. Why the difference? To gain benefit from carbon plates, you have to hit the ground relatively hard, which happens at faster paces. That's not to say only Eliud Kipchoge should be wearing these shoes, rather that, as the researchers said, 'this study emphasises the importance of individual response examination to understand the effect of footwear on runners' performance'. Or, in simpler terms, be open-minded about the shoe that's right for you.

## Form fixing

Three science-backed steps to better running form



There's a lot of information online when it comes to form, but a lot is opinion and conjecture. Physiotherapist Tom Goom (running-physio.com) has identified three science-backed changes that some runners will benefit from implementing. 'Gait changes won't always give as much back as you think, and even the best runners have differences in technique,' says Goom. 'But subtle changes can help, if you have the other things in place, such as an effective training programme and adequate recovery schedule. If you're injured or concerned about your gait, it's best to see a qualified health professional.'

**1. Don't overstride and land with a straight leg in front of your knee**

**Spot it:** Is your step rate quite low (less than 165 steps per minute)? Do you land with a heavy heel-strike with the ankle very dorsiflexed?

**Fix it:** Run to a metronome, upping your step rate by 5% to 10% based on comfort and effort.

**2. Avoid excessive hip adduction**

**Spot it:** If your knees brush against each other while you're running, there's a good chance that's from hip adduction. **Fix it:** Try to create a small gap between your knees while running. Strengthening the glutes is unlikely to address this on its own.

**3. Avoid excessive 'trunk' lean**

**Spot it:** Ask someone to film you running side-on to see if you're leaning forwards from the waist. **Fix it:** Try to 'run tall' and look straight ahead at the horizon, rather than down at the floor (providing it's safe to do so and there's nothing to trip over).

# goals get you out there

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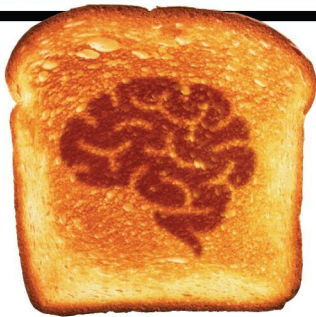
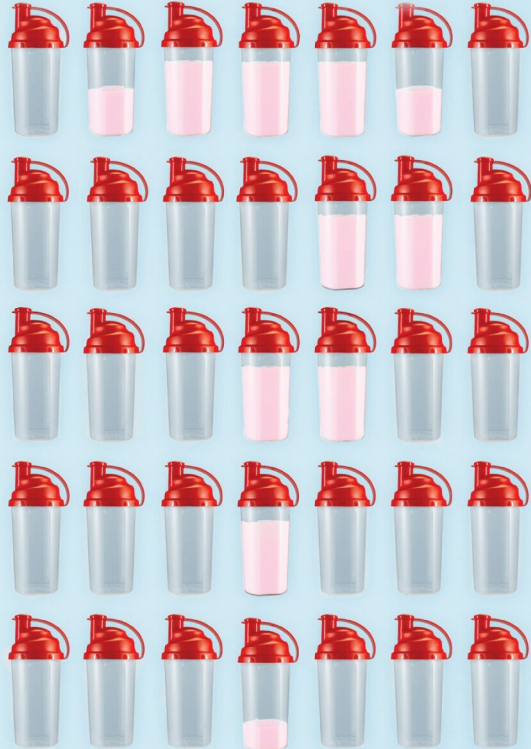




# Don't make a meal out of protein

*When it comes to building strength, it's more about what you lift than what you eat*

IF YOU'RE OBSESSING over which protein shake gives you more bang for your buck, you might be missing the point. According to a new study, the overall effect of protein intake on gains in lean body mass and strength is tiny. 'I'd guess, based on looking at a few thousand records from athletes, that there are very few whose gains in muscle/strength are being impaired due to low protein,' wrote study author Stuart Phillips on Twitter. 'Admittedly some may be "under gaining" due to insufficient energy. However, the gains come, almost always, through a combination of in-gym work plus a light sprinkling of nutrition.' If you want to get stronger, go to the gym – the rest of it is in the margins.



## Use your loaf

Take this quiz\* from WebMD to find out how well you know your bread

*\*see left for the answers*

**1** Brown bread is always healthier than wholegrain.

- True  
 False

**2** Which place is better to keep bread fresh?

- On the counter  
 In the fridge

**3** Eating too much bread can raise blood pressure.

- True  
 False

**4** 'Enriched' bread is healthier than wholegrain bread.

- True  
 False

**5** Which is boiled before it's baked?

- Pitta  
 Bagel

**6** What do you do if you find mould on a slice?

- Throw away mouldy slices  
 Throw away the loaf  
 Pick the mould off

**7** What is a health benefit of eating whole grains?

- Cuts risk of heart disease  
 Prevents acne

**8** Which type of bread raises blood sugar the least?

- Wholegrain  
 pumpernickel

- Sourdough  
 Wholewheat

**9** What's the difference between wholewheat and 'white' wholewheat?

- The milling process  
 The price  
 The colour of the wheat

**10** What are gluten-free breads made with?

- Potato flour  
 Rice flour  
 Both of the above

**11** Eating wholegrain can help with your weight.

- True  
 False



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## Running with diabetes

Here's the latest piece of evidence to add to the 'why running is better than cycling' folder. If you have type 1 diabetes, running provides better blood-glucose control than cycling. That was the conclusion of a new study\* that found running led to a larger decrease in blood glucose compared with jumping on the saddle. This led researchers to conclude, 'Active individuals with type 1 diabetes should be aware that current recommendations for glycaemic management need to be more specific to the mode of exercise.'



WORDS: RICK FEARSON. PHOTOGRAPHY: LEO ACKER. STOCKS: \*SOURCES: BRITISH JOURNAL OF SPORTS MEDICINE; DIABETIC MEDICINE; ANNALS OF INTERNAL MEDICINE; THE WORLD JOURNAL OF BIOLOGICAL PSYCHIATRY

## Find your focus

*Mindfulness boosts the performance of the pros – and it could do the same for you*

IT MAY NOT SOUND LIKE THE most athletic of terms, but 'mindfulness' can improve competitive performance. That's according to the first meta-analysis\* of mindfulness that focused on the mental health outcomes in 614 elite athletes, using evidence from randomised-controlled trials only. The researchers concluded that consistent mindfulness practice could improve both your chances of a PB and overall mental health, noting 'large, significant' results for reduced stress and anxiety, as well as improved psychological wellbeing.

**PRIME MIND**  
Time to get that yoga mat out of storage

### 3 mindfulness activities to try

**Mindful run:** Focus on how your body feels. Notice the breeze against your skin, your feet against the ground, the noises and smells around you.

**Body scan:** Move your attention slowly through different parts of your body. Start from your head and move all the way down to your toes.

**Meditation:** Sit quietly, focusing on your breathing, thoughts and sensations in your body. Bring your attention back to the present if your mind wanders.

# 30

Getting up and out of your seat every 30 minutes could help to reduce the harms of sedentary behaviour\*

## The happiness movement

Exercise was named as one of the key ways to combat depression in a major new paper. The review\* found that when it comes to lifestyle therapies, as opposed to medication, the 'recommendations with the highest ratings to improve MDD' (major depressive disorder) are: exercise, relaxation techniques, work-directed interventions [ie, changes to a job role], sleep and mindfulness therapies. Changes to diet and access to green space were also suggested, but had 'a lower strength of evidence', said researchers. Other studies have shown that people who are more active and are genetically predisposed to MDD are less likely to develop the disorder than people of equal genetic risk who are less active.



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## Are you a shuffler or bouncer?

Identifying your running style could help you to tailor your S&C

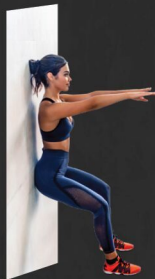
A new study\* looked at running styles, classified them, then suggested exercises to limit injuries. The Volodalen method divides runners into two categories: terrestrial (who mostly shuffle) and aerial (who bounce). They're

roughly equivalent in terms of injury risk and metabolic cost, but it does have implications for injury-prevention exercises. Shufflers should focus on flexion-based strength exercises, such as wall sits, weighted lunges and

balance work. Bouncers, improve leg strength through box jumps, skipping and straight-leg bounds. Tailoring your S&C work, said researchers, helps give you more of the body mechanics demanded by your style.

### FOR SHUFFLERS

**01/ WALL SIT**  
Sit with your back against a solid wall and your thighs perpendicular to the ground. Adjust your feet so your knees are directly above your ankles. Keep your back flat against the wall and hold for 1 to 2 mins.



### FOR BOUNCERS

**02/ BOX JUMP**  
Stand with the box a short step in front of you and your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend your knees slightly and spring on to the box, landing softly. Step back down and repeat.



## Expert approved

It's official: we think running's worse for knees than health professionals do. A study\* found 'the majority of health care professionals reported being relatively confident in evidence-based recommendations about running and knee health'. Another paper\* found low-intensity exercise is better for patients with severe knee osteoarthritis, but sometimes high-intensity workouts are beneficial.

## Flex factor

Dorsiflexion is the movement at the ankle joint that brings your toes closer to your shin. You should be able to achieve at least 15 degrees of dorsiflexion on both legs, or you're at risk of ankle injury. Here's how to improve yours:

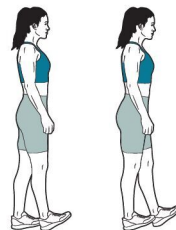
### 01/ DORSIFLEXION HOLDS

With feet hip-width apart, raise your right knee to hip height, with a 90-degree angle at the knee. Flex your toes on your right foot and hold for 30 secs. Swap legs and repeat 3 times.



### 02/ HEEL WALKS

Raise the front of both feet, keeping your heels on the ground. Without locking your knees, walk on your heels for 20 metres. Turn and repeat. Aim for 3 sets. You should feel a burn in your shins.



SOCIAL SPEED p22 + FANCY FOOTWORK p24

# HUMAN RACE

NEWS, VIEWS, TRENDS *and* ORDINARY RUNNERS *doing* EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

**'WHEN I'M  
RUNNING,  
I FEEL LIKE  
I'M WITH  
MY DAD'**

Katy Martins says running  
has helped her to come to  
terms with her father's suicide





**KATY MARTINS ALWAYS ENJOYED** running with her dad, Jim. She would sometimes do a short loop with him before he went for a long Sunday run around Richmond Park in west London. But in 2008, when Katy was 12, she lost her dad to suicide. 'There are so many things that he's missed, and so many more things that he will miss,' she says. 'You learn to deal with that better as you get older, but it does get really, really tough at times.'

But finding like-minded people helps. Last year, through the charity *November*, Martins, 26, joined other 'Mo sisters' – young women with similar experiences – to run both the London Landmarks Half and the London Marathon to raise awareness of male suicide.

'Until then, I'd never met anyone in a similar position to me. It's almost been taboo to talk about someone's death if it was by suicide,' she says. 'With these women – some who'd lost their dads, some who'd lost a brother – as soon as I met them we had a level of understanding that you don't get from other people. We all had similar questions: why did this happen? Could I have done something differently? Could I have helped him to link up with more friends? Could I have been a better daughter? When I met the others, it was comforting to know that I wasn't going crazy and that grief commonly presents itself in those ways.'

Running also helps her own mental health. 'I've suffered quite significantly with depression, anxiety and bulimia over the years,' she says. 'If I haven't been running for a week, I'll know about it. My brain feels quite busy. The first 10 minutes are always the

## 'THE FIRST 10 MINUTES ARE ALWAYS THE TOUGHEST, BUT THEN I GET THAT FEELING OF A WEIGHT BEING LIFTED'

toughest, trying to find that flow, but then I get that feeling of a weight being lifted. I always come back feeling better than when I left. It's the only thing that really works. When I'm running, a part of me feels like I'm with my dad.'

Having the goal of finishing her first marathon made running an even bigger part of her life. When she was a young girl, Martins would dream of running one with her dad. They used to watch the London Marathon on TV. 'Doing the marathon was a very

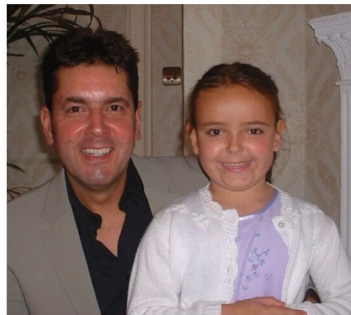


personal challenge and I'm so proud I've done it. I haven't always had enough faith in myself. Running is a way of taking down those demons in your head saying that you can't do certain things.'

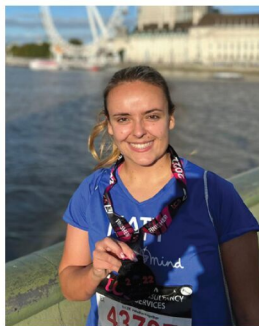
As public perceptions around mental health have become more enlightened, it's been easier for Martins to share her experiences more widely, too, and be heard. When her dad died, she didn't receive enough understanding from those around her. Her school had no pastoral care in place. She was bullied by classmates, who found it easy to get a reaction by bringing up her tragedy. When she walked out of a session in which students were asked to talk about what they were getting their dads for Father's Day, she was excluded from school. And her town's local newspaper wrote about her dad's death with such insensitivity that

her family fought to get the article pulled. 'I feel like a lot of my childhood was robbed from me. But my mum did her best to keep me afloat and I wouldn't be here without her.'

In today's more thoughtful climate, it doesn't feel intrusive to ask her about her experiences. 'I welcome opportunities to talk about it, in the hope that it might help other people,' she says. 'We can speak about mental health in a more positive way. And I like being able to amplify the voice of my dad because he obviously



Katy Martins runs to feel close to her dad (above with a very young Katy) and to help her own mental health



**If you've been affected by the issues covered in this article, Samaritans provides confidential support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call 116 123.**

didn't feel heard, and that's why what happened did happen.'

Martins did a master's in the psychology of mental health and now works for *November*. She praises the charity's 'Conversations' – an online tool to help people to find ways to talk to someone about their mental health – and the 'ALEC' model: 'Ask, Listen, Encourage action, Check in.' There's also 'Ahead of the Game', a new programme to show adolescents how to look out for their mental fitness as well as their physical health.

It's progress, but Martins thinks society still makes it harder for men to display vulnerability. 'It's not that being masculine is the problem; the charity is not asking men to change the way they are. It's about being more open. You might have had a bad day and don't want to come home and put that on your family. But it is possible to be a strong man *and* share your feelings.'

[conversations.movember.com/en-gb.uk.movember.com](http://conversations.movember.com/en-gb.uk.movember.com)



**SOCIAL  
MOVEMENT**

# CONVERSATION PACE

Meet the running group who value a post-run coffee as highly as a new PB

→ **WHATEVER YOU DO**, don't call Harborough Social Runners (HSR) a club. The running group, officially co-founded by Leanne Shrive three years ago, prides itself on being about much more than performances and PBs.

'I'd been part of a couple of running clubs, and I realised there was nothing local for people who just wanted to run,' says Shrive. 'I had no interest in track or cross-country races, and I realised there was a whole group of people just like me, who just wanted to get out and run with others without the pressure of pace, time or distance.'

What started as Shrive running with a few friends was formalised with the launch of a Facebook group in October 2019. Within months, word got around the small town of Market Harborough, Leicestershire, and hundreds of people joined. Branded kit was rolled out in 2020 and that's when 'we started to feel like a real community,' says Shrive.

The group, which has also attracted members from local running clubs,

has three simple rules. 'No one gets left behind, we don't mind walking and we love a post-run coffee or beer,' says Shrive. 'By setting these out to our runners, it means we've created a safe place for people to run among others. It's a social run, there's no pressure and there's always a happy face to greet you.'

There are four social runs a week, up to 10K in length, which attract about 35 runners at a time and always finish near a coffee shop or the pub. But runners are also encouraged to use the Facebook group to shout out if and when they want to run with others. 'The main thing for me is that every runner counts. We're a non-competitive group who embrace all kinds of runners and their abilities. We want to create somewhere where there's an equal emphasis on running and being social,' says Shrive.

But that doesn't mean that HSR isn't interested in formal training. Shrive is a qualified run leader and

the group has coaches in running fitness, too. They put on a selection of 12-week training programmes throughout the year, covering couch to 5K, 5K improvers, 5K to 10K and 10K to half marathon.

There have also been several informal challenges, such as a relay marathon around the town, a team sunrise-to-sunset run and a parkrun volunteer takeover. Members also organise away trips, including participating in Equinox24, the Long Walk in Windsor and the Secret London Runs Christmas Lights Running Tour.

But members' medals and times are not what Shrive is striving for. Her satisfaction comes from seeing people participate together. 'I'm so proud of every runner in our group and I love that they've all helped build the group to what it is today.'

@harboroughsocialrunners



## WHAT THEY SAY

'Over the past few years, I've made many friends, which has been fantastic for my mental wellbeing. I now regularly lead runs, and most Sundays, we run for one hour, [then go] for coffee, cake and a chat.'

**Simon Poynton**

'HSR has always been about the community – engaging runners online and offline. It's inclusive, engaging and has had a positive impact on my mental and physical wellbeing. "No one gets left behind" is the motto.'

**Ntola Obazee**

## BETTER TOGETHER

A strong sense of community is integral to the group's success





## Murphy's Lore

BY SAM MURPHY



# THE KEY TO BEING A GOOD PATIENT IS PATIENCE



**I**'ve been out of my running shoes for more than two weeks. At first, in the early throes of Covid, I couldn't have cared less. I was too busy shivering and sweating. But after five days of incapacitation, I was good for short dog walks and spells at my desk before needing a lie-down. Progress!

That's when I began to make calculations: I should be back running by Wednesday. Wednesday passed. Saturday, I'll be good to go. Saturday passed. Although my test was negative, I was still weak, wheezy and tired all the time.

When our bodies stop us in our tracks, through illness or injury, we regard it as a major inconvenience. The things we are in the middle of achieving – building mileage, preparing for a race – are temporarily derailed. Often, we rest with bad grace, allowing ourselves only the stingiest amount of time to recover before 'getting back to normal', anxious not to risk losing all that we've built.

This wasn't the first time I needed reminding that the body cannot simply be bent to the will of the mind. No matter how angry, depressed or frustrated you feel about not being able to run (or do much of anything at all, for that matter), it takes as long as it takes to get better. Simple as that.

According to the World Health Organization, the median recovery time for Covid is 14 days. For the common cold, two-thirds of people recover within a week; for flu, symptoms typically last eight days or more. These guidelines can be helpful in offering a ballpark figure for how long you can expect to be out – but they can also lead us to set our bodies deadlines for healing and, should we fail to get well in the given time frame, berate ourselves or, worse, plough on regardless. I've heard many an injured runner issuing ultimatums

### THE TAKEAWAY...

Running can affect the immune system. A prolonged hard session – such as a long run in marathon training – can compromise the immune response, leaving you more vulnerable to viruses and other infections for between three and 72 hours. Ingesting carbs during the run helps lessen the effects, while vitamin D has been shown to help support the immune system. Don't skimp on recovery, get enough sleep, eat healthily and practise good hand hygiene to maximise your chances of staying well.

to themselves about when they'll get back to training, as if the mind is the boss of a recalcitrant body.

It's only when 'the lights of health go down', as Virginia Woolf puts it so eloquently in her essay *On Being Ill*, that we get the opportunity to grasp something fundamental that's so often overlooked. Despite the belief that our brains are what make us human, it's the body that provides the interface through which we experience the world – the sensing, seeing, tasting, feeling, hearing, running body. Rather than bullying our unwell or injured bodies, we should be nursing and nourishing them. Runners, in particular, should be thanking them for all they do.

A few years ago, I had the flu. It wiped me out for at least a fortnight, and I emerged pale and feeble. But I had a half marathon booked only a week later and, despite having managed only one run post-flu, I ran. It felt like the longest race of my life (in terms of half-marathon times, the clock confirmed this to be the case) and served only to knock my confidence and leave me exhausted and aching for several more days.

This time, I've decided to show my body more respect. I'm giving thanks for how it's overcome the fever and breathlessness, headache and body aches, cough and sore throat. I'm trying to eat well and drink lots of fluids. I'm taking bite-size Pilates classes online when I feel up to it. I'm getting outside for a walk each day.

Of course, I'm itching to run again. But for once, I've listened to my body and – this is the hard bit – actually heeded what it told me. When the time is right for running, I'll be the first to know.

sam-murphy.co.uk

BY THE NUMBERS

# TOM DAVIES

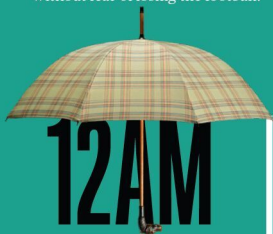
32, FROM ALDRIDGE, DRIBBLED A BALL ACROSS BRITAIN



### 'I'M ALWAYS LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE

**IDEAS**, things that haven't been done before,' says Tom Davies, whose past achievements include attempting to cross Wales in a completely straight line. 'So, I thought, "What about something that involves dribbling a football?" And so his latest challenge was born: attempting to dribble a ball across the width of Britain in a single day. 'I wasn't sure if it was possible – but it turns out it is.' Close control was needed sometimes on narrow paths (you don't want the ball rolling down into the brambles'). But, because Davies was following the Hadrian's Wall path, which is very well trodden, he says there was 'a natural curve' that allowed for 'a nice, firm side-foot pass', without fear of losing the football.

TO DONATE, VISIT [justgiving.com/dribblingbritain2022](http://justgiving.com/dribblingbritain2022)



# 12AM

'It began raining at midnight. But, somehow, our morale never got low'

# 21:30:11

TOTAL TIME TAKEN. THE MOVING TIME WAS 16:57, WHICH MADE THE AVERAGE MOVING PACE 13:55MIN/MILE

# 40 miles

LONGEST WALK-RUN DAVIES DID IN PREPARATION FOR THE CHALLENGE. 'I KNEW I WAS READY AFTER DOING THAT'

# £70,247

Amount raised for charity, £50,000 of which went to mental health charity Calm



# 55

MILE AT WHICH DAVIES FELT COMPLETELY DRAINED. 'STRANGELY, I DIDN'T WANT TO EAT, BUT MY CREW MADE ME EAT A SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE POUCH.' BELLISSIMO!

# 1,160,000

Number of subscribers to Davies' GeoWizard YouTube channel, where he documents his geography-inspired adventures



# 20 | 73

Davies says he 'kicked the ball about 20 metres in front of me', rather than relying on Lionel Messi levels of close control

NUMBER OF MILES DAVIES HAD TO COMPLETE IN 24 HOURS

# ONE

Number of people who ran the whole thing with Tom – kudos to Russ, excellent runner and friend



Davies is the only person to cross a country (Norway) without deviating more than 50 metres from a straight line drawn on Google Maps

# 0

NUMBER OF ULTRAMARATHONS DAVIES HAD COMPLETED BEFORE TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE

WORDS: RICK PEARSON. PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES. STUDIO 33





## Tonky Talk

BY PAUL TONKINSON



# GIVING TIME TO HELP OTHERS IS THE BEST TIME OF ALL



**I**t had been a tricky couple of weeks. My daughter had been in and out of hospital, and the days had taken their toll – the not knowing, not sleeping, waiting on doctors, having tests, driving up north, stopping over, worrying. Even though she’s moved out, the parenting never ends, and it was with relief that I dropped her off after she’d been discharged, healthy again.

The early twenties is a manic phase of life. When I listen to her, everything seems accelerated. She feels pressure to go out, work, be funny, look good, get a decent boyfriend, be spiritual, journal, post on social media. I’m constantly telling her to relax. It was now time to rest, eat well, ease off the clubbing and get some air. Walk every day.

The next morning, she rings me up and says she wants to run a marathon. ‘I just think it would be good to do a challenge.’ Her knowledge is limited.

‘How far is it?’ she asks. It’s 26.2 miles, I tell her.

‘Oh wow. That’s far. So you need stamina?’ she asks. I explain that yes, she will need stamina.

‘Will you help me?’

‘Of course,’ I say, going into coach mode. Let’s just take it easy at first. We’ll get you some good shoes, do some parkruns and see how you go. Get used to running three or four times a week, gradually running long on one of the runs.

‘So... if I enter a marathon in, like, three months, that would be good?’

I counsel caution. ‘Let’s just do different distances and build up.’

I want her, in my old-fashioned way, to be a runner first, to see if she fancies it. Two days later, she rings. She’s been running, loves it and has entered a 10K

in a month. I could help her run it, she suggests. ‘How much is it?’ I ask. ‘25 quid.’

Cue sharp inhale. ‘I’m sorry,’ I tell her. ‘I can’t be spending 25 quid to run 10km; it just annoys me too much.’

‘You get a T-shirt and a medal.’

‘I’m not really bothered by that.’

‘Have a think,’ she says. ‘Maybe you can turn up and support me.’

That afternoon, I go to a local infant school to help with reading. Post-pandemic, reading standards are down, so every week I give four kids some valuable one-on-one time. One kid has a heavy stammer, but we don’t talk about it much. I don’t want to make them self-conscious, and it’s beyond my remit. Usually, they’re a bit reluctant, looking to be somewhere else. The previous week, I’d stayed longer, gently urging them to read at home. ‘Relax with it, the words you know, the words you don’t. Doesn’t matter. There’s time. We can do this.’

This week, the kid does a dance when I come in. They begin to read, and I notice the stammer is almost gone. I’m giddy and don’t want to hex it, but after a bit, I can’t resist. ‘You’re reading so smoothly. What’s changed?’

‘I’ve been practising at home.’

‘Well done. This is brilliant.’

The pleasure it gives me, to witness that transformation, is lovely. It gets me thinking about my daughter. What am I being so curmudgeonly about? Just swallow the £25. Run with her as she gets a medal and a T-shirt. Be by her side. Enjoy every step. So, that night, I ring her. ‘I’ll do the 10K.’

‘That’s great! It’s meant to be really hard. It’s on trails.’

‘I love trails,’ I say.

‘Mmm,’ she says. ‘What are they?’

### RUNNING GAGS

by Rick Pearson

**What did the running influencer do on their recovery day? Aqua blogging.**

Paul is a stand-up comedian and co-host of the *Running Commentary* podcast



## LETTER OF THE MONTH



**KEEP GOING**  
Kerry and her mum pledge to run as long as possible

### LATE EXPECTATIONS

Your article 'The Race Against Time' could not have come at a better time – a time when my mum was considering cancelling her *Runner's World* subscription, and I feared losing my running partner. Mum has been running since 1983 and I finally joined her in the 1990s. We both belonged to the local running club (I still do) and our Sundays always started with a long run – unless Mum was signed up to a race. She's now 73 and I'm 52; lately, those niggles certainly are niggling, to the point where Mum stated there wasn't any point in running any more. Until, that is, your magazine dropped through her door. Your article has persuaded us to keep going as long as we can – and cover our ears to those who shout, 'You shouldn't be running, it ruins your knees!'

*Kerry Watson*

**RW** Delighted to hear the article has reinvigorated you both. Remember the saying, 'You don't stop running because you get old. You get old because you stop running.'



**WIN!**

What's inspired, impressed or annoyed you lately about running or runners? The writer of the winning email or letter receives a pair of Saucony Triumph 20s, worth £155 (available in a colour of your choosing, if in stock).

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Email [letters@runnersworld.co.uk](mailto:letters@runnersworld.co.uk)  
Twitter and Facebook @runnersworlduk



### PREGNANT APPLAUSE

I wanted to write to congratulate *RW* on an informative and valuable article about running in pregnancy ('Baby Steps', March 23). When I was expecting our third child, I ran through to 35 weeks (she was born two weeks later) and was so delighted I did – I'm convinced my fitness helped the birth and my recovery. Our daughter was born during the first Covid lockdown, in May 2020, a time of great uncertainty, and I, like other pregnant women, was virtually shielding. Running gave me the headspace and time in nature I needed, and I enjoyed it more than I'd ever done before. The key, as you wrote, was to slow down, listen to my body and hydrate more than usual. Thank you for publishing an encouraging and empowering article.

*Kate Morgan*

### INSPIRED BY UKRAINE

I am new to *RW* and running so didn't know what to expect. Thought I would give it a go. Absolutely love the magazine and will be a regular reader from now on. The articles were inspiring and not because of the distances people have run, but the reasons behind it. The article on Ukraine was so thought-provoking; I imagine not many of us would have thought about the impact on exercise for its residents. They're showing that you never give up and I'll be thinking of these people when I feel like giving up running when it gets too hard.

*Charlotte Wildman*

### IT'S TIME TO RUN EQUAL

My 11-year-old daughter has started secondary school and is keen on cross-country. She has been invited to run at an event organised by Surrey Schools Athletic Association this Saturday. However, she was flabbergasted to see that

the distances are different for boys and girls and asked me why. Obviously, I couldn't answer, without going into Victorian perceptions that women can do less than men. There was an excellent article on the Run Equal campaign [on the *RW* website], but a year later, it has not yet been achieved. Please help to ensure the new generation is brought up on the principles of the 2010 Equality Act. It's now 2023.

*Arjen Naafs*

### GREEN LIGHT

On recent runs, I've noticed the amount of plastic bottles and parking areas rammed with cars. Race organisers need to think outside the box and offer discounted rates for car-sharing or use of public transport. Medals and T-shirts can be produced from recycled materials and made to be optional – with the income going into reforestation, for example. Manufacturers need to look at the make-up of shoes and kit and stop pushing the need to replace so soon. We need to do better – and it has to start now.

*Stevie McKimm*

### THE BIG FREEZE

I found Paul Tonkinson's column in the March 2023 edition truly inspiring, and I am glad he is enjoying the challenge of frugality. However, if he can see his breath indoors, I'm worried his pipes will freeze. Could you pass the message on?

*Alistair Falconer Hall*



**Tonky, take note!**  
If you can see your breath, turn up the thermostat a notch.





**WE ASK, YOU ANSWER**

# WHAT'S THE GREATEST PLACE ON EARTH YOU'VE RUN OR RACED?



'London Stadium, Stratford'  
*Nicola Morris*

'Malawi – up and down Mount Mulanje and around Lake Malawi. Breathtaking'  
*Barinderjit Singh Cheema*

'Best parkrun: Central Park. Best race: Loch Ness Marathon'  
*Alistair Logan*

'Philadelphia Marathon. To finish by the "Rock Steps" was awesome'  
*Dana Power*

'Hadrian's Wall, from the North Sea to the Irish Sea, over three days'  
*Peter Cheung*

'Great North Run'  
*Mark Summers*

'NYC Marathon had the BEST vibe'  
*Stacey Parsons*

'Windermere Marathon or Haweswater Half. Both have stunning scenery'  
*Matt Simp*

'Istanbul Marathon (10K race), over the Bosphorus Bridge between Asia and Europe'  
*Julia Power*

'Two Oceans Marathon, Cape Town'  
*John Robinson*

'Anglesey coastal path'  
*Steve John*

'Faroe Islands. Truly incredible terrain, scenery and culture'  
*Alex Reilly*

## SNAP CHAT

# #SOCKITTOME

SHOW US A PIC OF YOUR FAVE RUNNING SOCKS

NEXT MONTH: #TOPDOG: SHOW US A PIC OF YOU AND YOUR FAVOURITE FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND  
[LETTERS@RUNNERSWORLD.CO.UK](mailto:LETTERS@RUNNERSWORLD.CO.UK)



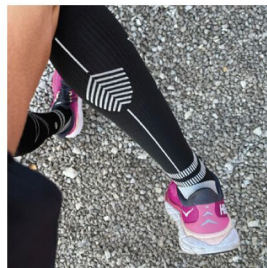
'Grumpy Monkey socks are brill'  
*Theresa Slater*



'My first attempt at darning socks'  
*George Gardner*



'This morning's pair'  
*Pamerjit Kaur*



'Stox energy socks'  
*Katy*

## POLL

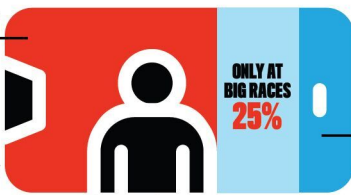
# WHAT'S YOUR PHILOSOPHY ON THE RUNNING SELFIE?

I COULD NEVER  
**55%**

ONLY AT BIG RACES  
**25%**

SNAP HAPPY  
**20%**

\*Based on a RW Twitter poll of 238 votes





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## The Flamingo Diaries

BY LISA JACKSON



# A CHANGE OF SCENE MEANS WE RUN REJUVENATED AND SERENE



### WORDS TO GIVE YOU WINGS

'There's a lot of optimism in changing scenery, in seeing what's down the road.'

The words of American singer-songwriter Conor Oberst remind us that a change is as good as a rest. If your running feels stale, change where you run and you'll be amazed at how inspired you feel.

**T**he move from KwaZulu-Natal to Cape Town with my dad was as clandestine as a CIA operation. Finally admitting that I couldn't manage his inadequately trained carers any longer, I took the difficult decision to move my father to a care home. His dementia means he gets anxious, especially about change, so I secretly packed his bags and only informed him that we were 'going on holiday' on the morning of our flight. My own anxiety levels were sky high. I was afraid he wouldn't be allowed to fly – I hadn't informed the airline of his condition.

We arrived in Cape Town without incident. My dad accepted the 'fiblef' (a white lie told to a person with dementia) that he'd be staying in a five-star hotel and that I'd be with my friend, Angie, across the road. With trepidation, I bid him farewell. The next day, I returned to the care home to find him excitedly doing seated exercises to music. The presence of the nurse supervisor's sausage dog Lucy van Heerden (have you ever met a dog with a surname?) delighted him.

Determined that Dad should continue to believe he was on holiday, Angie and I took him to a restaurant nestled among milkwood trees. He spent ages perusing the menu, then announced solemnly, 'There's chimpanzee on the menu!' I was aghast – either we'd stumbled on a bush meat restaurant or Dad's dementia was worse. Hastily, I paged through until I stumbled across what he'd been referring to: an unappetising pizza topped with pineapple and avocado.

Our move to the Cape not only rejuvenated Dad – whose movement and language skills improved – but me, too. His care home is close to the Two Oceans Marathon course, often voted 'the most breathtaking route in the

world'. I spotted lone runners grinding their way up the steep hills, something I never saw in KwaZulu-Natal where the security situation made it too dangerous to run alone. A few days after we arrived, I donned my skapris and set off at sunset for my first solo run beyond the confines of a compound surrounded by an electric fence.

I ran downhill on a sandy track, captivated by the views of the mountains in the distance, their slopes carpeted in rows of grapevines. On either side, there was a profusion of fynbos (fine-leaved bush), delicate orange petals waggled in the wind while waxy-looking yellow and orange pincushion proteas formed a floral guard of honour.

Passing the road signs warning drivers to beware of porcupines, I continued down as the sun slowly lit up the mountains until they glowed like embers. Ahead of me a mother guinea fowl and her six tiny keets raced through the veld, their legs pitter-pattering so fast they turned into a blur. I reluctantly turned back, knowing that the glorious descent would morph into an uphill trudge.

It wasn't long before I had to walk. As I did, I spotted something I took to be a sign from the universe. The word 'serenity' carved into a plaque hanging from the gate of a house. It summed up not only what I'd been craving – some peace from the worry of looking after Dad – but also what I always feel when I toss my troubles aside and go for a run.

Lisa is the author of two bestselling running books, *Running Made Easy* and *Your Pace Or Mine?* Her latest books – *Travel Sickness* and *Travel Agents* – contain chapters about running and have been released as audiobooks

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# HOW LONG CAN RUNNING KEEP ALZHEIMER'S AT BAY?

---

**When renowned endurance racer Mark Macy got his diagnosis, he was told he had two years to live. That was four years ago**

**WORDS: DAVE HOLMES**

**PHOTOGRAPHY: CALEB ALVARADO**





Mark Macy, 68,  
on a trail run  
near Leadville,  
Colorado, on 19  
August 2022



# 'IT NEVER ALWAYS GETS WORSE'

is part of Travis Macy's answer to my perfectly reasonable question: 'How and why would a person run 100 miles, all in a row?' Hundred-mile races are just one of the many superhuman things he and his father, the equally legendary endurance athlete Mark Macy, 68, have both done multiple times over multiple decades. How – why – does a person take on a race where a 20-hour finish is an aspirational result? I have run marathons before, I have felt the pain and the elation and the thing where a stranger hands you an orange slice and you put it in your mouth. I have pushed myself past my limits. At least I thought I had. But I have never crossed a marathon finish line and thought to myself, let's do this roughly three more times right now. How do you mentally get yourself to 30 miles, to 50, to 100? How do you keep going, long after any sensible person would tell you to stop?

'You have to remember that it might actually get better,' Travis, 39, explains. 'You tend to think, I feel this bad after 20, I'm going to feel twice as bad after 40, but how do you know? Maybe you won't.' It's a testament to his general charisma level that I find myself believing him. 'If you keep eating and drinking, if you surround yourself with positive energy, you might hit a point where you feel better.' Travis smiles. 'Things turn around, that's what happens in any long-distance event.'

I'm with the Macys – Travis and Mark and their wives, Amy and Pam – on a family hike. I'm with them because I want to talk about how a person becomes an ultrarunner, but I'm also here because I want to know how this family is weathering the latest complication in their collective long-distance event. In 2018, Mark Macy was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease, an incurable and terminal illness.

'You have ups and downs out there,' Travis says. 'But the lows don't always just get lower. You can still find some good.'

Mark nods at his son, and then at me. 'It's not that hard,' Mark says. And we keep moving.

WE'RE IN THE US TOWN OF SALIDA, COLORADO, ABOUT THREE HOURS south-west of Denver. Travis and Amy moved here a few years ago; they wanted their kids, Wyatt and Lila, to be able to walk home from school and play unattended in playgrounds. Salida is a town full of outdoor types. The main street is one Gold Rush-era facade after another, now home to yoga studios and art galleries. It's devoid of national chains, and there appears to be roughly one microbrewery for every eight residents. I've taken to this town immediately.

The family hike is up Tenderfoot Mountain, the town's focal point. We've stopped for a moment because we're at the perfect spot for a panoramic photo, and also because I can't breathe. There's no way I'm not slowing this family down, but they're gracious enough to pretend otherwise. Mark does these kinds of trails regularly, up Evergreen Mountain, near where he and Pam live. He's usually running them, of course – an hour or two, at 3,000m altitude, maybe twice a day. Swimming had been part of his daily routine, until the leisure centre in his town closed for the pandemic. He'll get back to it. 'Of course, because of my Alzheimer's, I can't drive any more, so Pam will have to take me there,' he says. 'And that's a pain in the butt, for me and for her.'

I'd been looking for the graceful way to bring it up, the elephant on the side of the mountain. When you meet Mark Macy, you don't want to bring it up. It feels like introducing the subject of his Alzheimer's will drag it into the realm of what is real. And when you talk to him, when he fixes his attention on you and those blue eyes hit you like full beams, it doesn't feel real. He's too present, too together, even if when you first approached him, Pam was tying his running shoes. He brings it up himself, both to put it out into the open and to diminish its power, as I will learn is his way. He first addresses the subject of Alzheimer's – a disease that is slowly robbing him of his cognitive function – in terms of being a nuisance.

The Macy family has faced its share of what we will call nuisances, and the breezy way they discuss them often makes you ask them to repeat themselves. Pam has had a liver transplant, then – because of the long-term effects of the antirejection medication – a kidney transplant, and then another, 15 years apart, one from each of her brothers. She will tell you this like she is telling you what she had for breakfast. In gratitude, Mark donated a kidney to a stranger at the age of 64. 'I had a spare one,' he shrugs. Travis has dealt with nuisances of his own; sometimes he'll tag a memory with statements like, 'that's the time I ripped my spleen in half, and barrel forwards with a story about something else. (I did ask him to back up for this one: snowboarding accident as a teenager. The spleen healed up fine.) I might be the only thing the Macy family will slow down for.'

This nuisance is different. Around 2015, Mark began to forget things. Basic words, people's names. This wasn't like him. Mark was a full-time lawyer with a weekend hobby of travelling the world winning marathons, triathlons and adventure races. Pam urged him to see a doctor, the doctor urged him to see a neurologist, the neurologist gave them the news: Alzheimer's. No treatment, no cure, no hope. The 'get your affairs in order' speech, the 'go for a good holiday while you can' advice, an estimate of two years left. A real nuisance, you have to agree.

As of October 2022, that visit to the neurologist was four years ago. Mark kept moving.





## RUNNING TO REMEMBER

**'WE ALL HAVE HEALTHY CELLS INSIDE OF OUR BRAIN THAT ALLOW US to speak, talk and think,'** says Victoria Pelak, neurologist at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and one of the many specialists the Macys have consulted since 2018. 'They interact with other cells in the cortex that do a lot of automated functions, such as keeping our heart rate going or allowing us to digest.' For all of us, those cells begin to die off in our forties, but in an Alzheimer's patient it's accelerated '10 to 100 times beyond the speed of death of our brain cells in the cortex over time,' she explains.

The good news for Mark is that regular exercise can slow down the death of those brain cells. 'Everything that we know to date shows that the more active you are, the more of a heart-healthy diet you eat – those things contribute to slowing the progression of Alzheimer's disease,' Dr Pelak tells me, 'more than any other therapy that we have.' The good news for the rest of us is that we don't have to do day-long trail runs up a mountain to reap the same benefits. 'The brain is an organ just like the heart and eyes,' says Dr Pelak. 'And good cardiovascular health fights inflammation

and plaque build-up in the blood vessels.' Dr Pelak says even 10 minutes a day of moderate exercise can decrease the progression of disorders that lead to dementia in the future, but the ideal is one hour, four to five times a week.

Beyond the general cardiovascular effects, the high-level physical challenges Mark continues to take on keep his brain active. 'Activities that are challenging and involve processing, such as training for races, where you're making schedules and setting goals, are all extremely important to maintaining good brain health,' explains Dr Pelak.

They also have another benefit, which is that they call upon our brain's more durable memories. Alzheimer's robs its sufferers of their day-to-day details: names, dates, directions home. But procedural memories – remembering how to ride a bike or swim in a pool or put one foot in front of the other – tend to hang on longer. Dr Pelak brings up musician Glen Campbell, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2011 and continued touring through 2012. 'He was able to play and sing at a very high level, when he was having difficulty remembering what he did three hours before.' As your memories drop off one by one,

Mark and Travis Macy run by Leadville's Turquoise Lake





The Macy family, left to right: Amy, Wyatt, Mark, Lila, Pam and Travis

continuing to do what you know how to do must feel good. Even if what you know how to do is run 100 miles.

**A LOT OF YOUNG BOYS LOOK UP TO THEIR DAD AS THE STRONGEST person on earth,** says Nate Dern, one of Travis's school friends. 'But I think that's more true for Travis than anyone else I know.' Travis Macy grew up idolising his father, which seems like the natural response when your father does superhero stuff. Mark was a local legend in their Denver suburb of Evergreen, Colorado, a regular guy who would coach soccer and chaperone church trips and then duck out for a week to run across the Sahara Desert. Travis wanted to follow in Mark's footsteps, so he did. He ran track and cross-country in high school, and he graduated to longer and more gruelling races at the University of Colorado.

Not that he'd tell anyone. He and Amy were on a bus back to the University of Colorado from a show in Denver when they had their first real conversation. 'He wanted to eat my food, which is what Travis does,' says Amy. In conversation, Travis revealed he liked to do races at the weekends. 'I said, "Well, I did the Avon Breast Cancer three-day 60-mile walk last summer, just so you know who you're talking to." And Travis being the humble dude he is, said, "That is so great." Travis's secret identity stayed a secret. 'For months, I didn't know who I was dating. He'd come home and I'd ask how he

did, and he'd say, "Fine," until I finally had to ask what fine meant, and he'd say, "Oh, I won it.'" She wouldn't find out until months later that the 'it' was often an ultramarathon or an adventure race. Superhero stuff, just like his dad.

Amy's telling me this story over pizza at Amicas, a popular place just off the Salida main drag. Mark and Pam are there, with Travis and Wyatt and Lila. The waitress has a quick, private word with Amy because they're working on her college applications together, because that kind of selflessness and quiet, confident mentorship runs in the Macy family, even if you married into it. Eleven-year-old Wyatt asks his mum, 'So when did you find out he was good?' Without missing a beat, Mark tells the kid, 'couple of weeks ago.'

Travis has gone on to do marathons, ultramarathons, quadrathlons, adventure races and plenty more of your unfulfilled new year resolutions. Amy says, 'We've been lucky enough to see A&E rooms all over the world.' He still does those long events from time to time. Most recently, he's taken on burro racing, a uniquely Colorado tradition that involves a racer leading a donkey through a long course, with the donkey carrying a 15kg pack saddle with a miner's pick, pan and shovel – a tribute to the early settlers of towns like Salida. He's thinking about buying a donkey, just to make the whole process easier. He's like this, Amy explains. 'He gets a new idea and he goes after it like schoolwork.' He's recently been officially diagnosed with ADHD, for



## Going forwards to the next place, step by step, is where Mark lives. 'When I'm moving, everything clicks back in,' he says

which he tells me exercise really helps, and which gives Amy hope that he will skip forwards to a new idea and that they will not soon be living with a donkey.

What Travis has really thrown himself into is coaching: telling mortals how to prepare for some of the superhuman events he and his dad have taken on, what to eat, when to drink. He's written a book called *The Ultra Mindset* about how to programme your mind for success, and he talks to fellow athletes about it every week on his podcast *The Travis Macy Show*. He also takes on private coaching clients and, last summer, he began helping his dad. Mark had never had a coach like his son before, because in his early days, no one did. 'If anything like what Travis does existed when I was starting out,' says Mark, 'I didn't know anything about it.' Travis put Mark on a strict race-day diet: a banana at this mile marker, an energy bar every hour, plenty of water. 'He makes it so easy,' says Mark. 'He knew to feed me what would benefit me and nothing else. When Travis showed up, everything changed.'

Mark points those full beams at his son. They have a bond that's still evolving, a list of things they still want to teach one another. Even now. Pam leans towards Amy. 'So, where will you put the donkey?'

### PASSING THE TESTS

TRAVIS KNOWS WHAT TO FEED MARK TO KEEP HIM MOVING, BUT he also knows how important it is for him to keep moving at all. Moving – running, climbing, swimming, paddling, doing whatever it is you do to get through the jungle in Fiji when the objective of every other living thing is to bite you – is what Mark does. Going forwards to the next place, step by step, is where Mark lives. 'When I'm moving, everything clicks back in,' he says. Travis agrees with Dr Pelak. 'For anyone dealing with any kind of cognitive decline, physical activity is key. Especially if it's a thing you're used to from beforehand, it puts you back in your element, you don't have to worry about anything but just going.'

When you spend time with Mark Macy, you mostly don't notice that anything is wrong. He's sharp and personable. You'll see Pam buckling his belt here and there and write it off as one of the little things couples do for one another when they've been together forever. But once in a while, you'll see Mark searching for a word, or struggling to find his place in a story he's telling. The full beams come off you for a moment and search the middle distance, trying to illuminate a room in his mind that's gone temporarily dark. Sometimes he finds it, sometimes he doesn't. Always you get the sense that he'd rather just be moving.

So it makes sense that a few months after the diagnosis, when Mark Burnett, producer of the TV show *Survivor* announced he'd be bringing back his legendary and

gruelling Eco-Challenge, the Macy boys would sign up. The 2019 Eco-Challenge would be an 11-day, non-stop event, in which mixed teams of four race across Fiji's jungles, oceans, mountains, rivers and highlands, and then get yelled at by Bear Grylls. Mark had done the race eight times with his four-person posse, Team Stray Dogs. His old friend and long-time teammate Marshall Ulrich says he was the heart of that crew. 'The way he approaches challenges, he's... infallible, or something like that. He'd

approach things with caution, but he also knew when to throw caution to the wind.' Ulrich says Mark had an expression that would calm the rest of the team down. 'When things got shitty, Mark would say, "It's just a test." Whatever we were facing, we would get through it and it would make us stronger. There was a lot of meaning in just that little phrase.'

The possibility of being a burden to his old team wasn't a test Mark was willing to take on. The Stray Dogs reluctantly filled Mark's spot, while Travis decided a race with his father was more valuable than a shot at the podium; he formed a team with Mark and a few younger athletes. 'He needed those young studs who could really take care of him,' Ulrich says. 'He's perfectly capable of putting one foot in front of the other, and he's done so many of these that the paddling or running or trekking is almost automatic.' But it's the simpler stuff that's a problem when you're dealing with Alzheimer's. 'Dressing yourself, making sure you're feeding yourself, that's...' Ulrich pauses, corrects himself, '...that's where the young studs came in, and they did a brilliant job.' Facing a good friend's cognitive decline and finding the good in it. It's just a test.

The Macys called their new gang Team Endure, and their introduction in the premiere of *World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji* on Prime Video is how a lot of Mark's acquaintances and fans found out about what he'd been

A handful of Mark and Travis Macy's endurance-racing awards



enduring. Nate Dern was one of them. 'I might have heard something, but I didn't fully digest it until I saw the show. He said, "I don't know if you know, but I have Alzheimer's." Very casually, like someone saying, "I'm colour blind, so I might need help with this menu." Alzheimer's affects everyone differently. Dern recalls his own grandmother getting the diagnosis. 'Pretty quickly she didn't seem like herself. But Mark still seemed like himself, still the same tough guy walking through the jungle.'

Dern recalls the moment long ago when he learned what Mark was made of. 'He was chaperoning a river-rafting trip, and I wanted some packing advice because I figured, who better? So I asked, "What sunscreen do you bring?" and he said, "Oh, I don't wear sunscreen." I said, "Which sleeping mat do you use?" and he said, "I just sleep on the ground." I thought, Okay, this guy is tough.'

He laughs. 'I'm realising now that this actually might have been really bad advice.'

### **PUSHING THE LIMITS**

**MARK AND TRAVIS MACY HAVE DOCUMENTED THEIR LIVES** since Mark's diagnosis, in particular their experience on Eco-Challenge Fiji, in the book *A Mile At A Time*. It may have been out on that Eco-Challenge course that both Macys came to understand the limits of toughness. On the night before the start of the race, as the team tried to get their last good night's sleep, Mark woke up confused. 'We had a room with a view of the pool,' says Travis, 'and it had all these umbrellas and lights and a snack bar that looked like the Louvre. Dad thought he'd been abducted.' Mark shrugs, and they share a laugh.

But after seven days, three-quarters of the way through the race, at the base of a canyon in the middle of the night, Mark Macy faced the grim truth. 'We had to do a canyoneering event in the dark. I used to be a rock climber; the last time I did that race, I went right up the rope. Took people with me even. But this year, our turn to go up the ropes out of the... the...' he searches, '...the canyon came up after dark. I was going to have to jumar [a method for ascending a rope, complicated even in daylight] and I couldn't see anything, I couldn't even begin to come up that... that... and there was nothing those guys could do. I'm not supposed to be doing that kind of stuff. I could kill someone.' Team Endure withdrew.

'We didn't finish that race, and it's my fault,' says Mark. 'If it hadn't been for me, they could have just gone on and done good, maybe really good.' I tell him I watched the show, and saw that plenty of other very good teams – Team Stray Dogs included – also didn't finish. Travis agrees and reassures him, 'It's totally fine, Dad.'

'Well, no, it's not. I don't do that stuff. Dicking around and not finishing,' Mark says.

'But we had fun.'

'I agree with you, but still. We did not finish that race because of me. Damn Alzheimer's.' The full beams dim for the first and only time. Just a little. Just for a second. Then he smiles. 'So, to make a long story short, we had a great time.'

**IT'S WHEN WE'RE FINISHING DINNER AT AMICAS, TALKING ABOUT THE** Leadville Race Series, a summer's worth of trail runs and bike races at 3,000m above sea level, that I'm starting to consider entering. If you hang out with the Macys for long enough, these things begin to seem logical. I tell them how surprising it was, when I started doing endurance events in my thirties, to see that the really packed and competitive age groups were the people in their forties and up. How you don't see as many



**'I think time is a renewable resource. If you listen to what anyone says about my condition, I have no chance... But I'm not scared of it'**



people in their teens and twenties taking on triathlons as a hobby, and how quickly that began to make sense. As I got older, I began to understand that my body won't be able to do everything I want it to forever. I became more aware in middle age that time is not a renewable resource.

Mark shakes his head. 'I think time is a renewable resource. If you listen to what anyone says about my condition, I have no chance. At all. But I don't think Alzheimer's is going to kill me. I'm not scared of it.'

Pam puts a hand on his shoulder. 'I think we're both pretty good at staying in the present, and that's helpful. It's impossible to know how things are going to change, but if you stay in the present, you can do an awful lot.'

'I'm going to eat well, I'm going to stay strong, I'm going to have a positive attitude and I'm going to say fuck it,' says Mark. There he is. A man who's pushed himself harder

than just about anyone else on the planet, with a wife at his side who's had three extensions on her life via transplants that weren't possible a few decades ago. His son across the table, carrying and building on his strength and his spirit so that it lives on no matter what happens to his body and mind. A daughter-in-law preparing students for college, and two grandchildren taking it all in, poised to do

impossibles of their own.

'That's it. Something else is going to kill me. Fuck it.' Alzheimer's doesn't get better. At least so far it hasn't, not for anyone. But it will, for someone, somewhere down the line. Someone's going to be the first. I wouldn't bet against Mark Macy. But whether it's him or not, what he will do is keep putting one foot in front of the other. He'll keep pushing his limits. And he'll keep trusting that it will never always get worse. **EW**

Even when Mark and Travis aren't racing in the Leadville Trail 100 Run, the family often attends to see friends and for Travis to coach his athletes competing







# Time on your side

**Slowing down your strength work can speed up your gains. Here's how to get your timing right to get more strength, power and endurance**

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# They say time is money, but we're proposing an edit. Time is strength. At least it can be if you know how to use it.

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Tempo training or time under tension (TUT) training, is a go-to for experts because it gets results. 'The method challenges your body and allows you to tire your muscles at specific points in the full range of motion of an exercise,' says trainer Jacqueline Kasen.

The approach is actually pretty simple: you slow down your movements strategically to change the pace of your reps and keep your muscles loaded longer. Then, you linger as your muscles lengthen in a static hold or as they shorten. Spending more time in any part of an exercise increases focus on the movement pattern in general, which helps develop strength and muscular control, Kasen explains – whether you're using your body weight, dumbbells, kettlebells or anything else you have to hand. It works with any equipment.

If you haven't dabbled in TUT training, think of it like this: when you grab a pint of milk off the shelf at the supermarket and put it in your basket, that's like your standard exercise rep. Now imagine picking the bottle up and bringing it down to your basket in slow motion. It's a subtle change that forces your arm muscles to support the bottle even longer, making the action more tiring. 'The longer you make that muscle work, the more fatigued you get,' says performance scientist Heather Giordano. 'And the more stamina it needs to build to support? Now you're working muscular endurance.' Another upside to strategic slowness: you're retraining the pathway between your brain and muscles, says Mallory Fox, a master trainer with the National Academy of Sports Medicine in the US. Unlike fast-paced actions, with TUT, there's more time for the muscles and mind to fully process the movement, react and stabilise the joint. It's time to get down to speed.

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## BODY DECODER

*Give yourself a quick refresher on the three phases of movement*

### **Concentric**

...is the muscle getting shorter. See that bulge when you curl your arm and flex? That's it.

### **Eccentric**

...is when the muscle lengthens (look as you lower and straighten the arm).

### **Isometric**

...is the midway hold. If you curl and pause in the middle, so your forearm is parallel to the floor, that's a static (or iso) movement.



A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair tied back, looking intently at a barbell she is holding. The barbell is positioned across her shoulders, and her hands are gripping the handles. The background is a blurred, outdoor setting, possibly a gym or a training area. The lighting is natural, highlighting her facial features and the texture of her skin.

**NEW TO  
STRENGTH  
TRAINING?  
START HERE**

Although it sounds advanced, tempo training is actually an ideal introduction to strength training. Slowing down allows you to focus on positioning and improve your body awareness, creating a strong foundation for future results, says Fox. TUT works well as a re-intro, too, says Giordano. 'When you go slowly with good technique, it helps with injury prevention.' By drawing out motions, you gain control over your joints' and teach your body how to support explosive, athletic movement', adds Fox.

# YOUR SPEED-PLAY SESSION

In this routine designed by Kasen, you'll learn how to achieve three different goals with the same six moves, just by playing with rhythm. Tempo training really delivers with functional exercises such as these, but you can use the time schemes in any routine. Now pick your pay-off and follow the code - which denotes seconds to spend in the eccentric, isometric and concentric phases, respectively - for all of the moves.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

2 medium dumbbells, 1 long resistance band

## HOW TO USE THIS WORKOUT

### TO BOOST POWER AND PERFORMANCE

**1-0-5**

#### YOUR MANTRA

Control the concentric

#### YOUR FORMULA

1 sec eccentric; no hold (isometric); 5 secs concentric; 8 to 10 reps (per side for unilateral moves)

### TO INCREASE MUSCULAR ENDURANCE

**5-5-5**

#### YOUR MANTRA

Slow and steady the whole way

#### YOUR FORMULA

5 secs eccentric; 5 secs hold; 5 secs concentric; 10 to 12 reps (per side for unilateral moves)

### TO GROW MUSCLE AND GAIN STRENGTH

**5-1-1**

#### YOUR MANTRA

Go extra for the eccentric

#### YOUR FORMULA

5 secs eccentric; 1 sec hold; 1 sec concentric; 4 to 6 reps (per side for unilateral moves)

01

## Staggered-stance front rack squat

▶ Stand with your feet hip-width apart, holding two dumbbells racked at your upper chest; step back with your right foot (A). Lower your hips into a squat (eccentric), keeping your chest upright and weight in your left foot (B). Drive through your front heel to stand (concentric).



02

## Staggered-stance deadlift

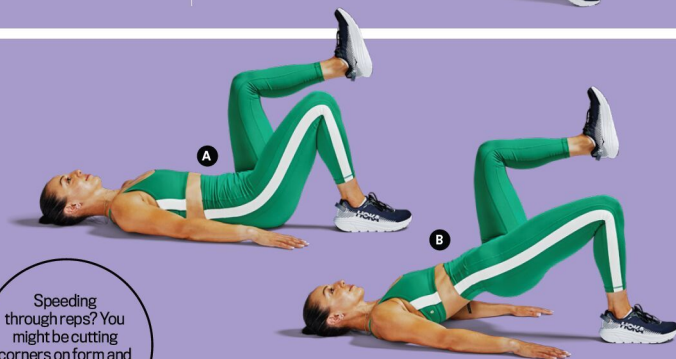
▶ Stand with your feet hip-width apart, then move your right foot back, holding the dumbbells close to your hips, palms facing in (A). Send your hips back as you hinge at the waist (eccentric) to lower the weights to your shins (B). Pause, then reverse (concentric) the move, engaging your glutes and core at the top.



03

## Single-leg glute bridge with leg raise

▶ Lie with your legs bent, knees over your ankles; raise your left leg to tabletop position (A). Raise your torso (concentric), maintaining a straight line from your shoulders to your knees (B). Lower and tap the floor (eccentric).



Speeding through reps? You might be cutting corners on form and balance, says Giordano





04

**Banded chop**

▶ Stand with your feet hip width apart and a band wrapped under the arch of your left foot. Hold the band with a mixed grip (left overhand and right underhand) (A). With straight arms, rotate into a right diagonal and pivot your left foot (concentric) (B). Reverse the movement to return to the start position (eccentric).

The lower your hands are on the band, the more resistance you'll feel



**Push past a plateau**

**WHEN YOUR PROGRESS STALLS**, you probably default to adding more weight. But adding more isn't always more in terms of results. Sometimes, it's not even possible. (Maybe you have a limited set of dumbbells or your form falters with the extra kilos.) When you're not seeing the results you want, turn to TUT instead and play with rhythm. 'Lift a little less weight and take the pace down a notch,' says Giordano. The speed check makes each move a totally fresh, more strenuous exercise. 'It's a way of taking momentum out of it and forcing your muscles to work harder without adding weight,' says Giordano. 'That means more time on-task for those muscle fibres.' Basically, you'll make greater gains because you're holding the weight in the muscle for longer. **TM**

05

**Overhead press**

▶ Stand with your feet hip width apart, your pelvis tucked and core engaged, holding dumbbells so the weight touches your shoulder and your elbows are close to your body (A). Press both hands overhead, without locking your elbows (concentric) (B). Reverse the movement to return to the start (eccentric).



Brace your core so your ribs don't splay when you lift your arms

06

**Rear delt fly**

▶ Hold the dumbbells with your palms facing forwards. Hinge so your chest is parallel to the floor (A). Raise your arms to shoulder height (concentric). Keep your wrists neutral and thumbs up (B). Reverse to return to the start (eccentric).

WORDS: JENNIFER NIED. PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKS; TYLER JOE. STYLING: DANIELLE FLUM. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: KAYLA JO FOR ART DEPARTMENT USING DIOR BEAUTY. MODEL WEARS: SPORTS BRA AND LEGGINGS. SPIRITUAL GANGSTER. TRAINERS. HOKA

# THE LIFE





# LEGEND

RUNNING  
CONVERSATION  
HAILE  
GEBRSELESSIE

The great Haile Gebrselassie talks to *RW* about discipline, fame, friendship, divine inspiration and running to promote peace

INTERVIEW:  
DAVID SMYTH

# HAILE MOVES AT SPEED,

they warn before I spend a weekend trying to pin down Haile Gebrselassie for a conversation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital city. It's not surprising. The 49-year-old, who was born in a small town south of the capital, set 27 distance-running world records in a career that puts him among the true greats of our sport. In fact, you could almost call it two careers. First came his sublime dominance in the Olympic and World Championships 10,000m in the 1990s, when he won two Olympic and four World Champs titles (as well as four World Indoor Champs). Then came a remarkable second wind as a marathon runner in the 2000s, during which he set the world record twice and notched four consecutive Berlin Marathon wins, from 2006 to 2009.

What his team means by 'moves at speed' in the context of 2020s Gebrselassie is that this is a man with so much on his plate that he is never still. It's the weekend of the Great Ethiopian Run, which he co-founded – a 10K event through the wide streets of central Addis for around 40,000 people, which feels more like a giant, colourful street party than a competitive race – and he pops up everywhere. There he is at the Friday press conference in the Hyatt Regency hotel, full of smiling praise for honoured Kenyan guest Moses Tanui, even though, if you've seen their race against each other in the 1993 World Championships 10,000m, you'd swear they should be lifelong enemies. There he is amid the camels, horses and bouncy castles at the Saturday morning children's races, handing out medals and prize backpacks to a long line of different age and ability categories. And there he is again, at Sunday morning's main-race start line, accompanying Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde while pop singer Hamelmal Abate belts out the national anthem.

Between these stage appearances, he tends to walk fast, a phone clamped to his ear. It could be a tactic to avoid the endless selfie demands, but when we get to his office complex in the city, the door is often knocked and it's obvious he's in huge demand. On the way in, we pass the Alem Cinema and Alem Fitness Centre – both named after his wife. A chart on one wall shows his different businesses, including seven hotels and resorts, coffee, honey, schools, real estate and a Hyundai import company called, of course, Marathon Cars. But can Gebrselassie the entrepreneur find as much joy as Gebrselassie the gold medallist? He spared some of his precious time, paused from what seems to be almost perpetual motion and sat down to let RW into his world.



Previous page:  
Gebrselassie wins  
the 10,000m at the  
1997 World Athletics  
Championships in  
Athens; (this page)  
victory in the 10,000m  
at the 1995 World  
Championships in  
Gothenburg; (right)  
the start of the 2022  
Great Ethiopian Run

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES





**RUNNER'S WORLD: How did the Great Ethiopian Run come into existence?**

**HAILE GEBRSELASSIE:** 'I started the Great Ethiopian Run because of the Great North Run. Right after the Sydney Olympics in 2000, when I was still in Australia, I met with Brendan Foster and John Caine. They thought my time on the track was over and asked me to participate in their half marathon in England. "No problem, I can come," I said. But I also asked them, "Why don't you organise a race in Ethiopia for us like your race?" I admired the Great North Run from the beginning – so many participants and the atmosphere is so wonderful. They said, "Okay, why not?" I hadn't planned it, but a month or two later, they said, "If you're serious, we'll come over to start a run." There was no sponsorship. In Ethiopia back then, no one cared. But they went to the British Embassy. We were given an office and £10,000. And finally, the dream came true in 2001.'

**RW What was the race like then compared with the size of it now?**

**HG** 'The first Great Ethiopian Run had about 10,000 participants. This kind of race was really unknown in Ethiopia. It was quite a mess – all 10,000 people wanted to be in the front. So it was half successful. A year later, we had a better one. Then, slowly, the race became known and now we are on the 22nd edition.'

**RW What kind of influence has the race had in Ethiopia?**

**HG** 'It is more than a race. The main goal was to bring more people into athletics, especially people who have no chance to participate outside Ethiopia. Today, running in Ethiopia is in fashion. Twenty years ago, if people saw someone running in the street, especially women, they might think there was some kind of mental problem. No one was doing sport outside.'

**RW Even though you, and Ethiopian runners before you, such as Abebe Bikila and Miruts Yifter, had won gold medals at the Olympics?**

**HG** 'Of course we had elite athletes, but normal people running in the street? It did not use to be like that. Now our main

problem with organising the race is the big numbers. If we were able to have a race for 100,000 people, believe me, we could register them in a week. It is so popular.'

**RW It seems like, for many, it's more of a party than a race...**

**HG** 'When you come to do it, don't think about competing. Just think about enjoyment. If you want to run, you have to start near the front. If you are in the middle? No chance. Most of the participants will walk and dance.'

**RW What other advice do you have for international visitors who come to Ethiopia to run?**

**HG** 'If you come here to run 10K, your time here in Addis Ababa will be

completely different from your time in London or Paris, because you are running at 2,500m above sea level. The lack of oxygen is a big challenge. It will also be a wonderful new experience. Ethiopians are good because we do a lot of uphill training, but the altitude alone also gives you a lot of potential. When you go down to sea level after running here, your running will be easy. It's a very good advantage. Come at least two weeks ahead of the race if you want to get some benefit. Before Covid, there were so many tourists who came to take part and travel around the country. After Covid and the recent war [a two-year conflict in the Tigray region ended in November 2022], not so much, but slowly they are coming back.'

**RW Do you think the country can remain stable now that there is a peace agreement?**

**HG** 'I hope so. What I believe is that Ethiopia is a country built by God. The politicians are always the ones who mess up this country. Normal people, at the end of the day, we are the same. People may have different ideologies but one day, you will see, they will come back. And one of the tools to bring peace is sport – especially running. The ruling party, the opposition party, different religions, people who have different views... this is a run for everybody.'

**RW Many of the best Ethiopian runners, including yourself, trained in the Entoto forest to the north of Addis Ababa. What's so special about the place?**

**HG** 'It is even higher than the city. You can reach up to 3,400m if you train there. Also, the air is very fresh. The city itself is a bit polluted. When I was an athlete, I would go there a minimum of three times a week.'

**RW When did you realise you had a talent for running?**

**HG** 'I won a 1500m race when I was in high school. I was 14. Most of the other runners in that race were from grade 11 or 12 and I was in grade nine. I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't even know how many laps it was. I only wanted to run fast from the beginning. The other runners, they knew how many laps there were. They were watching each other and using tactics. I was maybe 80m ahead of them. The ▶

**'I ONLY WANTED TO RUN FAST FROM THE BEGINNING'**



only thing I remembered from my physical education teacher was that when the bell rings, it indicates the last lap. I tried to increase my speed, even though by that time I was tired and there was already a big gap. The other group tried to catch me, but by the finish line I was still in front.'

**RW** Between 1993 and 2000 you won two Olympic golds and four World Championship golds. You've also held 27 world records (including the marathon, twice). What's the extra thing that made you the best?

**HG** 'For me, the best gift was my life itself. Physically, there was a natural talent from my childhood. Thank you to my family, my parents, to the way I grew up in the countryside. By the age of three or four, I was not in the house any more. I was working in the fields, helping my parents with the cows and sheep. And I can give thanks that the distance between my house and my school was about 10km. I walked or ran it every day, so 20km a day. But I don't think I was that strong, mentally.'

**RW** Really? Watching races such as the 10,000m at Sydney 2000, where you beat Kenya's Paul Tergat by a fraction of a second, or the 1993 World Championships, where you caught Moses Tanui after he sprinted away from you [with Tanui wearing only one shoe], you seemed to show great mental strength...

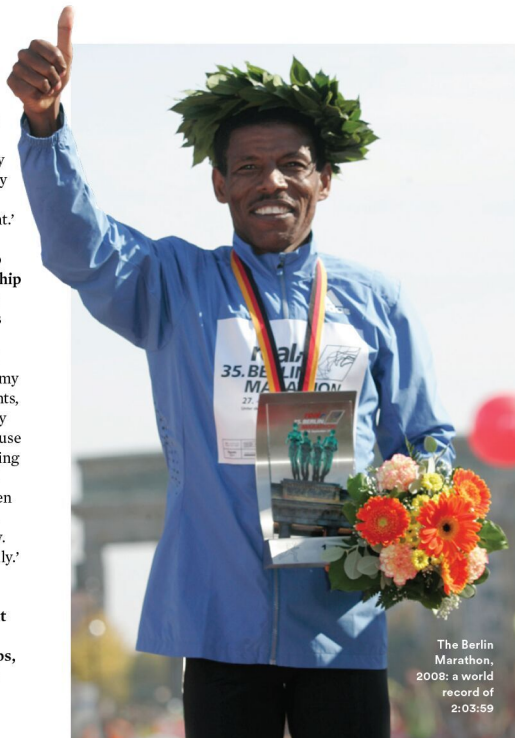
**HG** 'For me, when I run, of course the other thing that comes with that is winning. When I got strong and famous, I started to think something else: winning was not enough. I also wanted to break the record, to surprise people. I gave everything I had for sport.'

**RW** Do you think God played a role in your victories?

**HG** 'Of course. Everything I am saying to you, God is there. Everything about my achievements, who comes first? Who is in front? It's God. No question. As human beings, we can say, "I have done this, I have done that." But God is always in front.'

**RW** So does that mean God likes you more than he likes Paul Tergat?

**HG** 'It could look like that! I would never say God likes me more. But I have said that because God loves me, he has given me the strength to win this race. Don't forget, Paul's achievements were a lot. Maybe the difference between the athletes is discipline. Sometimes I felt I won because my discipline was closest to what the 10K needs. Of course, everybody in athletics is sweating a lot. But let's say there are discipline points up to 10.



The Berlin Marathon, 2008: a world record of 2:03:59

## 'I WANTED TO BREAK THE RECORD, TO SURPRISE PEOPLE'

Maybe Haile achieves eight of the discipline points and Paul has seven. It's a small advantage for me.'

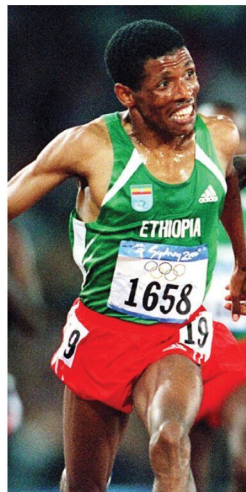
**RW** Which of your races do people ask you about the most?

**HG** 'Mostly Sydney [the Olympic 10,000m final]. If you watch it, we were so close to each other. It should have been two golds for that race. I can say Paul was really

unlucky that day. I still think today, how did I win that race? It's amazing. When I watch it, I still don't think I am so good or I am so brave. I think, look at Paul! He almost wins! We are still friends. Two weeks ago he was here in Addis Ababa and we had a good time together.'

**RW** There has been a long-running rivalry between Ethiopia and Kenya. Which do you think is the greatest running nation today?

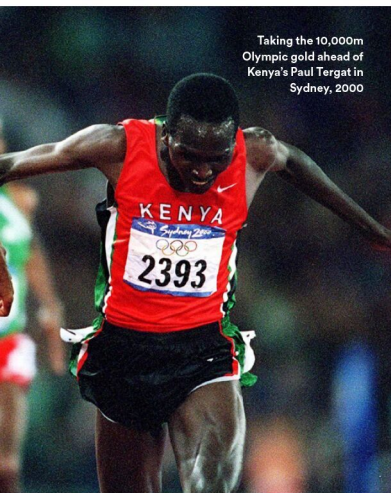
**HG** 'In all the major competitions, both countries are very strong. These two nations are always really close. For me, my strength comes from the Kenyans. My world records, especially, were because of the Kenyans. I broke 5000m four times, 10,000m three times, because of the Kenyans. How can you break a world record without them? Thank you to the Kenyans! And the same is true the other way, of course. We need each other in this peaceful fight.'



Gebrselassie wins the first of his four consecutive Berlin Marathons, September, 2006







Taking the 10,000m Olympic gold ahead of Kenya's Paul Tergat in Sydney, 2000

**RW** How did you feel watching Kipchoge breaking two hours for the marathon? [Gebrelassie's second marathon record, set in Berlin in 2008, was 2:03:59]

**HG** 'It was amazing. Eliud Kipchoge is a very disciplined athlete. Out of 10, I give him 9.5 and sometimes 10, because he gives everything to this sport. That's why he's different to the others. But I don't really want to talk about this under two hours thing.'

**RW** Is it that you disapprove of the newest shoe technology?

**HG** 'I had the same Adidas shoes since 1988. New style but basically the same model until recently. These new shoes in 2022: they are completely different. You're flying! I've tried them. I do a lot of running on the treadmill. I increased the speed on the treadmill and still I wasn't tired. This technology can take a minimum of three minutes off your marathon. It is the biggest change. I would prefer to keep the sport natural. Of course, if I talk a lot about this kind of thing, maybe people will think, "He's jealous." I'm not

jealous. Sport is a contract. You run when you are on top and after that you retire.'

**RW** How hard was it for you to decide it was time to retire? [Gebrelassie announced his retirement in 2010, after dropping out of the New York Marathon, but reconsidered and continued competing until the Great Manchester Run in 2015.]

**HG** 'Very difficult. I still run for myself, but it is difficult watching other athletes on TV. When I watch a race, especially a marathon, I'm thinking, "Why are they doing that? They should do this." I can criticise when I'm not there. Of course, I wish still to compete, but it's okay. As long as I sweat, I'm good.'

**RW** So you can still enjoy running, even when you're not setting world records?

**HG** 'Oh yes, I'm so happy. I train in the gym. At weekends, a little bit outside. Of course I'm also quite busy in the office. I run probably 10km every day. Sometimes I cycle. It's important to sweat, so that's what I want. But I don't do any competitive running now.'

**RW** Has your diet changed since you stopped competing on the world stage?

**HG** 'No, it's basically still the same. But I used to think a lot about how easy things would be to digest. Now I don't care any more about what I'm going to eat in the evening.'

**RW** Do you enjoy being famous?

**HG** 'Sometimes, to become famous is not a good thing. I wanted to do things in sport, and the fame, it came. Everybody focuses on you and they follow you. Sometimes, I could say I'm a little bit in prison. Every step, you have to be careful, because everybody is watching you. When you do something good, they admire you. When you do something wrong, they are watching, too. That's why you have to live for others, not for yourself.'

**RW** You have so many companies now, is there any thrill in business that can come close to the thrill of winning a big race?

**HG** 'Impossible! In sport, the things that I have done, even in small competitions... the enjoyment that gives you, business never gives you. Business, at the end of the day, is business. The headache is always there. I am happy, though, because this is what I wanted. What athletics taught Haile Gebrselassie is: never give up. Business is the same. It's a big challenge. During Covid, we had a very hard time, but thanks to running, thanks to the things inside me, I knew we could come back, just like in athletics. That's why we are still here. Now we are good.'

The next Great Ethiopian Run is on 19 November 2023. [ethiopianrun.org](http://ethiopianrun.org)







**ARE  
SHOES  
REALLY**

**GETTING  
GREENER?**



How to sidestep the greenwashing and identify the meaningful steps being taken to reduce the colossal footprint of our running shoes

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WORDS: LILY CANTER



# The running shoe industry is awash with sustainable messaging,

net zero targets and innovative material developments that seek to assure us our running footsteps are treading lighter on the planet, but the uncomfortable truth is these incremental changes in manufacturing are only scratching the surface. And if the current unsustainable manufacturing practices and consumption patterns continue, the planet will face irreversible ecological consequences, warn scientists.

A panel of industrial engineers from Loughborough University's Centre for Sustainable Manufacturing and Recycling Technologies (SMART) has warned that the current initiatives, investments and regulations to mitigate the impact of manufacturing on climate change are, at best, slowing down the rate of growth rather than eliminating or reversing the damage caused.

Scientists agree that to have any hope of limiting global warming to a maximum increase of 2%, greenhouse gas (ghg) emissions need to be reduced by 80% by 2050. Yet the current targets fall far short of this level. The latest estimate is that by 2050, ghg emissions will have increased by over 50%, even with all the current policies and targets in place. 'It is the grossest kind of simplification and understatement to say we are not taking enough meaningful action,' warns Shahin Rahimifard, professor of sustainable engineering at SMART. And the global trainer industry is a huge part of the problem – if it were a country, it would be the world's 17th largest polluter, emitting as much CO<sub>2</sub> as the whole of the UK.

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY, ANYWAY?

LET'S GO BACK TO BASICS and ask if we're all even speaking the same language when it comes to what we're trying to achieve. Specific definitions of what sustainability is and how it can be achieved are difficult to agree on, but the term broadly relates to surviving on earth for a long time by protecting the environment. Professor Rahimifard argues the term is becoming ineffectual, however, because it often refers to the 'least worse option' and the 'less bad solution'



but does not go far enough towards solving the earth's manufacturing and consumption problems. And as companies set their own emission goals, they all interpret environmental language differently.

Recognising the vagueness of the term, the London College of Fashion and publisher Condé Nast have developed a sustainable-fashion glossary. The term 'carbon neutral', is defined as equivalent to 'net zero' and, in the long term, is achieved by transitioning to an economy that doesn't rely on burning fossil fuels. This means durable footwear that is manufactured using renewable energy and is made from regenerative organic materials. The materials and products must be transported using packaging and freight that does not rely on fossil fuels.

No major brand has managed to achieve this yet, though Allbirds is perhaps the closest of the bigger players. Starting with a clean slate (it was set up in 2016), the company has been able to explicitly set its mission statement as 'reversing climate change through better business'. 'It's not just about doing less and less of a bad thing; it's about ultimately using regenerative technologies and ways to actually remove carbon over time through a more modern business model,' says Jad Finck, Allbirds' vice president of innovation and sustainability. 'One of the biggest challenges of the existing incumbents is the burden of an old dirty portfolio.'

Allbirds does not calculate carbon offsetting in its race to carbon zero, but many companies do and their methods are not always transparent. In reality, many brands are reaching a self-imposed net zero target largely by carbon offsetting.





way is the net positive approach, because sustainability itself is not enough,' says Professor Rahimifard. 'Net positive is a restorative, regenerative, healing approach towards our ecosystem and production industry that puts back more into society and the environment than is taken out.'

However, the reality of achieving this in the world of running shoes is extremely complex, with convoluted supply chains, dozens of shoe components (65 distinct parts on average) and global distribution of products. The average pair of running shoes generates 14kg of carbon emissions during its life cycle, from raw material to landfill, with manufacturing the largest emitter in the process (9.5kg).

Then there is the release of toxic chemicals when shoes are disposed of. 'Polyurethane and polyester are responsible for the majority of the carbon footprint,' explains Danny McLoughlin, author of a report on 'eco sneakers' by running website RunRepeat. 'Nylon also has a disproportionate impact. They have a large impact on the carbon footprint because of the amount of energy required to process the materials.'

Critics argue that the footwear industry has been slow to address its role in the climate crisis, using sustainability as a marketing ploy rather than a means to effect meaningful change. But others believe things are beginning to shift in the right direction. 'I'm sure there will be examples of brands doing it more as a kind of marketing tool, but I think that is less common today,' says Naomi Braithwaite, senior lecturer in fashion marketing and branding at Nottingham Trent University. 'The way the world is moving, business at all levels is recognising we have to do something differently. So brands really want to make that change, but it's very hard to be 100% sustainable and I think it takes time,' says Dr Braithwaite.

If we decide to become eco-conscious consumers, it can be difficult to distinguish between greenwashing and genuine net-positive business models when it comes to choosing our running shoes. Allbirds hopes the industry will follow its example by labelling all shoes with a carbon lifecycle emission stamp, which clearly indicates output from cradle to grave. But until this happens, consumers are left to weigh up the pros and cons of the growing array of 'sustainable' footwear products on the market.

## GOING THE EXTRA MILES

**ONE OF THE** simplest ways to reduce your footprint is to buy a shoe that lasts a long time and can be repaired, or recycled when it no longer performs. But recycling via charity shops and clothing banks is hugely problematic. Only 10% to 30% of donated items are actually sold in the charity shops we donate them to, with the rest sold to textile merchants, who ship much of what they buy overseas, often to developing countries. This has led to a surplus in those countries and, ultimately, huge numbers of donations being discarded. Every week, Kantamanto Market in Ghana – the largest secondhand clothing market in West Africa – receives 15 million items of used clothing. With 40% of those products being discarded, Ghana's capital, Accra, is overflowing with clothing waste. This waste is either burned on street corners or on huge bonfires, or sent to landfills, where the overflow washes downstream into the ocean, polluting beaches and entire ecosystems as a result.

Fortunately, some brands are now stepping in to directly recycle their products, grinding down materials to reuse in the manufacture of new shoes. In summer 2022, Merrell launched its ReTread exchange programme, which aims ▶



Allbirds is making the carbon message clear

This includes schemes such as planting trees and capturing CO<sub>2</sub>, which, in itself, requires energy.

Carbon offsetting has been heavily criticised for not delivering enough of a reduction in carbon and continuing the status quo, allowing the industry to avoid making radical changes to manufacturing processes. Professor Rahimifard describes a large proportion of carbon offsetting as a 'totally shambling' approach that doesn't stand up to scrutiny. 'Carbon neutral doesn't stop creating carbon, which is what's needed,' he says. 'It's an estimated type of approach. Net zero, carbon neutral, sustainability – these terms are becoming part of a dated view that doesn't address the challenges we're facing.'

Replacing this language are terms such as climate positive, net-negative emissions and net positive. 'The only

# 'The sportswear market is very reliant on fossil fuel-derived materials'

to keep footwear out of landfill. The scheme involves taking back hundreds of thousands of pairs of shoes in the UK, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden and Finland. These shoes are repaired and refurbished for resale at 50% of the original price, broken down for use in new products or recycled for other uses. As an incentive, when runners send their no-longer-wanted shoes back, they receive £20 off new Merrell footwear on purchases over £80.

Going a step further, Swiss brand On has launched an innovative recycling subscription service, Cyclon. For £25 a month, members can get a fresh pair of shoes every six months, sending their old, used ones back to be ground down and recycled into new components. Meanwhile, sportshoes.com has partnered with running recycling initiative JogOn and delivery firm Evri to enable runners to return old or unwanted shoes, which are then distributed to charities around the world.

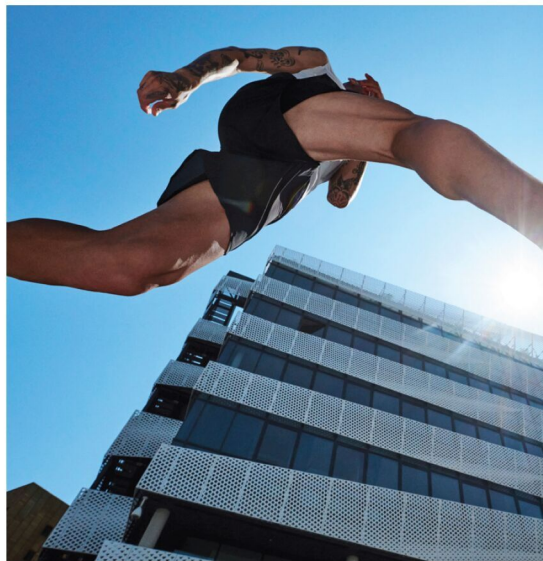
But critics such as Professor Rahimifard argue that while returning and reusing individual pairs of shoes may provide short-term benefits, these need to be carefully assessed against the carbon involved in shipping and cleaning the footwear. Michael Doughty, co-founder of eco shoe brand Hylo Athletics, says the industry is largely 'propagating the same problem, which is a reliance on a finite resource'. 'Currently, the sportswear and footwear market is very reliant on fossil fuel-derived materials such as polyester and nylon,' says Doughty. 'A lot of the sustainability work is focused on recycled content of those same materials.'

The issue raised by Professor Rahimifard, Doughty and others is that while recycling may delay products from reaching landfill and have a lower carbon emission than manufacturing shoes from virgin materials, it does not address the underlying issue and is not enough to prevent irreversible changes to the climate. Nor does it do enough to address the huge problem of overconsumption, with

schemes such as Cyclon encouraging consumers to get value for money by replacing their footwear every six months.

This leads to the hugely damaging myth that shoes have to be replaced after around 500 miles, which drives overconsumption and the carbon emissions needed to satisfy demand. Dan Lawson, ultrarunner and co-founder of upcycling outfit ReRun Clothing, says to ignore advice on when to change your trainers. 'Shoes can last thousands of miles,' says Lawson. 'It baffles me how shoe companies bang on about shoes' short lifespans; they should be doing everything to make them last longer.' Record-breaking ultrarunner Jasmin Paris, a co-founder of The Green Runners, agrees, estimating that she wears her running shoes for around 2,000 miles.

Addressing the issue of shoes' lifespan, one of Allbirds' key commitments is to double the life of its shoes by 2025



## Plant power

Three leading bio-based running shoes tried and tested



Hylo Athletics Hylo Run, £140, [hyloathletics.com](http://hyloathletics.com)

Made from 60% renewable and vegan materials, including PLA derived from sugar cane and corn, organic cotton, natural rubber and algae bloom. Built for short-to-middle distances, they feel slightly firm for longer runs. Though a little loose around the ankle, they're a fine option from a new brand that's serious about sustainability.



Zen Running Club ZR 01, £134, [zenrunningclub.com](http://zenrunningclub.com)

A neutral cushioned shoe engineered from eucalyptus, sugar cane, castor beans and natural rubber. Light and reactive, the ZR 01 has been built with performance in mind and works well for tempo runs and speedwork. The snug fit of the woven one-piece upper keeps your foot securely in place on the chunky midsole stack.





Big steps are needed for big changes



Allbirds Tree Flyer, £150, [allbirds.co.uk](http://allbirds.co.uk)

Made with a 48% castor bean bio-based Pebax midsole, eucalyptus tree upper and merino wool heel lining, this shoe combines comfort with plenty of punch. Lightweight but with a bouncy ride, the Tree Flyer is a good option for mid-length runs, although the upper feels a little loose in all-out speedwork sessions.

through improved construction techniques. It also highlights its machine-washable footwear's versatility as well as its durability, because, obviously, the more situations a shoe can be worn in, the fewer shoes you need. 'We wanted shoes that could blur categories and could be used for running, but that you could also wear for business casual, or to a restaurant,' explains Finck. 'We're going after modern, timeless classics that stay in our line for a very long time.'

Newcomers Zen Running Club and Hylo Athletics follow the same mantra, stressing that their plant-powered footwear is built for durability. 'We're very insistent on this shoe lasting as long as any other running shoe on the market,' says Dominic Sinnott, designer and co-founder of Zen. Meanwhile, Hylo has an NFC (near field communication) tag that, when scanned, links its customers to hyloop, a technology platform that advises on care, repair and recycling options. 'We're trying to encourage longer use of products,' says Doughty. 'The most significant decision you can make is not to buy anything new, so we're trying to encourage that through technology.'

Durability is definitely on the radar of ultrarunning superstar Kilian Jornet, who recently launched NNormal trail shoes with Spanish footwear brand Camper. Its aim is to produce fewer, more durable products that eschew seasonal changes and fashion trends. The shoes are minimal by design, to reduce the number of seams that degrade over time and use as few components as possible. 'I think we need to change the way we sell and buy products,' says Jornet, 'not to try to sell new products to replace old ones that are still in great shape but can "feel old". That seems simple, but it involves big changes in the industry. We also need to realise that products are something we should take care of, repair and, eventually, when we need to replace them, ensure a circularity to build new products.'

## MATERIAL GAINS

SOME BRANDS ARE FOCUSING their attention on recycled materials as a means to reach net zero (but not net positive). Merrell's Moab Speed trail shoes are made with 100% recycled mesh lining and laces, while Nike's sustainable materials range feature models such as Pegasus Turbo Next Nature, made from 50% recycled content by weight. (See *The Cut Up* on p82 for a closer look at how the Pegasus Turbo Next Nature is constructed.)

Using recycled materials is, of course, a positive step, but some argue it doesn't go far enough. 'Those type of materials are really working with the system that we have right now, which is, unfortunately, a large amount of consumer waste is being put into the environment, such as drinks bottles and fishing nets, and these types of things are being turned into those recycled products,' says Matt Williams, co-founder of Greenspark, which supports businesses' sustainability goals. But while recycled polyester uses up to 84% less energy to produce than virgin polyester, the material needs to be processed in the first place. Adidas uses waste plastic salvaged from the ocean in the uppers of its Parley shoes, which is undeniably a good thing, but these materials still require energy to be turned into the Primeknit that wraps around your feet. Nike uses polyester made from plastic bottles diverted from landfill, which, again, is beneficial, but not without energy costs.

A 2021 report by RunRepeat concluded that without updating manufacturing processes, major companies were not going to make meaningful strides in reducing carbon



## The longer run

How to prolong the life of your running shoes

➔ The better you take care of your running shoes, the longer they'll last. And that starts with how you keep them clean. 'Avoid the washing machine at all costs,' says Christian Allen, product expert at Runners Need. 'Some materials in shoes should not be exposed to heat or submerged in water – they risk getting damaged. Use a sponge and soapy water.'

Allen also advises saving your running shoes for running. 'Wearing them for other activities will wear them down quicker and add empty miles,' he says. 'And make sure you're wearing the correct socks. If your socks aren't made for running, they can cause damage to the inner material. Lower cut socks can also cause premature wear, so it is best to stick to longer pairs.'

Depending on where they are damaged, you can repair your running shoes at home. 'You can repair any rips to the uppers using Rocktape and a glue called Elastic Fantastic,' says ReRun Clothing's Dan Lawson.

**Nike's Pegasus Turbo Next Nature**



emissions – regardless of what material shoes were made from. 'Eco-shoes are not going to save the planet – all they'll do is kill it a little more slowly than conventional shoes,' says McLoughlin. His report concluded that 'eco-sneakers' (footwear containing some recycled materials) cut emissions by less than 10% and a shoe with 100% recycled materials makes a saving of just 24%. This was largely due to the manufacturing process making up 64% of all carbon emissions, irrespective of the materials used.

You also need to be aware of just how much recycled material is being used, as recycled components may just make up a fraction of a shoe. 'There's definitely been a lot of greenwashing in the market, brands jumping on the green bandwagon,' says Williams. 'That has made it more difficult for consumers to make the right choice. How much is actually recycled? Is it 100% recycled or just 20%, with 80% still being made from virgin materials?'

Meanwhile, huge brands such as Nike have been promoting their 'journey towards a zero carbon and zero waste future' by announcing partnerships with carbon-offsetting asset management companies such as EFM). But while Nike aims to power owned and operated facilities with 100% renewable energy by as soon as 2025, there is still a reliance on recycled materials.

## PLANTING HOPE

IF THE FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY is serious about having a carbon neutral (without offsetting) or positive impact on the planet, then renewable energy, green transportation and recycled materials are still not enough. Using renewable – rather than recycled – materials is the only way to create a completely closed-loop economy. Innovation with plant-based materials, as well as climate-positive wool, are starting to emerge. The question is whether change will occur quickly enough to prevent irreparable damage to the earth.

In 2022, Asics launched the Gel-Lyte III CM shoe, with a carbon emission stamp of 1.95kg across its life cycle. This is significantly less than a traditional pair of running shoes, which emit 14kg CO<sub>2</sub>, according to researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Gel-Lyte III CM contains bio-based polymers in the midsole and sockliner that are partially derived from sugar cane, but a large part of



the shoe is derived from recycled polyester. Still, like other initiatives, Williams acknowledges that this is a 'step in the right direction' and Asics sustainability manager Minako Yoshikawa says it 'is only the beginning'.

Allbirds, which has ambitions to be emissions-free well before 2050, also acknowledges it has a long way to go. But by working with brands such as Adidas on the 2.94kg CO<sub>2</sub>e [CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases] Futurecraft shoe, it is trying to lead innovation. Using natural renewable materials such as sugar cane, eucalyptus, plant rubber and merino wool, the company is on target to reduce the use and carbon footprint of raw materials by 25% by the end of 2025. But its goal of '75% sustainably sourced materials' still relies on both natural and recycled components – for now. 'We think natural bio-based is the long-term vision,' says Finck.

'Renewable source, low carbon and, ultimately, regenerative.'

Exploring material science is also key to Hylo's vision of the future of running-shoe production. The company currently uses organic cotton, corn, algae and natural rubber to create a shoe with 60% bio content. 'We're not fully at that north star, but when we look to develop new shoes, we not only think about how can we improve the performance, but also how can we improve that number to 100,' says Doughty.

Similarly, Zen Running Club is innovating with castor beans, eucalyptus, natural rubber and sugar cane while still placing an emphasis on performance. It's an ongoing process but the company is making consistent progress. 'We're now getting close to 60% sugar cane within the shoe, when a few years ago it was 30%,' says Sinnott.

So how about 'super shoes', which rely heavily on chemicals to create their energy-returning midsoles? Biotechnology is closing in. 'There's a lot of work going into it from our side to try to create a nitrogen-infused bio-based mix,' says Andy

**'There's definitely been a lot of greenwashing in the market'**





Farnworth, Zen co-founder. 'But the super shoe carbon-plated, eco rocker shoes aren't there yet,' he admits.

While the shift to renewable materials could be a giant stride towards shoe sustainability, Professor Rahimifard points out that organic materials emit methane when they degrade. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas, so the end-of-life assessment has to include this. Part of Allbirds' solution is to use carbon-absorbing wool through regenerative farming techniques in New Zealand, which means the process of producing the wool absorbs more carbon than it emits.

Positive change is happening at varying rates across the shoe industry, but when we turn the focus to ourselves as individuals, the biggest thing we can do is simply consume less. Continuing as we are is not a viable option. Professor Rahimifard cites studies that show if everyone in the world consumed at the rate of the average US resident, the resources of five earths would be needed to sustain consumption.

The required shift in mindset is not all down to us as individuals. 'Perhaps the most important action by all manufacturers, including footwear producers, is to identify how they can create economic growth but not through producing a large volume of products and encouraging increased consumption,' concludes Professor Rahimifard. But we can play an important part: 'Consumers have to change as well,' says Braithwaite. 'It really requires a shift in consumer attitudes and consumer behaviour.'

If you want to take a step towards protecting the planet, looking for more sustainable footwear when you need new shoes can help – reducing your carbon emissions by around 9% according to RunRepeat. But 'the most effective thing a consumer can do is buy one less pair of shoes per year, cutting their carbon footprint by a third,' says McLoughlin.

Asics uses natural and recycled materials

## Life after life

→ How to recycle pre-loved running shoes that are still in good condition

### Donate your shoes to a sports-focused charity

A few organisations specialise in used sports shoes and clothing, including Wales-based social enterprise [Play It Again Sport](#), which sells pre-worn sports clothing at a fraction of the original cost to those who need it, with any proceeds supporting groups providing sporting activities for local people. The charity has collection bins across Rhondda Cynon Taff (South Wales) and accepts donations at its office in Pentre. It also offers a referral scheme, where schools, social workers and sports coaches can request clothing and equipment for those who would otherwise be unable to take part in sport. There's also a DropPoint option for donations from outside South Wales. [playitagainsport.wales](#)

Yorkshire-based not-for-profit [Preloved Sports](#) resells pre-worn shoes and kit, donating the proceeds to charity. You can donate via a number of drop-off points in and around Yorkshire, to their facility in Malton or by post. [prelovedsports.org.uk](#)

[Kitsquad](#) provides donated secondhand adventure kit to those on low incomes, so they can experience the joys of exploring the great outdoors. [kitsquad.co.uk](#)

### Donate to an emergency clothing charity

Nottingham-based [Sharewear Clothing](#) offers free-of-charge clothing to people in economic difficulty. As with the other organisations here, the charity only takes high-quality clothes and shoes. Kit can be dropped off at, or posted to, its national processing and distribution centre in Nottingham. [sharewearclothingscheme.org](#)

[Care 4 Calais](#), a volunteer-run charity delivering emergency aid to refugees in Calais and areas affected by the European migrant crisis. It also accepts clothing and shoe donations. [care4calais.org](#)

### Gift or sell them online

To save someone buying a new pair of running shoes, gift yours to a friend or sell them on sites such as [Ebay](#), [Depop](#) and [Facebook Marketplace](#). You can also sell and buy used running gear on Facebook group [Running Gear Buy and Sell](#).



Johnny Hayes  
completes a lap of  
White City Stadium  
to finish the 1908  
Olympic marathon

62-93844



At the 1908 London Olympics, marathon runners tackled a course of 26 miles and 385 yards for the first time. The ending was pure sporting drama and it ensured one man's place in running history. **But not the one you might think**

# THE FORGOTTEN CHAMPION

WORDS

JOHN CARROLL



# S

ay the name John (or Johnny) Hayes to most people in running circles and you're likely to get a blank expression. Yet this was the man who won the first modern Olympic marathon – arguably the most dramatic and controversial race in the event's history – and the runner who kick-started a long-distance racing craze in the US over a century ago. His story is a remarkable one of hardship, determination, success and,

when the time came, a dignified retreat from the limelight.

Hayes was born in April 1886, in New York City. His father, Michael, grew up in Nenagh, Co Tipperary, in Ireland, but like so many of his generation, he emigrated to the US. His mother, Nellie O'Rourke, was born in the US, but was of Irish extraction.

Life was hard for the Hayes family on Manhattan's lower east side. Michael worked 14-hour days in a bakery – often joined by Johnny, his eldest son – while Nellie cared for their five other children. The endless toil proved too much; Hayes's parents died when he was still a teenager and his siblings were placed in a Catholic orphanage.

To help them as best he could, Hayes took a job as a 'sandhog', digging New York's subway tunnels. It was hot, dangerous work, but it made him strong and taught him how to pace himself in tough conditions. Above ground, he fell in love with running. The sport would soon change his life.

When Hayes joined the Irish American Athletic Club, his ability was soon noticed. The IAAC often used its connections to place athletes in jobs that provided a modest wage while giving them time to train. For many, this meant a position in the New York Police Department, but Hayes was about 5ft 4in and weighed 125lb (56kg), so that was out. Instead, he was given a job in what was then called Bloomingdale Brothers department store. He was reportedly paid \$20 a week but it's not known if he ever put in any hours. In later years, the story went around that Hayes would train by running laps of Bloomingdale's rooftop. There's no evidence of this, but what is beyond dispute is that he flourished as a runner.

In 1906, he finished fifth in the Boston Marathon, in a time of 2:55:38. The following year, he came third, in 2:30:38, and that November he won the inaugural Yonkers Marathon in 2:44:45. In 1908, he finished second in Boston, in 2:26:04. Not for nothing was he later described in the UK's *Sporting Life* newspaper as 'the most consistent marathon runner in America'. Hayes would soon have his chance to show the world just how good he was, as his Boston time won him a place on the US team gearing up for the 1908 London Olympics. He was 22.

## PLAYING GAMES

THE 1908 OLYMPICS had been awarded to Rome in 1904, but two years later, Mount Vesuvius erupted, devastating Naples. Massive reconstruction costs meant a replacement host city had to be found. London took up the challenge, but the ensuing Games were among the most contentious and bad-tempered in Olympic history.

The trouble started even before competition began. The Americans were unhappy with their lodgings, annoyed that a plant hole could not be dug for their pole vaulters (usual in the US, but against British rules) and even more exercised by the assignment of places in the heats for some running



**Above:** Hayes looks all business before the Olympic marathon. **Right:** Hayes is watched by an attendant (each runner was allowed two) during the race

events. James E Sullivan, the US commissioner for the Games, commented, 'It is extraordinary bad luck or the manner in which the drawings have been made that has resulted in such unfavourable conditions for the Americans.'

Then there was the opening-ceremony parade. On the day the fourth Olympics were declared open by King Edward VII, the Americans noticed that the Stars and Stripes was not among the flags flying in White City Stadium, which had been built for the Games. That was almost certainly an oversight (the Swedish flag was also absent). What happened next was no accident. The teams filed into the stadium, bearing their national flags, which were dipped in front of the royal box as a mark of respect. The Stars and Stripes, held by shot putter Ralph Waldo Rose, remained defiantly aloft. Irish American discus thrower Martin Sheridan was later reported to have remarked, 'This flag dips for no earthly king.'

The gesture – which the US team has observed at all Games since 1936 – did nothing to improve transatlantic relations and things got worse once competition began, with tensions reaching a pre-marathon high when American John Carpenter won the 400m final but was disqualified when he was judged to have obstructed Scottish runner Wyndham Halswelle. A re-run was ordered, but the other Americans in the race refused to participate, so Halswelle ran alone to take gold.

It was in this sour, mutually suspicious spirit that the marathon took place on Friday, July 24, the final day of stadium events. Hayes was not expected to win, but he wasn't fazed. According to the *New York Sun*, he had told his Bloomingdale's colleagues, 'I just know I'm going to win and I wish it were 50 miles rather than 26.'

The route was and, of course, 26 miles, but, for the first time, 26 miles and 385 yards, which became the official marathon distance (though not until 1921). It has long been believed the start was moved from Windsor town centre

63-93844 22



# 'IT'S HOT, THERE'S A LONG WAY TO GO. DON'T GO CRAZY'



rich and successful history of pedestrianism and distance running, 12 runners in the event (the US had seven) and home advantage. They were not used to running in such heat and many had no experience of running the new distance, but national honour was at stake, so a great deal was riding on the outcome.

As *The New York Times* put it, 'Since the beginning of the Olympic Games, the great rivalry has been between England and America and while the minor competitions on the track and field, in which the two nations specialized, were fought out, Englishmen consoled themselves for all the American successes by the thought that in the domain of long-distance running they always had been supreme...'

## DISTANCE LEARNING

**AT 2.33PM, THE RUNNERS SET OFF**, each clothed from shoulder to knee, as stipulated by the rules. Most wore nothing to protect their heads from the sun as the temperature reached 26°C, but a diminutive Italian, Dorando Pietri, resplendent in red shorts, wore a knotted handkerchief (reportedly doused in balsamic vinegar, so he could put it in his mouth to refresh himself). Years later, Hayes was dismissive of the conditions. 'Heat never bothered me. My grandfather and father were bakers and I worked in the bakery as a boy – I was used to heat,' he said.

From Windsor, the route took the runners towards Slough and in the fast early miles, the lead was held at various points by Britons Thomas Jack, Frederick Lord, William Clarke, Jack Price and Alexander Duncan. Also in the pack were South African Charles Hefferon, Pietri and the much-fancied Canadian Tom Longboat, from the Onondaga Nation. Hayes was, in the words of the official Games report, 'a long way back'. The report also noted that he 'evidently knew something of the value of running to schedule time in hot weather to over so punishing a distance'.

The runners continued to Uxbridge and Ruislip, the halfway point. 'The roads were in excellent condition, there was very little dust to complain of, despite the great heat,

to the grounds of Windsor Castle to ensure Princess Mary's sons could have a better view. But recent research has shown no record of such a demand (it may have been a decision taken for logistical or security reasons by Polytechnic Harriers, who set the route). Similarly, it appears the finish was always intended to be at the royal box in White City Stadium.

None of this was of any consequence for Hayes and the 54 other competitors who lined up for the starting gun. As they stood in the uncharacteristic heat (the Games had thus far been marked by rain and cool weather), Hayes is reported to have said to a fellow runner, 'It's hot, there's a long way to go. Don't go crazy.' Indeed, the official report of the Games noted the 'close, warm and muggy atmosphere of that summer afternoon, when the sun was deceptively strong and there was very little air'.

Unusually warm weather notwithstanding, a British runner was expected to win. In fact, Sullivan, who was also president of the American Athletic Union, told the *New York Sun* that, 'England should win the Olympic marathon, and if [it] does not finish one, two, three [it] should be well up.'

Even if there was a degree of gamesmanship and bluffing going on, there was some truth to his words. Britain had a

## CHANGING TIMES

➔ Johnny Hayes's victory wasn't the only 'first' in the 1908 Olympics

01. They were the first Games to have an opening ceremony in which athletes marched by nationality behind their flag bearer.

02. Winter sports such as figure skating were included for the first time (events were still taking place at the end of October).

03. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded for the first time (in previous Games, some winners received diplomas).

04. John Taylor became the first African American to win an Olympic gold medal, as part of the medley relay team.



## 'PLUCKY MAN AS DORANDO IS, HAYES WAS THE WINNER'

the pace was very fast,' reported the *Sporting Life*. The pace, in fact, was too fast.

At mile 15, Hefferon took the lead and held it for the next nine miles, with Pietri not far behind. Lord was in trouble, as were Clarke and Price, whose race ended soon afterwards. Duncan also pulled out, as did Jack and Longboat. Hayes kept his cool and stayed in touch with the leaders.

By mile 24, Hefferon was suffering and he accepted champagne from a spectator to revive him. Unsurprisingly, it didn't work. Hayes had eschewed any kind of refreshment, food or drink, during the race. 'I merely bathed my face in Florida water [a kind of cologne] and gargled my throat with brandy,' he later said.

With Hefferon struggling, Pietri accelerated and was first to reach the stadium. What followed remains one of the most emotion-charged finishes of any race in history. *The New York Times*, in purple-tinged prose, called it 'the

Above: Hayes is carried around White City Stadium by his teammates the day after his victory in the marathon. Right: the statues of Hayes and fellow Olympians Matt McGrath and Bob Tisdall in Nenagh, Co Tipperary

most thrilling athletic event that has occurred since the marathon race in Ancient Greece, where the victor fell at the goal and, with a wave of triumph, died'.

When Pietri emerged from the tunnel into the stadium, it was obvious to race officials and the 75,000-plus spectators that he was in trouble. He was staggering left and right, and clearly on the brink of collapse, if not – it was feared – death. His legs soon went and he crumpled to the ground. Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, covering the race for *The Daily Mail* wrote, 'Thank God he is on his feet again – the little red legs going incoherently, but drumming hard, driven by a supreme will. There is a groan as he falls once more, and a cheer as he staggers to his feet.' Then, after another collapse, 'Surely he is done now. He cannot rise again.'

But he did, albeit with the assistance of clerk of the course Jack Andrew, chief medical officer Dr Michael Bulger and others. Andrew later wrote an account of the event: 'Each time Dorando fell, I had to hold his legs while the doctor massaged him to keep his heart beating.' Conan Doyle found the spectacle 'horrible yet fascinating'.

By this time, a second man had entered the stadium: Hayes, looking comfortable as he began his lap of the track. Leaning back and all but held up by officials, Pietri crossed the line in 2:54:46, with Hayes finishing second, in 2:55:18. Even as the Italian was stretchered off, the Americans were preparing their protest: 'Pietri had been assisted and so must be disqualified. 'Plucky man as Dorando is, Hayes was the winner under all the rules of racing. It was unfair to Hayes, who was robbed of the honour of breasting the tape,' wrote Sullivan.

The objection was upheld. Pietri was disqualified and Hayes declared the winner. Hefferon was upgraded to





second and another American, Joseph Forshaw, was placed third. The first Briton home was Clarke, in 12th. *The Sporting Life* was not impressed: '...the result does not speak at all well for the calibre of our long-distance runners. Indeed, to speak plainly, they were well beaten.' Only 27 of the 55 runners finished.

Hayes was apparently unaware of what was happening. In an interview republished in *The Irish Independent*, he said, 'When I passed the winning post I went home with my friends and I did not know what had happened until, just before dinner, my friends slapped my back and said, "You have won the marathon race."'

He later expressed less surprise at his victory. 'I ran to a set plan all the way and I knew the leaders could not keep up the fantastic pace they set for most of the race. No man could have hoped to finish the race at the pace Dorando was using.'

## NEVER MIND THE RESULT...

HAYES MAY HAVE BEEN THE WINNER but Pietri was the undoubted star. As *The New York Times* noted, 'It will not snatch any laurels from the brow of Hayes, who won a good race, to say that the hero of the day was the Italian Dorando.' That was putting it mildly. At the Games' prize-giving ceremony the following day, he was presented with a hastily arranged silver-gilt cup by Queen Alexandra, who had witnessed the drama of the marathon finish. Pietri then ran a lap of the stadium to huge applause. To make a point, Hayes's teammates carried their man around the stadium on a table. He was, after all, the champion.

From London, Hayes travelled to Ireland, where he was greeted like a hero in Nenagh. He then returned to New York, where he was at the head of an enormous victory parade and was later the first athlete from the US team to be introduced to President Theodore Roosevelt. He was also made head of the Bloomingdale's sports department. This was all greatly deserved, though unlike Pietri, Hayes did not have a London street named after him (Dorando Close, in west London), or have a song written about him by a young Irving Berlin. At least Dorando was an awful song: 'He run-a, run-a, run-a, run like anything' was one of the lines.

In September 1908, Hayes said he was retiring as a salesman and would devote himself to 'organising training courses under the American Marathon School'. He also knew there was money to be made from the marathon mania that had gripped the

US, thanks to his Olympic victory. So he joined the professional circuit, which meant he couldn't defend his title.

In November, Hayes and Pietri raced each other over the new marathon distance in Madison Square Garden, an event *The New York Times* called 'the most spectacular footrace that New York has witnessed'. The auditorium was packed with 20,000 spectators, but completing a marathon meant running 26.2 laps. Pietri won by just under a minute, finishing in 2:44:20. The men split the purse. They raced each other twice more (some accounts say three times), with Pietri winning each time. With his punishing schedule – 22 races in the six months after the Games, with 17 wins – the Italian made a fortune and retired from running at the age of 26.

Within a couple of years, the first marathon craze had fizzled out – the final race between Hayes and Pietri was described as having all the excitement of 'two old ladies engaged in a long-distance knitting contest'. Hayes was later a coach for the 1912 US Olympic team and worked in vaudeville before becoming a businessman. He lived in New Jersey with his wife, Anna, and died there in 1965, aged 79. They had one daughter, Doris, who kept her father's Olympic medal in her purse after his death. An obituary in *The Record*, a New Jersey newspaper, said that up until a few months before his death, he would jog from room to room in his apartment.

In 2001, Ronnie Delaney, Ireland's 1500m gold medallist in the 1956 Olympics, launched a project to build three bronze statues in Nenagh, to commemorate the achievements of Hayes and two other local Olympic heroes, Matt McGrath and Bob Tisdall. The statue was unveiled the following year. It was only in 2008 that a statue of Pietri was erected in Carpi, his hometown. Ivano Barbolini, coordinator of the Dorando Pietri centenary committee, told Reuters, 'Everyone in sport remembers Dorando but no one remembers the winner Hayes.'

Pietri's drama (it's on YouTube) is better remembered than Hayes's victory, but the Irish American did exactly what he said he would do that day: he won the Olympic marathon and did so without much fuss, which was in plentiful supply at those Games. Then he used his fame and ability to forge a career and, later, stepped away. He never seemed bothered that Pietri had most of the limelight. As the *New York Sun* said of him at the height of his fame, 'He is a modest chap who doesn't care to gabble about his own achievements.'

## DID THAT JUST HAPPEN?

The Olympic marathon has delivered its share of bizarre and marvellous moments

### 1904 St Louis

On a hot day, American Fred Lorz raced to an early lead but dropped out. Another American, Thomas Hicks, later took the lead but was beaten to the line by... Lorz. It soon emerged that Lorz had jumped into a car and only when it broke down had he run the last few miles. He was disqualified and Hicks was awarded gold.

### 1912 Stockholm

Japanese runner Shizo Kanakuri fainted during the marathon. A Swedish family took care of him before he returned to Japan – without telling anyone. In 1967, Swedish officials invited him to finish the race, which he did, 54 years, eight months six days, five hours, 32 minutes and 20.3 seconds after he had started.

### 1968 Mexico

Tanzanian John Stephen Akhwari fell during the marathon, badly injuring his knee. An hour after Mamo Wolde had won gold in 2:20:26, Akhwari limped into the Olympic stadium. He finished last, in 3:25:27. 'My country didn't send me 11,000 kilometres to start the Olympic marathon. They sent me here to finish it,' he said.

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# COACH

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## 74 BISH BASH SQUASH

From sumptuous soups to sensational salads, the humble squash is a versatile and nutritious treat for runners





# IN THE ZONE

*How training in different effort zones works, and whether it's the right approach for you*



**Training zones are a** method by which we can categorise the intensity of exercise, using distinct

areas to distinguish between harder and easier activities. The idea behind them is that they add precision to your workouts, as concentrating on a specific zone can theoretically be linked to a particular physiological effect. When pulled together into a plan, this can help you train in a more focused way.

● **Determining and measuring zones**

Training zones are often determined by heart rate (HR) or pace, and they are defined as a percentage of your maximum HR or running pace at your lactate turnpoint (also known as lactate

threshold). Sound too complex already? That's one of the issues – to be useful, zones need to be easily understood and accurately measured.

To do so, there are some simple methods you can follow. You can do a maximum HR test by running two to three high-intensity repeats, lasting about two minutes each with a recovery of 60 to 90 seconds. You'll probably reach your maximum HR during the second or third effort. Or you can work out your pace-based zones from the best pace you can currently hold for an hour in a race situation. Neither of these methods is particularly accurate but both can offer a starting point.

A physiologist can give you a much more in-depth profile based on a range

**STAY ON TRACK**  
Understanding your limits can improve your mental focus and self-discipline

of measurements such as pace, rate of perceived exertion (RPE), HR and blood lactate. This can cost upwards of £150 but will be a useful investment for many.

● **Zone models**

Once you've determined your maximum HR or threshold pace, you can calculate your zones. The most common systems use either five or three zones. The table (pictured right) gives an overview of these different models and how intense each zone should feel.

● **The benefits**

The concept is attractive and there are a number of advantages to consider: **Framework** Training zones offer an easy-to-understand framework for organising your training, ensuring





you're achieving a good balance of easier and harder work.

**Focus** Often, runners will head into a run, whether that's an easy run, or a tempo or interval session, with no clear idea of how hard or easy they should be running. Working on a specific zone can help to keep you focused on the point of a session, providing a sense of clarity.

**Discipline** It's common for runners of all abilities to run their easy or even their supposedly controlled tempo runs too hard. Understanding the boundaries of the zones can help you maintain your discipline to ensure your easy runs stay as zone 2 efforts and your tempo sessions stay at zone 4.

● **The risks**

I'll be honest, I don't really use training zones much as a coach, and there are some limitations to consider before you decide to adopt the approach:

**Shades of grey** To believe that each training zone has a different or discrete physiological result is not really accurate. Training in zone 4 will have many similar results as time spent training in zone 2. An example would be when zones are used to differentiate between aerobic and anaerobic energy systems. The reality is your body is in a constant state of flux between these two systems; it doesn't switch one off

and another on just because you've moved between zones.

**Reductionist training** Performance is more than the result of time spent at easy-to-measure metabolic efforts such as those in the table below.

Psychological and social factors also have an impact on our perception of effort and belief in our ability to sustain a pace for a period of time. For example, have you ever noticed how a pace feels easier in a race than it does in a solo training session?

**Individual adaptation** The idea that we can be precise about the outcome of our training by splitting it into zones is comforting, but it doesn't always work that way. Zone-based training risks assuming that 10 people training in exactly the same zones for the same volume of training would get the same results. But most likely they would not.

● **Training intensity distribution**

If you've been to start to use training zones, which model should you use and where should you aim to complete most of your training? This depends on your level of experience and the event you're training for, but it's also linked to different training theories:

## THE REALITY IS YOUR BODY IS IN A CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX

**Polarised training** This approach would typically use the three-zone training model and runners would complete 80+% of their training volume in zone 1, under 20% in zone 3 and minimal time in zone 2. Advocates suggest that this allows for greater volumes of training because the majority of your workouts are at a lower intensity, reducing the chances of injury and excess stress. This technique might be particularly useful for newer runners, who can sometimes run their easy runs too hard and then not quite sustain the right intensity for their harder sessions.

**Pyramidal training** Although there aren't established breakdowns in the pyramidal model, broadly, this might be around 50% to 75% in zone 1, 25% to 30% in zone 2 and 5% to 10% in zone 3. This suggests there are still benefits to training in zone 2, such as when completing threshold and tempo sessions or when practising at half- or full-marathon pace, which typically falls into this zone. Advocates might consider using the five-zone model to allow for greater nuance in their harder training sessions.

● **A blended approach**

My own coaching tends to blend the two styles. For example, if I'm coaching a more experienced athlete for a marathon, their training further out from the race might be more polarised, then it would evolve to pyramidal closer to the race. This would allow them to get used to the specific demands of the race and help them to build confidence in their race pace.

To conclude, zones can help you broadly organise and monitor your training, but they're not a prescriptive set of rules or a clearly defined list of right and wrong areas to train. Remember that our bodies and training can be complex and fluid.

### ZONE MODELS

5 ZONE MODEL	3 ZONE MODEL	% OF MAX HR	% OF THRESHOLD PACE	RPE (0-10)	FEEL AND ANTICIPATED BENEFITS
Zone 5	Zone 3	90-100	105-120+	9-10	Very hard. To develop VO <sub>2</sub> max and improve anaerobic capacity
Zone 4	Zone 3	80-90	95-105	7-8	Hard but controlled. Improves ability to sustain faster paces for longer
Zone 3	Zone 2	70-80	85-95	4-6	Steady effort. Used to develop half- or full-marathon paces
Zone 2	Zone 2	60-70	75-85	2-3	Easy running. Increases capillaries and mitochondria and fat metabolism
Zone 1	Zone 1	50-60	<75	1	Very light jogging. Can be used for active recovery or return from injury

Tom Craggs is a coach and road running manager for England Athletics

# MORE THAN A FEELING

*Tapping into your intuition can bring out your best performance, says Kiera Carter*



## **INTUITION MAY SEEM TO BE AN ABSTRACT THOUGHT PROCESS,**

but recently, experts have linked it to more tangible

experiences. Dietitians talk about 'intuitive eating,' and trainers talk about 'intuitive fitness'. Is intuitive running next? I put the practice to the test recently by trusting my own intuition, which led to me running my fastest (and happiest) half marathon in 12 years. And experts confirm that using this gut feeling to guide your training and racing decisions could indeed help you run better.

### ● **Defining intuition**

'Intuition is the productive use of unconscious information to make better decisions or actions,' says Joel Pearson, a neuroscientist and founder of the Future Minds Lab at the University of New South Wales,

Australia. 'We can feel information even though it's unconscious; people often describe feelings in their gut, stomachs or back of the throat. Our brains take in an immense amount of information each day, but we're only conscious of a tiny tip of the iceberg,' he says. 'The bulk of the associations we make are below the surface, things that we mostly ignore in order to go about our lives.'

So when you have a hunch about something, it could be based on information you aren't consciously aware of – say, the connection your brain has made between mild levels of humidity and your performance. The humidity is up slightly and you think, maybe this isn't my day to go hard, even if you don't consciously acknowledge the sticky air.

Con conversationally, when 'intuitive' is placed in front of verbs such as

eating and running, it has come to imply trusting yourself over outside influences; in these cases, diet pressures and data. In conversations about these topics, people tend to conflate intuition with mindfulness, but they're more like cousins than twins. Intuition is a gut feeling that drives a decision, Professor Pearson says. Mindfulness is a sense of awareness that can make you more intuitive in the long-term.

It's also important to acknowledge intuition is not every thought that pops into your head. 'The conscious mind is loaded with self-doubt, fear and anxiety,' says Cindra Kamphoff, a certified mental performance consultant. Remember that intuition is based on information we aren't overtly aware of, so if you're beating yourself up and thinking you'll never hit your goal, that's pretty overt – and,





**SENSE OF DIRECTION**  
Go with your instinct

therefore, not to be confused with intuition. It's more likely that you're experiencing fear and anxiety.

● **Why to consider intuitive running**

To tap into your intuition, you need to move away from surface-level thoughts, such as your to-do list, your running time or how you wish the workout would end right now. These types of thoughts (a) distract you from your deeper needs and capabilities, and (b) take you out of the present tap-tap-tap of your steps. 'You're more likely to race your best when you're focused on the present,' Dr Kamphoff says. 'Sometimes, the mind holds us back.'

While running intuitively can mean taking a step back if that's what your body is craving, it can also mean pushing forwards with a clear head and heart. It can allow you to speed up without letting anything hold you back – such as the self-doubt, fear and anxiety Dr Kamphoff noted earlier.

I'd be sceptical if I hadn't experienced this first-hand. A few months ago, when I ran my fastest half marathon (and my 12th half to date), my splits were consistent down to the second. And they were led by a feeling, a rhythm, a dance to a beat that never changed. I had no hang-ups and no concept of my pace as a particular number; yet I maintained it – again, to the second – for 10 miles because it felt good in the moment, only speeding up for the final three. This was after having a more laid-back training cycle, in which I also went off feel more than numbers.


Professor Pearson says this is actually known as interoception, a supreme awareness of your body that drives intuitive decisions. 'You can sit some people down and say, "Tap out your heart rate," and they'll just go, "Sure," and tap on the table,' he says. 'Same with breathing, temperature and digestion; so people are in tune with sensing things inside their body.'

You need a certain level of interoception to make intuitive decisions in running, but once you have more body awareness, 'you should know exactly what your ideal pace feels like, how much you can push and what that means at the end of the race', Professor Pearson says.

## HOW TO TAP INTO INTUITIVE RUNNING


You need experience in whatever task you're trying to be intuitive in, because this concept works by internalising information over time, says Professor Pearson. Think of it this way: you might make intuitive decisions in your job, but you probably made fewer when you were new to the position. This doesn't mean beginners can't begin to develop a more intuitive relationship with running. In fact, now's a great time to start, no matter your experience level. Here are few guidelines:

● **KNOW THYSELF**

 Running precise splits based on your gut (and not a watch) comes from getting to know your body and what certain paces feel like, which takes practice. 'When you're really in tune with your body, you know when to push and when to back off,' says Dr Kamphoff, which makes intuitive decisions a lot easier and more accurate.

That's why Chloe Steinbeck, a senior instructor with Barry's Bootcamp in San Francisco, does a check-in before every run. 'How I am feeling today? Am I tired? Did I get a good night's sleep? Am I feeling sore?' she asks herself. 'I set realistic goals after I acknowledge how I feel physically and mentally.' Taking just a few minutes a day to note how you feel can pay off in better intuition on the road.


● **FEEL FIRST**

 If you wear a watch or run on the treadmill, take note of what happens to your body at different speeds or inclines. Is your heart rate going up? Can you talk? 'I start every

Barry's class by explaining what I believe each speed should feel like,' says Steinbeck. 'This gives clients ownership over the workout so they know how to adjust their speeds to meet their bodies where they are that day. It also sets treadmill runners up for success when moving outside.'

In the spirit of focusing on your body and environment, Dr Kamphoff and Professor Pearson are both fans of occasionally forgoing music. 'Awareness is the first step to high performance, but we're often distracted when we run,' says Dr Kamphoff. Paying attention to your breathing, cadence and effort is crucial in building body awareness so you can act intuitively.

● **BE WATCH-SAVVY**

 The problem with obsessing over numbers is that it sometimes comes with what Dr Kamphoff calls 'future-based thinking' or that dreaded 'I'm never going to hit my goal' doom-spiral. So, next time you're tempted to check, ask yourself why you're looking at your pace right now.

When I was tempted to glance at my watch during my fastest half marathon, I asked myself if I would do anything different based on the number on the screen. If the answer was, 'No, I feel good,' then I kept going without looking. I allowed myself to look only when I felt like I could be going too fast for my own good. If you think data could screw with your mood, then protect your mood. Don't let fear or your watch data mess with how you're actually feeling. Instead, just let that gut feeling guide you to a PB.

MASTER THE MOVE

# CLAMSHELL

Strengthen your hips and glutes from every angle with this simple move, using only a mini-band



**WHY IT'S WORTH DOING:** This sneaky burner works your gluteus medius and maximus. 'The medius is what forms the outside edge of your bum and the side of your hip,' says trainer Kristina Earnest. The importance of your medial glutes can't be stressed enough: they're crucial for balance and power. 'Strong glutes stabilise and propel you and protect your knees and back,' she says. The maximus is at the posterior of the hip joint.

**How to do it**

**1/** Put a mini resistance band around your thighs. Get into a side plank, with your right forearm and knee on the floor. Engage your core and lift your hips. **2/** Make sure your

spine is straight and your hips are stacked. Don't sink into your bottom shoulder. **3/** With control, open your top knee, pause, then slowly lower it back down.



**WORK IT IN**

Use this as a glute warm-up ahead of lower-body workouts. Do 20 reps per side, twice through.



**LEVEL UP**

Add a hip dip and raise between reps to make it even more challenging for your core and back.



**RESISTANCE TIP**

Use a band you can stretch without momentum from the rest of the body. (Your torso should stay rock solid.)



**MODIFY THE MOVE**

If the forearm position doesn't feel comfortable, extend your bottom arm and lie down.





## ASK JO

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED  
BY OUR RESIDENT OLYMPIAN

BY JO PAVEY



**SOLE DESTROYING**  
Maybe it's time  
for a new POA  
before your next  
5K race...

*Jo's tip:  
Work out  
faster than  
race pace*

To run your best 5K, you'll feel much more able to cope with your goal pace if you've done interval sessions that incorporate running faster than it. A good session is:

- 8 x 400m with 45-sec to 1-min recoveries
- 5 mins' rest
- 8 x 400m with 1-min recoveries

This session is great for 5K training, as you have to try to maintain running the 400ms at 5K pace or slightly quicker, and you can practise maintaining good form at the pace.

**If a workout calls for strides, when should I do them? And how fast?**

Strides are great for getting your muscles ready for a workout. They're usually about 50 to 100m in length but one or two longer strides of 200m can be beneficial as the last ones before the workout begins. Do them after your warm-up as the final prep for the main workout. They should be fast but not full sprint – around 80-85% of your max. Ease into each stride rather than starting fast to reduce the risk of injury.

They're also useful at other times to work on form, efficiency and leg turnover. Strides at the end of a normal training run help top up your speed without overstressing your muscles. Alternatively, they can be done at the end of a tough run to practise maintaining good form when you're tired. It's also useful to do gentle strides to introduce slightly faster running when you're returning from injury.

**When's best for a massage – before or after a race?**

It's beneficial before and after races, but timing and depth is key. Before a race, a massage may be used to work on tight areas. Any fairly deep massage is best at least four days before the race and could be done after your last quality workout. Any deep massage too close to racing could leave your legs feeling heavy. In the last two days before the race, if you do have one, it should be gentle.

Deep massage immediately after an event could cause more soreness, so wait a few days. The therapist should be able to gauge the massage depending on how sore your muscles are.

## I always seem to crash and burn when I race a 5K. How can I pace myself better?

Good pacing is important when targeting a 5K PB. Work out your kilometre splits for the goal time you're aiming for (divide your goal time by five) and don't be tempted to go quicker than these splits for at least the first 3 to 4km. Then try to pick up your pace in the last kilometre. Some runners get carried away from the start when doing a 5K, as they think it's a short distance, but it's easy to end up struggling if you go off too hard.

In training, try to include interval sessions of, for example, 5 to 6 x 1km or

3 x 1-mile with 2 to 3 minutes of recovery. These sessions involve running the race distance, but build in recovery breaks to give you a good indication of the pace you should be able to maintain for the whole race. Short tempo runs of 10 to 15 minutes (run at a 'comfortably hard' effort or a pace about 25 to 30 seconds per mile slower than your race pace) are also helpful. You're running at a good pace for a longer amount of time, so you'll be able to improve your awareness of the effort you can sustain.



# SQUASH YOUR MOUTH OUT

*Dig into these underrated fruits and they'll repay you with energy, flavour and nutrients in spades*

## Spiralised courgette and anchovy

Courgettes are a trusty, low-cal carb alternative. High water content boosts satiety, while potassium helps defeat DOMS.

**443 cal / 10g carbs / 28g protein / 30g fat / serves 2**

### INGREDIENTS

5 romano courgettes  
2 **tb**sp olive oil  
1 garlic clove, thinly sliced  
2-3 anchovy fillets  
Chilli flakes, to taste  
Zest of 1 lemon  
100g parmesan

### MAKE IT

1 / Cut 3 courgettes into 3cm chunks. Sauté three-quarters

of the chunks in a lidded pan with the oil, garlic and some salt, plus the protein-packed anchovy fillets and metabolism-boosting chilli.  
2 / Steam the mixture for 20 mins, then add the rest of the chunks. With the lid off, turn up the heat and cook out the moisture.  
3 / Mix in the lemon zest and some more chilli flakes. Spiralise the remaining courgettes and boil for 20 secs. Serve with the parmesan.

MUSCLE SOOTHING



## Butternut soup

One serving of butternut squash boasts nearly half your RDA of vitamin C, feeding your immune system after a hard session.

**571 cal / 40g carbs / 7.6g protein / 41g fat / serves 1**

### INGREDIENTS

1 butternut squash  
40g butter, diced  
100ml chicken stock  
1 **tb**sp pumpkin seed oil  
1-2 **tb**sp garlic breadcrumbs  
Rosemary, to taste  
1-2 **tb**sp sour cream

### MAKE IT

1 / Cut the squash in half and scoop out the seeds. Fill each half with 10g salt and 20g butter.  
2 / Place the halves in a deep casserole dish with the hollow side facing up, then pour in 5cm of stock.  
3 / Bake, lid on, for 45 mins. Scoop out the flesh and puree with the broth.  
4 / Sieve the mixture and garnish with pumpkin seed oil, garlic breadcrumbs, inflammation-reducing rosemary and gut-friendly sour cream.

IMMUNITY BOOSTING







FUEL

## Cod and pattypan salad

Yellow squash, called pattypan, is low in carbs, fat and cholesterol, and full of beta-carotene. It's an antioxidant powerhouse that protects heart health in the long term.

**403 cal** / **21g carbs** / **24g protein** / **22g fat** / serves 1

### INGREDIENTS

1 pattypan  
1 shallot, peeled  
1-2 **tbsp** olive oil  
Splash of mature sherry vinegar  
Small handful of reductrants  
1 cod fillet

### MAKE IT

**1** / Tear out this recipe and keep it for summer, when pumpkin is in season.  
**2** / Slice the pattypan into 2mm rounds, then slice your shallot in the same way. Be sure to

keep it thin, as you won't be cooking these two ingredients.  
**3** / Season with some salt, pepper, olive oil and a splash of cholesterol-reducing sherry vinegar. Fold through your reductrants and leave for 5 mins.  
**4** / Finish with strips of squash flowers. Bake the cod for 8 mins and serve.



  
**HEART  
HEALTHY**

## Pumpkin and burrata salad

Pumpkins rival carrots when it comes to helping you see in the dark. They're rich in carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, both linked with keeping your eyes healthy as you age.

**332 cal** / **9.7g carbs** / **9g protein** / **28g fat** / serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

1 pumpkin  
1½ **tbsp** olive oil  
150g burrata  
Pickled chilli and parsley, to garnish

### MAKE IT

**1** / Cut your pumpkin into wedges, shave off the skin and put aside the seeds to toast before serving.  
**2** / Dress the pumpkin with olive oil, which is rich in healthy monounsaturated fats. Add salt to taste, wrap it in foil and bake at 180°C for around 25 mins, until the flesh is firm but a skewer meets no resistance.

**3** / Cool, refrigerate, dress with more oil, then grill on a griddle pan until the pumpkin is coloured.  
**4** / Serve around a burrata, topped with pickled chilli, parsley and the toasted pumpkin seeds.



  
**VISION  
PROTECTING**





## RHYTHM & GRIT

A FRESH TAKE ON  
MAXIMISING YOUR  
RUNNING ENJOYMENT

BY CORY WHARTON-MALCOLM



# MINUTES VS MILES

*Measuring your runs by duration or distance both have their advantages*



**RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT OUR MINDS** process distance and time differently, and that you're more likely to maintain an even pace throughout a time-based interval, but run faster in a distance-based effort – such as when the finish line of a measured effort is in sight, which spurs you to accelerate. Both have their advantages, depending on the purpose of your run.

### WHY YOU SHOULD RUN BY TIME

#### TO HONE A SENSE OF EFFORT

When you aren't concerned with pace or how far you've run or got left, it's easier to gauge how your body's feeling at different speeds.



You'll get to know when something feels easy or hard. With practice, you'll know how long you can sustain that effort for. This helps you learn how to run on 'feel'. Honing this skill is beneficial in other circumstances, for instance on runs with hills or headwinds, or workouts that are hotter than expected – these factors slow your pace, so effort's a better way of judging how hard you're working. It's also crucial to get the feel right for tempo runs (a 'comfortably hard' effort you could sustain for an hour).

#### TO RELIEVE PRESSURE

When returning from injury or a break from running – or even if you're just not feeling it – trying to cover the same distance that you covered or hit the same split time on a 400m rep prior to your break can do more harm than good, as it knocks your confidence. Instead of easing yourself back into running, you might overdo it to try to get back to where you were quickly. But you need to build it back up, and running for time takes a bit of this pressure away. A fartlek run, for example, can be

a useful way to introduce faster running intervals without the pressure of a measured workout.



### WHY YOU SHOULD RUN BY DISTANCE

#### TO REACH A MILEAGE GOAL

If your goal is to run a race – 5K, 10K, half marathon or marathon – there will be mileage milestones along the way that you'll want to hit. These milestones help you monitor your progress and build confidence, so that when it comes to race day you know you're ready. If your goal isn't just about one run, but a number of runs over a week, month or year, distance is an easier metric to measure than time in the long term.



#### TO LEARN SPECIFIC PACE

Running at a specific pace for a particular distance helps to teach you how to pace – useful if you're training for a race and aiming for a time, which requires you to cover a specific distance at a particular pace. It gives you a better understanding of how hard you're able to push over the distance. It lets your body get used to how that pace feels, so come race day it's not a shock. Do repeats at a track to see what 400m looks like, giving you continuous feedback from your body.



Cory Wharton-Malcolm is a coach and founder of TrackMafia. @bitbeef, @trackmafia\_

ILLUSTRATIONS: ADAM NICKEL AT SYNERGY ART





## FOOD TO GO

EXPERT NUTRITION ADVICE  
TO FUEL YOUR RUNNING

BY RENEE MCGREGOR

# The iron files

*Iron is vital for health and performance, but runners can easily become deficient. Here's all you need to know*

### Why is iron important?

Iron is an important mineral that helps maintain healthy blood. It's a major component of haemoglobin, a type of protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from your lungs around your body. Iron is also critical for runners as it's a part of myoglobin, a protein that carries and stores oxygen specifically in muscle tissue. It's also involved in the production of various cells and hormones.

Without sufficient iron, there aren't enough red blood cells to transport oxygen, leading to fatigue. Iron is stored in the body in the form of ferritin in the liver, spleen, muscle tissue and bone marrow and is delivered through the body by a protein in the blood that binds to iron, called transferrin. If we suspect someone is low in iron, haemoglobin, ferritin and transferrin saturation are three of the blood tests commonly used to investigate.

### How much do I need each day?

In general, you need iron the most during fast growth phases, such as in infancy, early childhood and adolescence. However, women who are menstruating or pregnant may have higher requirements. Some runners also have higher needs because of an increased loss of iron through a scenario known as foot-strike haemolysis. This occurs due to a breakdown of red blood cells in the small capillaries in the soles of the feet from repetitive foot striking.

In order to prevent low levels of iron, it's recommended in the UK that adult men require 8.7mg of iron a day, while women need 14.8mg.



### How can I spot a deficiency?

Iron-deficiency anaemia results in reduced haemoglobin in the red blood cells. The classic signs of a deficiency include lethargy, fatigue, shortness of breath, negative mood and difficulty concentrating. However, runners may notice additional symptoms that mimic overtraining – such as reduced work capacity, poor adaptation to training and, ultimately, poor performance.

### What are the best sources?

The main dietary source of iron is **red meat**, but many runners have reduced their consumption of this for other health reasons. **Egg yolk** is also a good source, but absorption can sometimes be reduced due to the protein in egg. Plant-based sources of iron include pulses and legumes, **dark green, leafy vegetables**, **nuts and seeds** and foods fortified with iron, such as cereal and bread. In general, iron from plant-based options is much more difficult to absorb. Additionally, foods containing phytates (whole grains, cereal) impair your absorption of iron. So try to consume these options with vitamin C or an animal protein.

For example, combine a cereal such as bran flakes with cow's milk for animal protein, or a source of vitamin C, such as a glass of orange juice.

### Should runners supplement?

It depends – in general, if you have both good haemoglobin levels and ferritin stores, there is no additional benefit to you supplementing with iron. In fact, taking too much iron can cause a deficiency in other nutrients. When looking at blood tests, ideally you'd want levels of haemoglobin to be above 14g/dL, ferritin to be above 40mcg/L and transferrin saturation to be higher than 20%. Levels below this, although not strictly iron deficiency, may result in suboptimal performance in runners. It's important to highlight that these figures are above those for the general population, so if you suspect you might be low in iron, it's important to let your GP know that you're a runner and so your acceptable base levels are going to be higher.

Renee McGregor is a leading sports dietitian with over 20 years' experience. [reneemcgregor.com](http://reneemcgregor.com)

# GEAR

GIVE  
YOURSELF  
THE EDGE



## The bottom line

*The best running shorts  
for training, racing and  
off-road adventures*

**IN OUR INCREASINGLY HI-TECH** running world, shorts seem like refreshingly simple items, but they can be a deceptively complicated piece of kit to get right. Hitting the sweet spot for you in terms of weight, length, cut, comfort and storage, as well as the type of run you have planned, means some savvy selection from the many options out there.

Of course, there are some qualities you should always be looking for. The best shorts prevent chafing, wick sweat, dry quickly and offer freedom of movement, no matter how far or fast you're running. But beyond that, shorts can be designed to suit your particular running purpose, whether you're chasing session splits on the track, cruising your usual easy five-miler, lacing up for the long haul on the trails or gunning for a PB in a 5K or a 26.2. Use our expert-picked selection of the best options out there for every type of run to find your perfect fit.





**BEST FOR**  
**LONGER RACES**



**WOMEN**  
**New Balance Q Speed Fitted Utility Short**

£22.50, newbalance.co.uk

**RACE-FRIENDLY SHORTS** that are light, provide a snug fit but still offer good coverage and storage. The mid-waisted cut adds comfort, while stretch panels balance hip and thigh hugging to stay put with plenty of flex. There are mesh pockets on both thighs, a zippered back pocket and a storage tunnel for jackets and extra layers. A word of caution: sizing can run a little large.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 5-inch / Pockets: 3 / Liner: No



**MEN**  
**Under Armour Run Anywhere Shorts**

£58, underarmour.co.uk

**THESE FITTED RACE** shorts strike a happy balance between fast and functional. The race-weight fabric wicks well, stays light when sweaty and dries fast. Storage is ideal for a half or full marathon, with a zippered back pocket that'll hold larger phones or up to five gels. If you're going longer, you'll need a running belt. Oh, and you'll have to bring your own base layer. Great if you already have some favourite race undies.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 5-inch / Pockets: 3 / Liner: No

**BEST FOR**  
**TWO-IN-ONE**



**MEN**  
**Soar Three Season Short**

£95, soarrunning.com

**THE TWO-IN-ONE STYLE** running short offers a cycling-style inner layer with a modesty- and pocket-friendly short outer layer. Soar's mildly compressive pair combine a 7-inch light and loose outer with a 10.5-inch soft and stretchy liner. They're supremely comfy and work well on easy recovery runs, longer training runs and faster sessions. A zippered rear pocket is ideal for a large smartphone or multiple gels.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 7-inch / Pockets: 1 / Liner: Yes



**WOMEN**  
**Nike Eclipse 2-in-1 Shorts**

£49.95, nike.com

**HAD ENOUGH OF** the dreaded thigh chafe? This two-in-one take on Nike's classic running shorts will ease your pain. The Eclipse combines a soft, supportive liner with a relaxed-fit outer, cut for comfort with a high and wide waistband. Side mesh panels and subtle side splits bring extra flex and heat management. One zippered side pocket will hold a larger smartphone, while two drop-in pockets will take keys, cards and a gel or two.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 4-inch / Pockets: 3 / Liner: Yes

# GEAR

## BEST RUNNING SHORTS

### BEST FOR SPEED SESSIONS AND SHORT RACES



**MEN**  
Tracksmith Session Speed Shorts

£73, tracksmith.com

**A SHORTER VERSION** of Tracksmith's excellent Session Shorts, these 3-inch, high-stretch speedsters are great for all-out efforts. The knit outer is light and loose, with retro overlapped side splits. Storage is pretty good for short shorts, too, with a hidden zippered pocket on the right hip and another small fuel pocket in the liner.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 3-inch / Pockets: 2 / Liner: Yes



**WOMEN**  
Lululemon Track That Mid-Rise Lined Short

£48, lululemon.co.uk

**WHETHER YOU'RE RUNNING** sprint repeats or chasing down your 5K PB, these high-coverage racers offer lightweight freedom of movement with a flattering cut. The super-soft fabric has Lycra fibre for extra stretch, while a roomier leg guarantees unrestricted movement. The wide waistband doesn't dig in and a zippered side pocket offers enough stash space for your basic run essentials, too.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 5-inch / Pockets: 1 / Liner: Yes

### BEST FOR DAILY TRAINING MILES



**MEN**  
Brooks Run Visible 5" 2-in-1 Short

£60, brooksrunning.com

**THE REFLECTIVITY HELPS** keep you seen and safe on dark winter training runs, but these are an excellent option all-year round. The built-in base layer shorts offer excellent comfort and support. The two pockets on the inner shorts – one secure zippered, one drop-in mesh – will hold a large smartphone.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 5-inch / Pockets: 2 / Liner: Yes



**WOMEN**  
Lululemon Fast and Free HR Short 2 Airflow

£78, lululemon.co.uk

**LULULEMON'S HIGH-RISE** training shorts are ideal for whatever your weekly training schedule throws up. The light, four-way stretch fabric outer has a high side split that makes for a roomy, flexible fit, while a super-soft mesh liner gives extra coverage.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 2-inch / Pockets: 3 / Liner: Yes

### BEST FOR VALUE



**MEN**  
Evadict Comfort Men's Trail Running Tight Shorts – Comfort

£29.99, decathlon.co.uk

**EVADICT'S COMFORT** shorts are made for the trail, but they'll handle much more than just your off-road adventures. There's a lot of storage – a built-in belt, six pockets and room for a 250ml soft flask. The over-shorts fit loose, while the base shorts deliver reliable comfort. All for under £30.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 6-inch / Pockets: 6 / Liner: Yes



**WOMEN**  
Gymshark Speed Shorts

£30, uk.gymshark.com

**THESE SPEED SHORTS ARE LIGHT AND** breezy, with a 2-inch curved-hem cut that's speed-friendly and definitely lets you fully flex on the run. The wide waistband is soft against the skin, with silicon dots ensuring it stays put. A built-in knicker liner offers extra coverage, while a zippered pocket provides space for your phone or other essentials.

**The stats**  
In-seam: 2-inch / Pockets: 1 / Liner: Yes



**BEST FOR**  
**TRAIL AND ULTRA**  
**ADVENTURES**



**MEN**  
**Salomon S/Lab Sense 6" Shorts**

£100, salomon.com

**SALOMON'S S/LAB GEAR** is all about performance. These half-thigh racers are built light and minimal for flying along trails. The snug-fitting liner offers excellent support, while the outer is feather-light. The thin fabric dries fast, too, and the inner has a water-repellent coating. Storage is excellent, with a built-in four-segment mesh storage belt that gobbles up a 250ml soft flask, light windshell jacket, smartphone and gels.

**The stats**

**In-seam:** 6-inch / **Pockets:** 4 / **Liner:** Yes



**WOMEN**  
**Inov-8 TrailFly Ultra 3" 2-in-1 Short**

£65, inov-8.com

**NOTHING KILLS THE BUZZ** of immersed-in-nature trail runs like chafed thighs and a friction-burned undercarriage. Inov-8's two-in-one trail shorts tackle the problem with soft, protective, stretchy inner shorts. The built-in base layer has silicone dots to stop the legs riding up, while the perforated outer keeps things cool. Storage is solid, too, with one back pocket and two in the waistband.

**The stats**

**In-seam:** 3-inch / **Pockets:** 3 / **Liner:** Yes



**BEST FOR**  
**CYCLING STYLE**



**MEN**  
**Nike Dri-Fit Adv AeroSwift**

£69.95, nike.com

**FOR THOSE WHO** prioritise aerodynamics, these body-hugging half-tights fit the brief. Made from soft, stretchy, woven fabric, the second skin security makes you feel like you're suiting up in muscle-protecting running armour. There's a built-in brief liner and seamless front for preventing chafing, a vented waistband and six pockets, including two side pockets with moisture barriers to keep your gear dry.

**The stats**

**In-seam:** 9-inch / **Pockets:** 6 / **Liner:** Yes



**WOMEN**  
**Sweaty Betty Power 6" Cycling Shorts**

£60, sweatybetty.com

**FITTED AND FLEXIBLE**, with the brand's famous bum-sculpting technology, these cycle-style shorts put a warm-weather spin on Sweaty Betty's popular running leggings. The waistband offers a flattering cut and ensures they stay put. The side pocket will comfortably hold a smartphone, while the zipped back pocket is perfect for keys and gels. They're also available in a 9-inch cut.

**The stats**

**In-seam:** 6-inch / **Pockets:** 2 / **Liner:** No



Adding colour to the raw materials before they're spun into yarns saves water compared with traditional dyeing processes.

The upper uses 100% recycled Flyknit yarns.

The waffle outsole offers good traction on paved roads.

The midsole of fused pieces has less bounce than a sole slab of ZoomX.

**%**  
The shoe is made with at least 50% recycled material by weight.

# How the Nike Pegasus Turbo Next Nature balances performance and sustainability

PRICE: £145 | WEIGHT: 249g (M), 201g (W) | DROP: 10mm | TYPE: Road

NIKE RELEASED THE Pegasus Turbo in 2018, which boasted a bouncy ZoomX midsole, and then, after just one update, killed the shoe. Three years later, it released an eco-friendly version with a similar, if long-winded, name. This shoe doesn't have the same bouncy ride as the original Peg Turbo, largely due to how the midsole foam is constructed, but our speedier testers love its responsive feel.

PEGASUS TURBO NEXT NATURE  
NIKE RUNNING EST. 1972

WORDS: JEFF DENGATE  
PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS HEWAGE





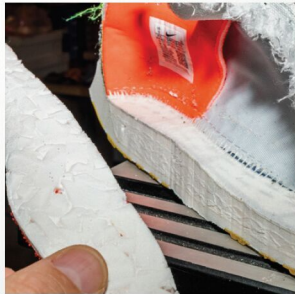
The thick upper can run a little hot.

Unlike Nike's racing shoes with ZoomX, the Peg Turbo Next Nature doesn't have a plate.

ZoomX isn't durable enough to make contact with a road, so a layer of SR-02 foam acts as a 'carrier'.

The midsole is made with at least 55% recycled ZoomX foam scraps.

Cutting the shoe reveals just how much recycled ZoomX sits underfoot, sandwiched by a thin layer of ZoomX and the more durable foam carrier on the bottom.



# Good vibrations



*The best percussive therapy tools, tested and selected by the RW Lab*

**PERCUSSIVE THERAPY:** your neighbours will be glad to hear it has nothing to do with drum lessons, but it does involve rapid and repetitive pressure. The devices used to perform it, most commonly massage guns, have become a common tool in the sporting world in recent years, with athletes from many disciplines pummelling their muscles in pursuit of peak performance. They're accessible to all – you can now pick one up from multiple high street retailers, with prices ranging from affordable to investment level. And with research increasingly supporting the theory that they could offer a long list of benefits, including faster recovery, boosted circulation, increased flexibility and extended range of motion, it may be time to reach for your gun. We put a wide range of products to the test in the RW Lab to select what we believe are the best on the market, which you'll find here.

## 01 Muscle Gun Carbon Go, £139.99, [muscleguns.co.uk](http://muscleguns.co.uk)

### Key specifications

WEIGHT: 510g  
SPEED SETTINGS: 3  
BATTERY LIFE: 3 hours

'Small but mighty' nicely sums this one up. It's about the same size as a smartphone, but it has everything its much chunkier counterparts offer and, in some cases, more. It packs a formidable punch (it's more powerful than the Theragun Mini), you get four interchangeable massage heads to target different areas and our expert tester raved about how well it glided over their muscles. The handy travel case means it can go with you to club sessions and races, too.

**RW LAB VERDICT:** The short handle makes it a bit awkward to reach the lower back, and it wasn't the quietest device we tested, but these are small flaws in an otherwise exceptional product.

**SCORE: 92/100**

## 02 Myomaster MyoPro, £149, [myomaster.com](http://myomaster.com)

### Key specifications

WEIGHT: 1kg  
SPEED SETTINGS: 5  
BATTERY LIFE: 3 hours

Made for athletes by athletes, the MyoPro is ideal for runners who take their training and recovery seriously. The variety of heads it offers is what sets it apart – beyond the usual tips, we were impressed by the 'thumb' (self-explanatory), the 'scraper' (more enjoyable than it sounds) and the 'damper' (which glides over joints like a dream). There are softer options, too, such as the 'ball' for when your DOMS is particularly acute.

**RW LAB VERDICT:** On the larger side, but it's powerful and the variety of heads means you can tailor your massage. It also comes with a handle on the carry case.

**SCORE: 83/100**

## 03 Hyperice Vyper 3, £189, [hyperice.com](http://hyperice.com)

### Key specifications

WEIGHT: 1.2kg  
SPEED SETTINGS: 3  
BATTERY LIFE: 2 hours

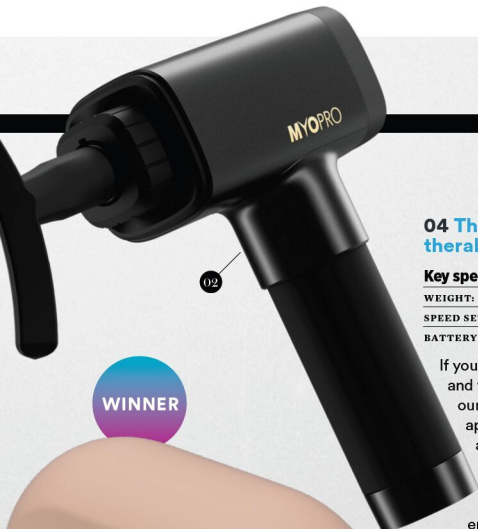
Not technically a massage gun, but this vibrating foam roller sits under the percussive-therapy umbrella. Hyperice claims the Vyper 3 will accelerate your warm-up, speed up your recovery time and keep you moving better. And it certainly helped our tester, leaving them feeling 'thoroughly massaged'. They appreciated the slanted ridge pattern that allows you to get deep into your muscles while the supple foam covering adds comfort.

**RW LAB VERDICT:** Great for all-round recovery, but if you want to target smaller muscles and niggly areas, look elsewhere.

**SCORE: 86/100**







WINNER



#### 04 Theragun Mini, £155, [therabody.com](http://therabody.com)

##### Key specifications

WEIGHT: 650g

SPEED SETTINGS: 3

BATTERY LIFE: 2½ hours

If you're new to percussive therapy and you'd appreciate some guidance, our winner pairs with the Therabody app, which is packed with follow-along tutorials. A single control button turns it on/off and cycles through the speeds, making it a doddle to use, and it's small enough to carry with you (it comes with a handy travel case). It's also extremely quiet, so you won't attract unwanted attention.

**RW LAB VERDICT:** Diminutive but certainly not short on power, the Theragun Mini glides smoothly over skin and comes with three tips for soothing different areas. There's only room for one head in the travel case, but that was our only (minor) gripe. **SCORE: 95/100**

#### 05 Hypervolt Go2, £149.99, [hyperice.com](http://hyperice.com)

##### Key specifications

WEIGHT: 680g

SPEED SETTINGS: 3

BATTERY LIFE: 3 hours

More proof that good things come in small packages. This pocket-sized gun will slip easily into your sports bag, but don't let its modest proportions fool you – it's more than

powerful enough to provide the requisite pummelling to help your tired muscles bounce back. Our tester praised its seamless movement over their skin and appreciated the clear step-by-step instructions. It scores style points for the sleek design, too.

**RW LAB VERDICT:** It lacks a carry case, but the compact, light design means the Hypervolt Go2 is still a highly portable option. There are two massage heads to choose from and access to Hyperice's app comes as standard. **SCORE: 87/100**

#### 06 Recoverfun Plus, £140, [recoverfun.com](http://recoverfun.com)

##### Key specifications

WEIGHT: 1.13kg

SPEED SETTINGS: 5

BATTERY LIFE: 3½ hours

Though bulky, this durable gun comes with six swappable tips, so you can fine-tune your pre-run prep and post-run recovery. Our tester was a big fan of the bullet head for tackling knots and trigger points, and said the spine head worked wonders on the lower back. While it can't compete with the most powerful models we tried, the motor's surprisingly quiet for a large device (even on the highest speed setting), so you can relieve your sore muscles without having to max out the TV volume.

**RW LAB VERDICT:** At more than a kilo, it adds a bit more weight to your bag than other models, but if you're after quality and a reasonable price for home recovery sessions, it's a good choice. **SCORE: 85/100**

## How we test

➔ The *RW Lab* tested a variety of market-leading percussive therapy tools to find those recommended here. Our expert testers trialed the tools for three weeks, using them to prime their muscles and recover around their busy training regimes, with their runs complemented by a

variety of cross-training, including strength work and yoga. The guns were judged on power and impact on the muscles, as well as how easy they were to use, practicality, the effectiveness of their interchangeable heads and how easily they glided over skin and muscles. Bonus points were awarded for innovative features and smart additions, such as carry cases.

# RACE

## LET YOUR RUNNING LOOSE



### RICHMOND PERKS

The low-key but hugely enjoyable Richmond Park 10K proves that, sometimes, less is more, says *RW*'s Rick Pearson



**THERE'S A TIME FOR GLITZY, BIG-CITY RACES** and there's a time for small-scale, relaxed, friendly affairs. The whole of December is, in my experience, a time for the latter. Unless you happen to be a reindeer, you're unlikely to emerge from the festive period fitter than when you started it.

And unless you happen to be a masochist, running in a Santa suit is about as appealing as a night of worldwide chimney-descending. But I've always found that getting an ordinary 10K in the diary goes some way towards making you feel vaguely athletic amid the chocolate, cheese and wine consumption.

December is not, however, a month famed for its excellent weather. The week building up to the Richmond Park 5K, 10K and half marathon has been freezing, so I expect the route to be hard underfoot on this bright day. In acknowledgement of the icy temperatures, the organisers, Fix Events, keep things mercifully quick and simple: turn up, grab your

number, follow a five-minute mass warm-up and start running.

When it comes to racing garb, I've always subscribed to the 'dress for the second mile' philosophy. If you're feeling comfortable and warm at the start, you're probably wearing too many layers. So I'm defiantly wearing shorts and a long-sleeve top, assuring myself that, at some point over the next 10K, I'll be thankful for this decision.

The half marathoners head off 30 minutes before the 5K and 10K runners, and there's a great sense of camaraderie on the route, aided by a smattering of Christmas hats and bobbing antlers.

I'm running the first 5K loop with my wife, who hasn't raced since giving birth to our second child, so we take things relatively easy early on, heading anticlockwise round Richmond Park's popular outer edge.

It's a spot that's favoured by many high-profile runners. Back in 2012, I saw Sir Mo Farah run here (I attempted to keep pace with him

### THE RUNDOWN

**Richmond Park 10K**

**First man:** Matthew Bonstead, 36:13

**First woman:** Ellie Lee, 48:11

**Last finisher:** 1:29:13

**No of starters/finishers:** 88/88



**Finishing stats:**

- <50:00 17%
- 50:00-59:59 58%
- 60:00-69:59 27%
- 70:00+ 18%

for 200m before accepting that Britain's greatest-ever distance runner was also a fair bit faster than a deluded jogger.) There's no Mo here today, but there are plenty of speedy types flying past in the opposite direction – a sight that's always equal parts inspiring and dispiriting.

The start list of this race leans more towards the beginner end of the spectrum. A newbie could do a lot worse than try this traffic-free, low-stress route around what is, arguably, London's best-looking park. Alongside the deer (which my two-year-old insists are, in fact, 'reindeer'), there are panoramic views back into the city. Running here is a tonic for body and soul.

As we approach the end of the first lap, my fingers have finally thawed and I'm ready to push the pace a bit. Any feelings of athletic heroism are tempered by the knowledge that most of the people I'm overtaking are running over twice the distance I am, but it still feels invigorating to be





Like this? Try...  
3 other UK 10Ks

#### SWANSEA BAY 10K

Taking place along the sweep of Swansea Bay, the race attracts both speedsters and novices for one main reason: the route is flat and fast. There's vocal support, too, and an excellent goody bag and medal. Once the running is out of the way, explore nearby Gower Peninsula, with its sandy beaches and cobalt waters.

**Swansea, 17 September,**  
[swanseabay10k.com](http://swanseabay10k.com)

#### GREAT MANCHESTER RUN

With a route that goes past the former site of the famed Hacienda nightclub, this quick 10K is duty-bound to provide an outstanding soundtrack for your run. Local bands and DJs line the route, which definitely makes you run faster (unfortunately, we have no actual science to back this up). There is also a half marathon on offer at this exceptional city centre event.

**Manchester, 21 May,**  
[greatrun.org](http://greatrun.org)

#### GLENLIVET 10K

Renowned for its single malt whisky rather than its road racing, this glen in the Scottish Highlands is, nonetheless, the site of a much-loved 10K. The race, claiming to be 'the most beautiful run in Scotland', takes place in the Cairngorms National Park. It starts and ends at Glenlivet distillery, if you fancy a wee celebratory dram afterwards. **Cairngorms, 2 April,**  
[chss.org.uk](http://chss.org.uk)



running quickly again. The past six months have been something of a rollercoaster, involving a couple of setbacks caused by minor knee surgery and mounting laziness. But you know what they say about injury making you realise

At the Richmond Park 10K, the emphasis was on having fun, but for those in the mood, the race was definitely on

how wonderful it is to run? It's true – and, with 3km to go, this is starting to feel pretty good.

The second half of the loop is mostly downhill, so I try to make the most of that fact and not allow myself to be distracted by my recent enforced absence from races. My approach seems to work because, as the finish line at Sheen Gate comes into view, I break into what I'm certain is a heroic sprint. The finish-line pictures tell a different story, but still, the intent was there.

In a coupon-buster of a result, I somehow sneak into the top 10, an unexpected bonus and something to build on this year. It's an uplifting end to a lovely race in idyllic, if chilly, surroundings. More events should be like this: unfussy, affordable and achievable within a morning. As we wave goodbye to the fabled reindeer of Richmond Park, I vow to return next year.

**The next Richmond Park 5K, 10K and half marathon take place on 16 April:**  
[thefixevents.com](http://thefixevents.com)

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## ROUTE RECCE

# OFFA'S DYKE HALF MARATHON

Race director Joe Cooper guides you from mountaintop to the seashore on this North Walian gem of a race

**WE FIRST STAGED THE RACE IN 2019** with a full and a half marathon, adding the ultra (52.6km) the year after,' says Cooper. 'The route is right on my doorstep and it's a course that appealed to me as a challenge. In December, we do a sea to summit, and the spring version is the same course in reverse. When we go up to the summit, it's a challenging ascent through some stunning countryside with the sea in the distance. Coming down the mountain is equally as impressive. Although the course follows a well-marked trail, it's marshalled and the Air Ambulance are on hand just in case. Even for this spring version, we ask you to take a survival kit in case the weather turns. For the half, we have under 200 runners, but the event is growing.'

This year's race is on 16 April. For more details, visit [out-fit.co.uk](http://out-fit.co.uk)

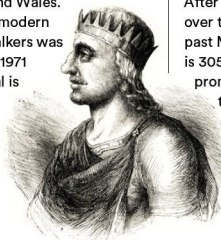
## START

After taking a transfer bus from Prestatyn, runners gather at the Dinorben Arms pub in the village of Bodfari. From here, they're accompanied on the 40-minute walk up to the summit of Moel y Parc which, at 398m high, is the perfect warm-up.

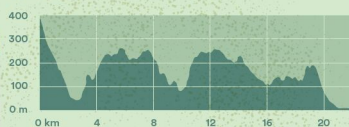


## 1KM

For the entire route, you'll take the well-marked National Trail Offa's Dyke Path. The dyke was constructed in the eighth century by King Offa through the borderlands between what's now England and Wales. The more modern trail for walkers was opened in 1971 and in total is 177 miles (285km) long.



## Course Profile



## 5KM

You're now heading through the heather-clad Clwydian Range, so expect the course to be full of dips and climbs as you go. On a clear day, you can see as far as the Cheshire Plains, Peak District and, out in the Irish Sea, the wind turbines on the horizon.



## 10KM

After a footbridge takes you over the A55, you'll skirt past Mynydd y Cwm, which is 305m high. In 2009, it was promoted to 'Marilyn' status, the name given to hills or mountains in the British Isles above 150m.

## 16KM

As you continue to head towards the coast, you'll pass one of the many Iron Age hillforts scattered along this route. As you near Dyserth, you'll see the spectacular cliffs that rise above this village.

## FINISH

After descending into the seaside town of Prestatyn, the race finishes on its sandy beach. Collect your medal and memento, then enjoy refreshments and relax at the race HQ at the town's Nova leisure centre.



# STILL GOING STRONG: THE FELLSMAN

This Yorkshire Dales classic has been going since the early 1960s

## HOW DID IT START?

IN 1962, a group of Scouts from West Yorkshire decided to take on a hike of around 60 miles through the Yorkshire Dales. They called it The Fellsman Hike, and David Howe and Martin Roulson were the first of just 15 finishers (from 76 entries) in 23 hours and 20 minutes. Word of the challenge spread quickly, with over twice as many entries the following year (and four times the finishers, with a new course record every year for the first seven years). It's still run by the Scouts and these days sees around 400 runners and walkers take part, of which only about 70% make it to the finish.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE?

IT'S A 61-MILE, self-navigated fell run with 24 checkpoints. It starts on a Saturday morning in April and, for most entrants, ends by Sunday lunchtime, by which point they'll have ascended some 3,350m. Entrants can choose their own route from Ingleton to Threshfield, but they must visit each checkpoint in the correct order. This is verified with the iconic Fellsman 'tally', a plastic disc worn around the neck that's scanned by a volunteer at the various checkpoints.

## WHO RUNS IT?

THE RACE HAS BEEN attended by fell running luminaries such as Sabrina Verjee, Jasmin Paris (who

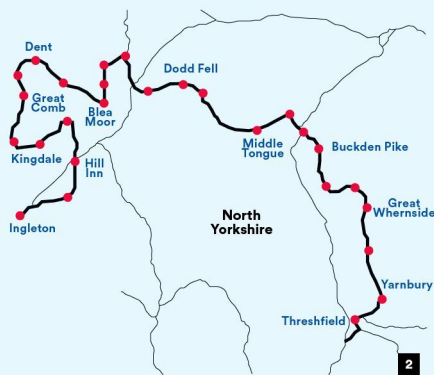


holds the women's record, 11:09) and Jez Bragg (who set the course record of 10:06 in 2011). The word 'hike' has been dropped, but it still attracts hikers. No matter how fast you plan on going, everyone must carry the same safety equipment and needs lots of experience with navigation and exposure to poor weather conditions. Thanks to the lack of a fixed route, the field spreads out quickly, but entrants often group together for safety, resulting in a lot of camaraderie along the way. This is particularly the case at the checkpoints, which are famous for providing excellent food to keep weary runners going.

## THREE REASONS TO RUN

### ● 'JUST THINK OF IT AS ONE LONG PICNIC'

These are the words of event organiser Shona Brunskill, who spent years on the catering team, revolutionising it from basic fare to the smorgasbord on offer today. The 'catering' section of the event's website is a mouth-watering and highly professional list of the foods



- 1 / A runner on the Pennine Way
- 2 / The Fellsman spans more than 60 miles
- 3 / The start line of the 1971 event
- 4 / Checkpoints have always been manned by volunteers
- 5 / Participant handbooks from the early days of The Fellsman

available and their suitability for various diets. Seriously, check it out. You won't find better food at any other running event.

### ● THE SHEER LOGISTICAL MAGNIFICENCE

Every Fellsman requires some 300 volunteers on the day (with up to 1,000 involved at one point or another), most of whom happily lug their own tents and equipment up into the hills and spend much of their weekend there. There are safety





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## WHAT THEY SAY

## THE EVENT ORGANISER

'I'm not a runner. I'm not even a walker. I cater as a hobby and I've been working on The Fellsman since I was 16. I started on a hilltop checkpoint and then a roadside one. I did radios for years, then gravitated to the kitchen one day and ended up running it. Now I do all the catering and the entries. I was the organiser for the past three events. There aren't that many of us, so we all do more than one job.'

– Shona Brunskill

## THE STALWART

'The Fellsman is one of our oldest races and still has a pleasingly low-key vibe, with ace aid stations and helpful and friendly volunteers. It's a self-navigation event through the glorious Yorkshire Dales, with some hearty climbs and hungry bogs – and the weather could do anything. The sort of event people come back to time and again.'

– Damian Hall

## WHO KNEW?

**OVER TO SHONA AGAIN:** 'I have to mention my mother, who in her heyday was making 800 slices of flapjack for checkpoints. It actually improves the longer it's wrapped up. So she used to start in early March and make 800 slices of The Fellsman Fruity Flapjack. We sold some in a shop and they became self-funding at one point due to their popularity – that paid for the checkpoint. That was fun.'

teams, catering teams, start teams, finish line teams, drivers, cooks and much more, all operating behind the scenes in invisible synchronicity. Not a single person profits monetarily from the event. Isn't that beautiful?

## ● YOU CAN DO IT THIS YEAR

Participation numbers haven't really recovered since the pandemic, and you can sign up for the event right up until the day before it starts. At £95, it's outstanding value – and not just because of the vast amounts of exceptionally good food you'll be eating along the way.

## ANYTHING NEW?

**IN 2022,** GPS entrant tracking was trialed. Before this, participants had to travel in groups of four after dark for safety reasons. This could mean hours of waiting at checkpoints for others to group with, or entrants of varying abilities or tiredness being forced together. Entrants can still group, but GPS means lone runners are no longer in danger – although organisers can reintroduce grouping during the race if weather worsens.

## WAY BACK WHEN

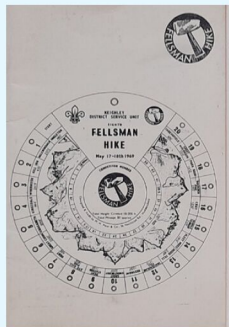
## 1962

– Brazil beat Czechoslovakia 3-1 to win the World Cup in Chile.  
– Marilyn Monroe is found dead in her home in Los Angeles.  
– Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uganda gain independence.

**The Fellsman takes place 29-30 April: [fellsman.org.uk](http://fellsman.org.uk)**



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5

# THE START LIST

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

## Key



Road



Trail



Urban



Rural



Flat



Hilly

## Great Welsh Marathon & Half Marathon

Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, 2 April

If you like camping and the Welsh coastline, this event is a dream come true for you. Both events start and finish at Pembrey Country Park, home to a caravan and camping park, and both events spend almost all of their duration along the coast between Pembrey and Llanelli. The beaches along here are exactly the shade of magnificent gold that you want from a beach, even if there are no guarantees that the weather will be quite as inviting at this time of year. [greatwelshmarathon.co.uk](http://greatwelshmarathon.co.uk)

## We Need To Talk About Chevin

Otley, Yorkshire, 1 April

If you've read the book this event's name ominously riffs on, you'll know you're in for a gruelling ordeal that may well leave you a very different person from the innocent one you were before. The Chevin is a big ridge to the south of Otley, and you'll be zigzagging over and back and up and down it for 14-ish tough trail kilometres. [greatowrunning.com](http://greatowrunning.com)



## Shropshire Way 80K Festival

Craven Arms, Shropshire, 1 April

This event aims to showcase the best of Shropshire food and scenery: two things that are very compatible with running. And there's running galore – the titular 80K, a marathon, a half, a 10K and even one that lets you choose your own distance. All the routes are hilly and while much of Shropshire's best-known foods are meat heavy, vegans and veggies will also be spoiled with delights. [shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk](http://shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk)

## Testway Ultra 2023

Linkenholt, Hampshire, 1 April

The Testway is a Bronze Age pathway that crosses Hampshire from north to south. You'll cover almost its entire distance by doing either the 40 or 50-mile ultra. There will be aid stations every 10 miles, and the route is well-signposted. The finish is in Totton, just outside Southampton, with a bus to bring you back to the start (so you can go home, not to do the whole thing again). [racedirector.co.uk](http://racedirector.co.uk)

## Cathedral to Castle

Lichfield, Staffordshire, 16 April

There are some hills on this 10-mile urban-rural-urban sandwich from Lichfield to Tamworth, however the route is overall downhill – including one rip-roaring descent as you emerge from Hopwas Woods. It's frequently cited as one of the most fun parts of the race, although the support at the finish line at Tamworth Castle is also a major selling point. [stuweb.co.uk](http://stuweb.co.uk)

## Wensleydale Wander

Leyburn, Yorkshire, 15 April

Here's a walking event that generously allows those hurried runners to participate. You'll need to visit checkpoints in the right order, so a few navigating skills would be useful. Choose between a 23 and a 12-mile route, with warm food provided at the halfway point of the longer event. It'll be lambing season, so prepare for cuteness levels to be through the roof, but leave your dog at home. Those canines don't always appreciate a sweet frolicking lamb in the paws-off way that they should. [rotary-ribi.org](http://rotary-ribi.org)



## Endurancelife Pembrokehire

Little Haven, Pembrokeshire, 22 April

Runners in these events – 10K, half, marathon and 56K ultra – will be faced with a dilemma every time they round a new corner: keep running or stop to take a photo of the scenery. At some point, you'll probably have to just keep going if you want to be finished by Christmas. But the wonderful Pembrokeshire views will stay with you for much longer than that. Warning: be prepared for some tough hills. [endurancelife.com](http://endurancelife.com)

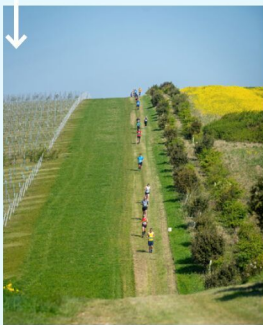


## The Green Run At Rathfinny

Alfriston, Sussex, 23 April



More races like this, please. Care for the environment is at the forefront of every decision: there's no free T-shirt, the medal is made of wood from the UK, there are no plastic cups (bring your own reusable one) and parking is only free for cars that arrive with three or more runners (social media groups are set up to help with carpooling). There's a half marathon or a 10K, both on trails through Rathfinny Wine Estate. [nice-work.org.uk](http://nice-work.org.uk)



## Putney & Fulham Riverside Half Marathon

Putney, London, 2 April



There are parts of the path along the Thames that feel like they're in the remote countryside, and parts that are bustling and urban. This half includes both. Crossing the Hammersmith and Putney bridges, with an elevation gain of only around 30m, there's significant potential for a PB. A more interesting challenge: try to keep up with the rowing teams that train here. If you fall behind, try shouting 'pull, pull' to yourself – it seems to work for the rowers. [runuk.co.uk](http://runuk.co.uk)

## Dorset Ooser Marathon & Half Marathon

Turners Puddle, Dorset, 16 April



Let's get the obvious question out of the way nice and early: the Dorset ooser was a carved wooden head from the village of Melbury Osmond used in musical parades in the 19th century... which somehow leaves us with more questions. Perhaps all is revealed along

### RW POLL

The pre-race meal

40%

Set in stone. Never changes.

42%

I have a couple of reliable meals to choose from.

18%

Anything will do, I'm not fussy.

Based on a Twitter poll with 141 votes

## RW ONLINE RACE LISTINGS

Thirsty for more? Go to [runnersworld.com/uk](http://runnersworld.com/uk) and click 'Events' for the UK's most comprehensive race database, where you can search over 4,500 races by location, terrain, distance and more.

the way on this pair of muddy, hilly trail events that showcase wonderful Dorset countryside. There will be aid stations every seven or eight kilometres. [dorset-ooser-marathon.co.uk](http://dorset-ooser-marathon.co.uk)

## Forces March

Ilfracombe, Devon, 26-30 April



In August 1942, a regiment of soldiers were training in Devon when their general decided that they should march back to their camp – 135 miles away in Bulford. The company that arrived first, after five days, ended up spearheading the Allied invasion on D-Day. At least when you get to Bulford after five days of gruelling running, you can just have a nice rest instead of fighting a battle. [forcesmarch.org.uk](http://forcesmarch.org.uk)

## Isle of Man Easter Festival of Running

Isle of Man, 7-9 April



This festival allows you to do three races in three days over the Easter weekend – all while exploring the rather lovely Isle of Man. The first is a Good Friday 10K road race in the south between Port Erin and Port St Mary (with transport to and from the start line included in the entry fee). Next up is a hill run on grass in the town of Peel – 4 miles (for men) or 3 miles (for women) – and many runners elect to run the 11 miles back to Douglas afterwards, which is a perfect warm-up for the 5K race along Douglas promenade on Easter Sunday morning. What a perfect weekend. [easterfestival.info](http://easterfestival.info)



## Peak Rail 7 Runner Versus Steam

Rowsley, Derbyshire, 10 April



Fancy a change from chasing after another PB? This is an unusual one – you can chase a train instead! In this event, you'll be running alongside an actual steam train for seven miles as it chugs along from Rowsley to Matlock and then back again. The route is almost entirely off-road and even includes a few flights of steps, but the train line will be in view for almost the entire course – and your supporters can even buy discounted tickets to cheer you along from the comfort of the train. [matlockac.org.uk](http://matlockac.org.uk)

## Rat Race Ultra Tour Of Arran

Brodick, Buteshire, 1-2 April



Arran is unquestionably one of the most beautiful areas of the UK, and with this event you get to explore almost all of it. Whether running over 45km through difficult terrain for two consecutive days is the best way to enjoy its rugged coastlines, sweeping mountains and dense forests is another question entirely. But you will certainly leave this island paradise with the feeling of having done something quite remarkable. Oh, and extremely sore legs. Worth it, though. [ultratourofarran.co.uk](http://ultratourofarran.co.uk)

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**THE HAMPSHIRE HOPBIT  
 TRAIL MARATHON AND  
 HALF MARATHON**

**Sunday 18 June 2023**

**Marathon** (9am start)  
**Half marathon** (10.30am start)  
 Kingsclere, Hampshire.

Marathon competitors must be 18 years or over on race day or Half Marathon 17 years or older.

Trail Running Association Permit TRAS134 (Marathon) and TRAS135 (Half Marathon). The event will be held under UK Athletics Rules.

**8th  
 Year**

*“Everything was amazing from the course, the views, the people, the marshals, the finish.”*

*“Love the Hampshire Hoppit, always challenging, but with the gift of the most wonderful views. Wonderfully supported all the way round you can't fail to love this race.”*



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# Often feel fatigued? Try **magnesium**

Feeling tired and don't know why? You're not alone. According to a recent study, less than half of us consume our recommended daily amount of magnesium, a mineral that helps turn the food we eat into energy.

Best known for helping to reduce tiredness and fatigue, magnesium is also vital for our health.

Deficiency can cause mood swings, migraines, eye twitches and muscle cramps.

If you have low magnesium levels, you are also less likely to get a good night's sleep.

Magnesium is present in foods such as black beans, bananas and pumpkin seeds, but to get the benefits we need to absorb it into our bodies.

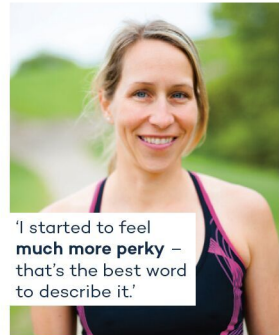
One way to ensure we consume a consistent level of magnesium is by taking a daily supplement – but not all supplements are equal.

Your body's ability to absorb the magnesium depends on the way that the supplement is made.

'Most supplements use magnesium oxide – it is the most common form, as it has a high concentration of magnesium but it's not easily released into the body,' explains Dr Miriam Ferrer PhD, head of product development at FutureYou Cambridge.

'Taking more magnesium to try and make up for the problem isn't the best approach, as too much can cause an upset stomach so we created Magnesium+ using magnesium lactate which is twice as absorbable as a standard magnesium oxide supplement. This means you need much less per capsule to deliver the same amount, making it a much more efficient way to take this essential mineral.'

Reviews gathered on independent website



'I started to feel **much more perky** – that's the best word to describe it.'

Trustpilot speak of its effectiveness. 'It gives your body a magnesium boost without upsetting your digestive system,' writes Robert.

And Nicole, 57, says: 'I genuinely started to feel different within a couple of weeks. I started to feel much more perky – that's the best word to describe it.'

## Free MAGNESIUM

Leading Cambridge company to offer scientifically proven energy range supplements for free.

\*Just pay £1.50 postage

FutureYou Cambridge, a nutraceutical company known for its well-researched nutritional supplements, is giving away packs of its flagship energy product to new customers.

It comes after the Cambridge firm received a flurry of positive reviews for its best-selling energy product on Trustpilot, the

independent online review platform.

Adam Cleveley, FutureYou Cambridge's Chair, explains the thinking behind the offer:

'After receiving so much positive feedback on Magnesium+,

**'We're confident that people will love it'**



our team is confident that people will love it, and we wanted to give people the opportunity to try it for free.'

### HOW TO CLAIM YOUR FREE PACK

To claim your free 28 day Magnesium+ subscription trial pack worth £11.50, visit [FutureYouOffers.co.uk](https://FutureYouOffers.co.uk) or freephone

**0800 808 5740**  
quoting code

**MGF604**

Your first box is free (just pay £1.50 postage) and you will be enrolled into a flexible subscription costing £11.50 every 28 days, which you can cancel at any time, without obligation.



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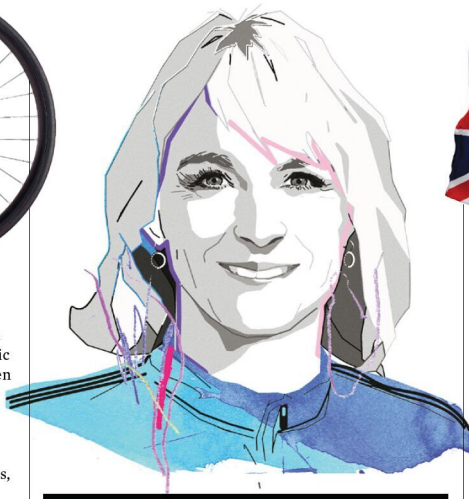
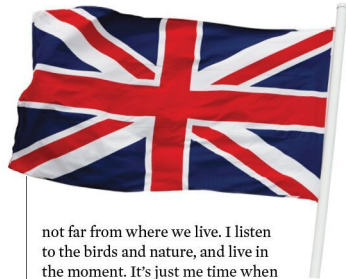
**FutureYou**  
CAMBRIDGE

\*Magnesium contributes to: a reduction of tiredness and fatigue, a normal energy-yielding metabolism, normal functioning of the nervous system, normal muscle function and normal psychological function. Introductory offer valid for new UK customers only. Offer expires 28th May 2023. See [FutureYouHealth.com/MGF604](https://FutureYouHealth.com/MGF604) for full terms and conditions.

I'M A RUNNER

# LOUISE MINCHIN

THE FORMER *BBC BREAKFAST* PRESENTER AND BROADCASTER, 54, ON RUNNING A MARATHON BY ACCIDENT

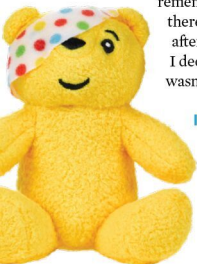


**IT TOOK ME** until the age of 45 to rediscover my love of sport. It was in 2012 and the *BBC Breakfast* team organised a challenge at the Olympic velodrome. Back then, I'd never been on a cycle track or ridden a racing bike before, but in front of 4,000 people, I crossed the finishing line and went 'Wow!' I'd forgotten how much I loved sport. Soon afterwards, I bought myself a road bike and did my first triathlon a year later.



**I LOVED SPORT** at school and did everything from netball to rounders, although I was never great at running. I was best at swimming, but when I was about 15, I looked at myself in the mirror one day and saw these big, muscly shoulders and didn't like them; I literally stopped training and racing there and then. I gave up doing sport for almost 30 years, which, looking back, was very sad.

**AS A TOTAL** one-off about 20 years ago, I did the Great North Run. At the time I was doing Radio 5 Live and randomly signed up while on the radio without doing proper training or knowing anything about running. I remember the atmosphere there was fantastic, but after I completed it, I decided that running wasn't for me.



**I RAN MY FIRST MARATHON** by accident. Chris Evans had asked me to do the New York City

Marathon in 2016 for Children in Need, but then I got injured and couldn't train. On the day, I had my trainers and race number, so I wandered to the start. Then I began running – intending to drop out after eight miles – but completed the entire race in 5:51, which was amazing as I wasn't even going to do it.



**I'M HOPING IT'S THIRD TIME LUCKY** and I can run the London Marathon for the first time this year. Injury has denied me twice – once with a foot issue and most recently my knee – but I did manage the virtual one when I was fit. Last November, I was starting training from scratch following a knee op with a Couch to 5K programme, so it will be a long way back to complete the full 26.2 miles.

**I USED TO SAY I HATED** running, but now I love it. What I call my 'fun run' is doing a half marathon distance out over the hills in Wales,

**'I used to say I hated running, but now I love it. It's me time when my mind wanders'**



● Louise presents the *Wattbike* podcast *Push Your Peak*. When she runs the London Marathon, she is supporting *5K Your Way, Move Against Cancer* ([5kyourway.org](http://5kyourway.org))

not far from where we live. I listen to the birds and nature, and live in the moment. It's just me time when I let my mind wander.

**REPRESENTING GREAT BRITAIN** for my age category at the World and European triathlon championships made me so proud. My teammates were hugely supportive, with my main goal being not to finish last. Although I came out of the water in a decent position, I was overtaken by those much stronger on the bike and some good runners during the rest of the race. It was competitive and enormous fun.

**AMONG THE MOST AMAZING PLACES** I've been is the Namib desert [in Africa]. I was doing a 100-mile trek for Sports Relief with Rob Rinder and the landscape was mind-blowing. For some reason I became our navigator and would say, 'Let's go this way!' and head towards another huge sand dune and hope we were going the right way. But I loved feeling very small in this enormous environment, which is what I like about some of the remote places where I run.

**I FIND IT FASCINATING** chatting to amazing sports people to find out what motivates them. I learn something new in every one of my podcasts, whether it's from the incredible Kevin Sinfield or Mimi Anderson, who is my hero and also now my friend. What they have in common is that they put the effort and hours in – they don't just turn up and the magic happens. They all pay careful attention to the detail, which is what I try to copy, too.



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