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RUNNER'S

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The Plan For Maximum
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**How Running
Keeps Your
Brain Young**

**THE KEY TO
YOUR NEXT PB**

14 Must-Try
Spring
Races

**Build Muscle
At Any Age**

+

**The Amazing
76-Year-Old
'Irongran'**

27

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FRESH^x
FOAM⁺
TEMPO




new balance

A full-page photograph of a man running on a paved path. He is wearing a light green t-shirt, black shorts, and black New Balance sneakers with red and yellow accents. The background features a stone wall, trees, and a building under bright, sunny conditions with a lens flare effect.

SOFT BUILT SMARTER

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2020

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COACH

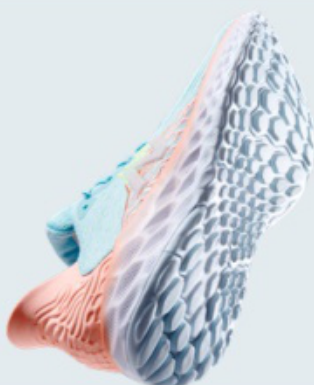
GEAR

RACE



Shoe Guide 2020

For our spring/summer shoe guide, we tried, we tested, then we tried and tested again. Turn to page 79 to see the 17 pairs that made the grade



ON THE COVER

Photographer: Sean Laurenz.
Stylist: Olga Kotova. **Model:** Altina. **Clothes:** T-shirt and vest, On; tights, Asics; shoes, Adidas; watch, Polar

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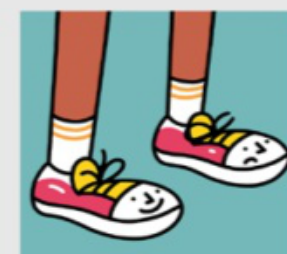
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NIKE'S ALPHAFLY

The AlphaFly is based on Kipchoge's sub-2 shoe and can be used in the Tokyo Olympics. runnersworld.com/uk/nike-alphafly



SHOE AND TELL

What your shoes really think about you. It's not flattering. runnersworld.com/uk/what-new-shoes-think-about



HYPERION ELITE

Brooks high-end race offering comes with some bold performance claims. runnersworld.com/uk/brooks-hyperion-elite

RAVE RUN

TARMACHAN RIDGE, SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS



THE LOCATION

The Tarmachan Ridge is a prominent viewpoint as you take the A85 towards the West Highlands of Scotland. From the summit of Meall nan Tarmachan, a 1,044m Munro (a Scottish mountain over 3,000ft/ 914.4m high), the ridge winds its way southwest for 3.5km, over the peak of Meall Garbh and beyond, offering great views north over Glen Lyon as you go. Take advantage of a car park at 450m, or be a purist and start at the roadside 250m further down.

THE CHALLENGE

Meall nan Tarmachan is within the boundary of Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve, which the National Trust for Scotland manages for conservation and public access. Home to seven Munros, the reserve offers trail and mountain runners a variety of challenges, from a few hours to all day (or even overnight).

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What's your go-to running superfood

(No basis in scientific fact necessary)

'Kale, quinoa, broccoli and chia seed salad. If I know this is waiting for me when I get back from a long run, I keep running until I am very far from home.'
– John Carroll

'Crisps. You don't get them very often at race fuel stations, only on longer trail events and, sometimes, international marathons. The texture and saltiness are a blessed relief from goopy sugar and they always pick me up.'
– Kerry McCarthy

'Chocolate milk: I was delighted when I found out my favourite childhood drink had the perfect carbs-to-protein ratio for faster recovery.'
– Andy Dixon

'Cheddar cheese. For the optimum amounts of calcium, protein...who am I kidding? I've never studied the nutrient profile, but it makes me happy and fuels my miles, especially when melted on granary toast with a healthy splodge of Lea & Perrins.'
– Joe Mackie

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EDITOR'S LETTER



RUNNING-SHOE TALK has gone mainstream recently. The game-changing effect of Nike's Vaporfly series has got more people debating the whys and wherefores of athletic footwear than at any time since the barefoot/

minimal trend of over a decade ago.

Certainly, the new shoe arms race has had ramifications for elite competition – the preservation of a level playing field required World Athletics to update its rulebook, which it has done. But we amateur runners have never had it so good. As our feature on page 28 explores, all the big shoe brands are busy developing next-generation models designed to help runners get maximum benefits from their efforts. And there's nothing unethical about this – the shoes aren't going to run a marathon by themselves. If you want to see our pick of the best current shoe releases, check out our *Spring/Summer Shoe Guide* on page 79.

Elsewhere, we have an extract from our columnist Paul Tonkinson's excellent new book on page 36. Tonky has been a familiar voice in this magazine for over a decade, but the feature gives a compelling glimpse into the formative role running has played throughout his life – from when he was a boy growing up in Scarborough to today's comic, family man and all-round good egg. And, may I say, he's got a sprint-face to die for (page 40).

ANDY DIXON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

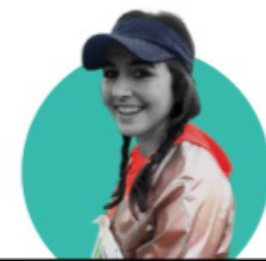
@RW_ed_Andy

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ADHARANAND FINN

The ultrarunner and author of *Running with the Kenyans* looks back on the moment that sparked the East African nation's remarkable rise in our sport. Read the story behind Kip Keino's 1500m gold at the 1968 Mexico Olympics in *Mile High* on p58.



SCARLETT WRENCH

The keen runner and *Men's Health* features editor canvassed the experts and delved deep into the science to find nutritional gold in unexpected places. Crack open the beer and pork crackling, and tuck in to *27 Most Unlikely Superfoods* on p50.

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WARM-UPS

The TIPS YOU NEED to GET UP to SPEED

MIND CONTROL

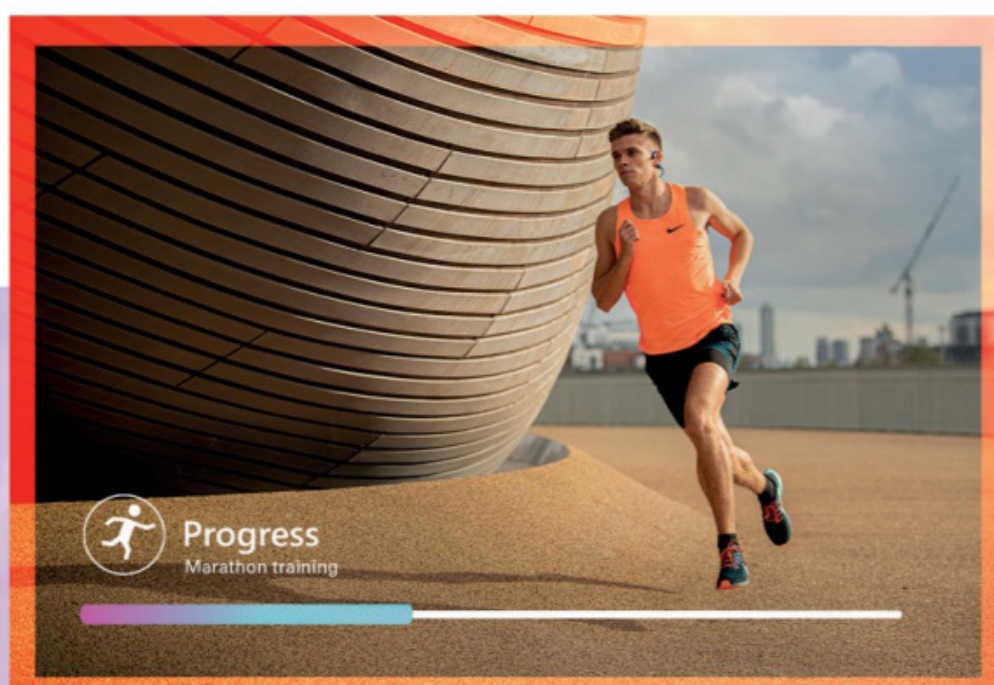
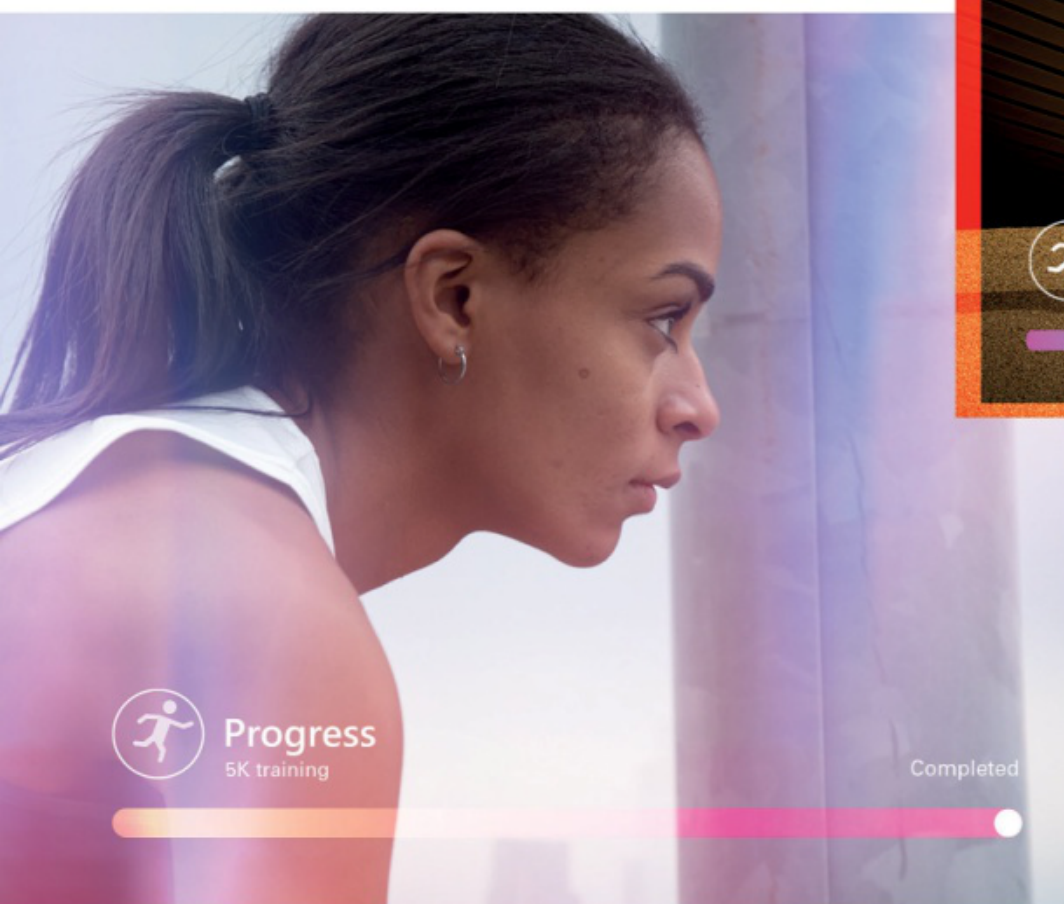
*Getting out there helps you
stay sharp as the years go by*

ADULTS OVER 50 who take up aerobic exercise can boost brain function and cognition, according to research.¹

The 12-week study involved 37 sedentary adults aged between 57 and 75, who were assigned to an exercise or control group.

The exercise group did one hour of aerobic activity three times a week, on a treadmill or on a stationary bike. They showed better cognitive function and improved blood flow in the brain after the study.

The lead author of the study, Dr Sandra Bond Chapman, says the results show the 'tremendous benefit of aerobic exercise on a person's memory and demonstrates that aerobic exercise can reduce both the biological and cognitive consequences of ageing'.



When we run, we're part of something. We might run solo, but we're never alone; we're united by freedom, by possibilities, by determination to be what we were meant to be. And though every runner and every goal is different, we're united by resolve to push our boundaries and redefine what we're capable of with every step. And we're here to help you get there, whatever your destination. Different purpose, one run. **Let's run together.**

ONE RUN.

RAISE THE AGE LIMIT

Getting older is no barrier to building muscle

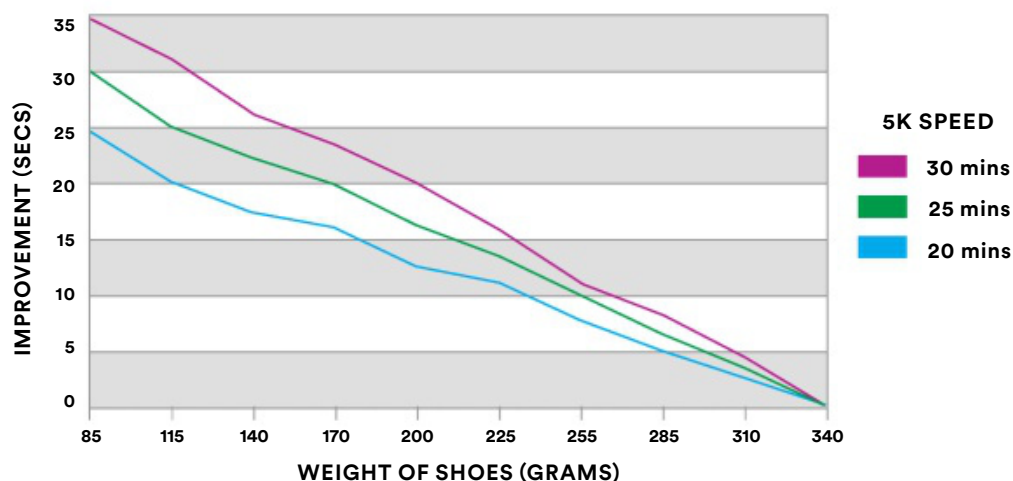
MOVE A MUSCLE
Good things come to those who weight

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD to have fun, fall in love or...build muscle. A new study¹ suggests that even if you've spent your first 70 years as a stranger to running or the gym, you can still get leaner and stronger if you begin exercising. The study looked at two sets of men over the age of 70. One was comprised of lifelong runners or cyclists; the other was made up of non-active men. First, muscle biopsies were taken and then both groups performed 6 x 10 reps

on the leg-extension machine in the gym. Two days later, biopsies were taken again to see how their muscles were responding to the exercise. The results showed both groups had an equal capacity to build muscle in response to exercise. 'Our study clearly shows that it doesn't matter if you haven't been a regular exerciser throughout your life: you can still derive benefit from exercise whenever you start,' says lead researcher Dr Leigh Breen.

LIGHTER SHOE, QUICKER TIMES

Looking for a 5K PB? Get a pair of lighter shoes.²



YOUR DAILY TREAD

What piece of gym equipment gives you the most bang for your buck? Rowing machine? Elliptical? Actually, it's the treadmill. Study³ participants burned more calories and had higher heart rates on the treadmill than on other cardio machines. Here's the top five:

1. Treadmill (KCAL BURN: 378/30 MINS)
2. Stepmill (KCAL BURN: 354/30 MINS)
3. Elliptical (KCAL BURN: 303/30 MINS)
4. Upright bike (KCAL BURN: 300/30 MINS)
5. Arc trainer (KCAL BURN: 294/30 MINS)

GET STRONGER WITH AGE

Building muscle in your later years will do a lot more than give you some extra definition



BONE STRENGTH
Many studies have shown that resistance training can help to build bone strength – something particularly important in older runners.



LONGER LIFE
A study, published in the *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences*, found that people with low muscle strength are 50 per cent more likely to die earlier than their stronger peers.



GET HAPPIER
Resistance training in addition to aerobic activity was associated with lower likelihood of depression and anxiety in a study⁴ of Australian women.

PROTEIN POWER



MADE EASY



A 110g portion provides 30g of protein (60% of the RDI for protein for adults).
Selected stores only. Subject to availability.

A TRUSTED SAUCE?

If you overuse condiments, you may not relish the effect on your health

ALMOST HALF OF BRITS think that condiments should be part of every meal, according to a new survey.¹ But many condiments are crammed with salt or sugar. To help you choose wisely, here's the saucy detail.

KETCHUP

What's in it? The UK's favourite contains one teaspoon of sugar per tablespoon.

Healthier choice: Make a salsa with chopped tomatoes, coriander and lime juice.

MAYO

What's in it? It's the fattiest of condiments. One tablespoon contains 10-12g of fat.

Healthier choice: Try low-fat yoghurt, on its own or mixed with lemon juice and chopped herbs.

SWEET

CHILLI

SAUCE

What's in it? It has almost two teaspoons of sugar per tablespoon.

Healthier choice: Make your own: blend a red chilli

(deseeded), two red peppers, 1 cm fresh ginger, four dates, the juice of one lime and a pinch of black pepper.

MUSTARD

What's in it?

One teaspoon of mustard can contain 0.43g of salt.

Healthier choice: Mustard powder is the best alternative – add water and it's practically salt-free.

SOY SAUCE

What's in it?

Each tablespoon has nearly half the recommended daily amount of salt.

Healthier choice: Low-salt versions are not healthy, either, so it's best to reduce the quantity you use: pour into a teaspoon rather than splashing it straight from the bottle.





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DOWN
AND OUT
Marathon
runners need
to look after
their lower legs

LOOK OUT BELOW

For injury-free marathon training, strengthen your lower legs

WHEN IT COMES TO STRENGTH TRAINING, look down: a study¹ suggests you should be working on everything below the knee. The study analysed data from 14 international championships between 2007 and 2018, to see what types of injuries affected which types of athletes. While thigh-muscle injuries were the main issues with sprinters, marathon runners suffered mostly from lower-leg muscle injuries. This is not surprising, given how much impact force you put through your legs on the run – three times your body weight. Factor in your, er, ‘individual’ gait and all the muscles working in sync to absorb shock, stabilise your body and help keep moving you forward, and you can see why it’s critical to stay on top of lower-leg self-care to avoid extended periods out of action.

Quote me on that

‘OUR GREATEST GLORY IS NOT IN NEVER FAILING, BUT IN RISING EVERY TIME WE FALL’ -CONFUCIUS

CALF GUARDS

Mat Forzaglia, certified trainer and coach at Neo U Fitness, describes three lower-leg exercises you should perform twice a week



BENT-KNEE CALF RAISES

Holding light dumbbells, stand on the edge of a step. Shift weight to one foot and bend that knee. Balancing on the ball of that foot, lift your heel, pause, then lower. Do 3 sets of 15 on each leg.



ECCENTRIC CALF RAISES

Stand on a step, heels hanging off the edge. Push up onto your toes. Then, slowly (to a count of 10) drop your heels below the level of the step. Do 3 sets of 15 reps.



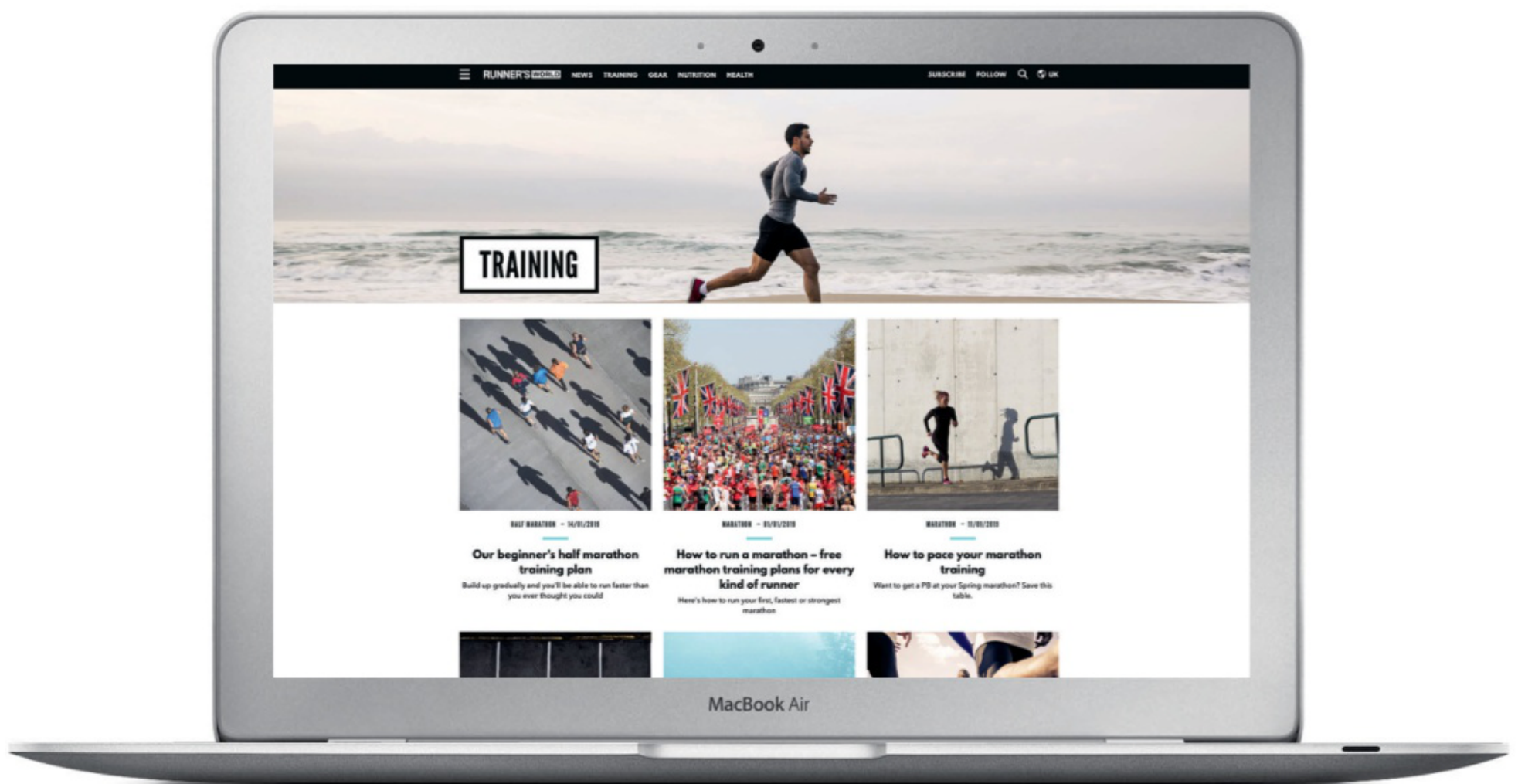
FARMER'S WALK ON TOES

Hold dumbbells (8-16kg) at your sides. Rise onto your toes and walk forward for 60 secs. If you feel you could've gone longer than 60 secs, increase the weight. Do 3 sets.

‘Without failure, we limit our potential to learn,’ says personal trainer and online coach Harvey Lawton. ‘Injury setbacks can prove incredibly challenging, but your ability to accept them and your determination to return stronger will see you through those periods. Once diagnosed and free from pain, focus on what you can do versus what you can’t. Add strength training, prioritise working on imbalances/weakness that may have caused the injury, and re-establish your goals.’
themovementblueprint.co

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OVERTRAINING =
OVERINDULGING
Yep, we're sure
it seemed a good
idea at the time

WARM-UPS

MIND+HEALTH

HASTY MOVE

*Overtraining makes you
more impulsive, which means
you make poor decisions*

TOO MUCH TRAINING COULD lead to bad decisions about what you eat and buy, according to new research.¹ For the study, participants overtrained for three weeks and were then tested on their decision-making skills. These involved answering questions along the lines of, 'What would you prefer: £10 now or £50 in six months?' The overtrained athletes were more likely to choose immediate (£10) over delayed (£50) gratification, compared with a control group. One possible reason cited is that, as the subjects became more physically exhausted, there was less firing in the middle frontal gyrus (MFG) part of their brains, the area associated with cognitive control. So, if you find yourself making bad, impulsive decisions, have a look at your training load – it could be part of the problem.

MOUTHING OFF

A new study² has found antibacterial mouthwash can severely limit the blood pressure-lowering benefits of exercise. It found that mouthwash can interfere with a process in which mouth bacteria is involved in the production of nitric oxide, which helps sustain lower blood pressure.

ZERO

*Doing 35+ hours of exercise per
week will not put your heart at
extra risk, says a new study.³*

BANK SLEEP TO RUN WELL

*You might be able
to bank extra sleep
to beat pre-race
sleeplessness, says
a new study.⁴
Twelve volunteers
went to bed two
hours earlier than
normal for six
nights. They then
performed
a series of tests.
The performance of
those who'd had
extra sleep was, on
average, 3.9 per
cent better than
those who had not.
Here's how to get
better shut-eye:*



BATH

A STUDY⁵ FOUND
THAT TAKING A HOT
BATH 90 MINUTES
BEFORE BED COULD
HELP YOU TO FALL
ASLEEP QUICKER.



BOOK

THE BLUE LIGHT ON
MOBILES IS KNOWN
TO DISRUPT SLEEP.
READ A RUNNING
BOOK INSTEAD.



BED

A COOLER
BEDROOM
TEMPERATURE (16C),
IS LINKED TO
DEEPER SLEEP.





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REASONS TO BOOK

STUNNING SETTING

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You will experience practices such as sound baths, massage, yoga and meditation, and eat a delicious menu during your stay. You'll learn all about your personal dosha

(biological energy) during a private consultation with an Ayurvedic doctor, and get tips on how you can integrate Ayurvedic principles into your busy life.

LEARN ABOUT THE DOSHAS

There are three doshas: vata, pitta and kapha. According to Ayurvedic principles, we are a mixture of all three. The doctor will identify the best way to keep yours in balance.

TO BOOK

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itinerary

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breaks from *Runner's World* at **RUNNERSWORLD.COM/UK/TRAVEL**

THE VIKINGS ARE RUNNING! p22 + WHERE'S MY MOJO? p27

HUMAN()RACE

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



CANNY OLD IRON

At 76, marathon and
Ironman veteran
Edwina 'Eddie'
Brocklesby knows
it's smart to go slower

WORDS: DAVID SMYTH. PHOTOGRAPHS: PAL HANSEN (MAIN IMAGES), @SUSANNEHAKUBA (ADDITIONAL)

→ **THEY CALL HER ‘IRONGRAN’,** and although that triathlon suit does look a little like a superhero’s spandex, Edwina ‘Eddie’ Brocklesby is not a new character in the Marvel cinematic universe. She’s a 76-year-old grandmother of four who has been demonstrating what’s possible for older athletes since she completed her first marathon at 53.

In 2005, Eddie ran the London Marathon in 3:45 – a fine time for most people, never mind a 62-year-old. Ten Ironmans later – six completed – the Bristol-born former social worker is Britain’s oldest competitor in these epic endurance challenges. ‘To actually finish one is a brilliant feeling. That’s probably what motivates me to have another go,’ she says.

Her eleventh will be in Austria in July, when she’ll be 77 and going elbow-to-elbow against Dexter Yeats, a 75-year-old American grandmother. However, they will both have to keep going if they are to trump Madonna ‘The Iron Nun’ Buder, a now-retired Catholic sister from Missouri, US, who, in 2012, finished an Ironman in Canada at the age of 82.

When Eddie is not training with London running club Serpentine or riding bike simulations with Zwift, she works as the director of Silverfit, a charity that offers exercise classes for

older people in everything from Nordic walking to cheerleading. Currently operating in 17 venues in nine London boroughs, Silverfit is looking to expand further, possibly starting Couch to 5K-type sessions to build members towards participation in parkruns.

‘We are run by older people, so there’s no deterrent factor of people feeling they might not fit in,’ she explains. ‘There’s also a strong social element, which is what we think keeps people coming back. It’s about making it sociable and making it fun.’

It was the social aspect of running that encouraged Eddie to take it up more seriously in the aftermath of her husband’s early death from colon cancer. She was 52 at the time, had been married to Phil for 30 years and hadn’t done much sport since school, beyond a little netball and squash. She joined a tiny club near Nottingham, where she lived – South Notts Athletics Pacers, or SNAP. She found the support in the club to be invaluable, and has said running was more effective than the therapy she had also signed up for after her husband’s death.

The club later folded due to its small size, but not before securing a place for Eddie to represent them in her first London Marathon. ‘Getting a place was quite a privilege and in my view

‘I’M CONSCIOUS OF NOT PUSHING TOO HARD RUNNING OUTDOORS, AS I DON’T WANT TO INJURE MY KNEE’

I had to do the club justice, so I started doing some serious training.”

Having wrecked her anterior cruciate ligament while skiing, and with experience of triathlons from supporting her son at various events, Eddie decided to shift focus from constant running to multidiscipline sport. This was despite the fact that she had never learned to swim properly. After a year of lessons, at 65 she could finally do a passable front crawl, but swimming remains her least favourite part of the event (she likes cycling the best).

Despite her triathlon experience and ongoing training, including a recent coaching holiday, she says that her swimming still leaves something to be desired. ‘Everyone said I kick off brilliantly at the beginning of a lap, but then the kicking ceases totally and my legs begin to sink,’ she admits.

She had supported her son on three occasions while he did an Ironman, so at 66 that was the obvious next step for her. In 2009, she completed her first, alongside him, in Lanzarote. She says she has never felt patronised at a start line – ‘People are always really encouraging’ – though the way the Ironman is set up can make life somewhat harder for slower swimmers like her.

‘It’s a rolling start and you position yourself for that, so you might start 20 minutes after the stronger swimmers. But the cut-off is real time, not your chip time, so if you place yourself honestly towards the back, you’re put at quite a disadvantage.’

Surprisingly, perhaps, Eddie does not believe she has had to make too many adjustments to ensure she, as an older athlete, performs as well and as safely as possible. ‘I’m conscious of not pushing myself too hard when running outdoors, as I don’t want to

Previous page and right: Eddie has represented GB in European and world triathlon and duathlon championships

Bottom: Eddie always feels better after a run





For more information on Silverfit, visit silverfit.org.uk

injure my knee,' she says. 'But I don't change much. I just accept it's OK to be slower. In an Ironman I enjoy the run, because it's later on and more sociable. You're not going in the heat of the sun like the faster people.'

Eddie may be getting older but she certainly isn't slowing down – she has already has two more triathlons and the Prudential RideLondon Surrey 100 in the diary for 2020. She's a brilliant advert for keeping going at an age

when many would be advising a feet-up lifestyle. 'There have been lots of benefits that I'd never have thought of,' she says. 'I saw a specialist at the hospital recently who said I haven't lost as much hearing as most older people. I knew about improvements to my muscles and the cardiac stuff but they were talking about how beneficial physical activity is to my brain, as well. There are odd things, too – I think my hair is stronger than it used to be!'

EDDIE'S 3 TIPS FOR GETTING FIT IN YOUR LATER YEARS

1. MAKE IT SOCIABLE

'Try and find somebody else who would be interested in walking around the block with you, then walking a bit faster, and possibly breaking into a jog. It's more difficult to keep it up if you're doing it alone. With Serpentine, the key to me wanting to travel to training on a Wednesday night is the fact that I'll end up with 20 others in a local pub.'

2. GET OUTSIDE

'Being out in the fresh air is so therapeutic. I always feel good when I've been outside. Look on your local authority's website to find out what facilities they have. As our population gets older, there's been a lot done to encourage older people to be more physically active. And find a parkrun – I think parkrun is brilliant.'

3. MAKE IT FUN

'That's the big one for me. There's not enough said about how enjoyable this can be. Look at the photos of our Silverfit cheerleading classes – there's a smile on everybody's face!'



BY THE NUMBERS

THE MILLION SQUID

85FT-LONG VIKING LONGSHIP, YORK,

➔ **HOW'S THIS FOR AN OAR-SOME CHALLENGE:** the people at Rat Race Adventure Sports have built an 85ft Viking longboat, which will be setting sail at marathons this spring. The boat, *The Million Squid*, weighs a quarter of a ton and is hauled by 40 bloodthirsty raiders/runners. Having made its way around the York Marathon in 2019, it will be launched at 26.2s in locations such as Brighton, Edinburgh and that old Viking stronghold of Milton Keynes. The hope is that these marathons will raise one million pounds for Children With Cancer UK.

250KG

Weight of the boat – 6.25kg per person.

FIVE

MEMBERS OF YORK CREW WHO'D NEVER RUN A MARATHON BEFORE.

15

BEERS AT THE BEER LOVERS' MARATHON IN LIEGE, BELGIUM, THE SQUID'S RACE IN MAY.

6:30

THE BOAT'S MARATHON TIME IN YORK.

85

THE LENGTH OF THE BOAT, IN FEET. VIKING SHIPS COULD BE AS LONG AS 121FT.

793 AD

THE YEAR IN WHICH VIKINGS FIRST INVADDED THE UK, LANDING IN LINDISFARNE.

£1,000,000

Amount of money Rat Race is hoping to raise with the longboat marathons for Children With Cancer UK.

40

PEOPLE IN THE BOAT - BELIEVED TO BE A WORLD RECORD FOR A MARATHON FANCY-DRESS COSTUME.

ZERO

Number of arguments, which is amazing.



ANTONIO ARREOLA AND STEVE SCHMIDT

First runners to run sub-3s over six decades

Running a sub-three marathon is a once-in-a-lifetime ambition for many runners. But, remarkably, two runners from the United States have now done so for six decades. Antonio Arreola (59) and Steve Schmidt (60) achieved the stunning feat at the Houston Marathon in January – and are the first runners to do so. The two men, who had not met beforehand, finished hand in hand, having run the last five miles together. Schmidt finished in 2:58:07, while Arreola's time was 2:58:18. Arreola, who set his PB of 2:46:17 in 2001, first cracked the three-hour barrier in 1976, with a time of 2:58:03, when he was 18. 'Today was the highlight of my 48 years in running,' he said, but admitted that the race was his 'most nerve-racking ever'. Schmidt – who has a PB of 2:37:03, set in 1984 – ran his first sub-three in 1979, also aged 18, finishing in 2:46:22. 'I'm elated and a little relieved,' he said after his latest race.



JORDAN MADDOCKS

Top banana over 26.2 miles

Talk about some impressive mile splits. Jordan Maddocks averaged 6:09min/miles at the Arizona Rock 'n' Roll Marathon in January – dressed as a banana. The runner, from Utah, finished in 2:41:27, breaking his own record (for running dressed as a piece of fruit) of 2:47:22, which he set in 2019, but which was not recognised by Guinness World Records, as his banana costume was deemed too short. Maddocks, who has run the race for the past 14 years, ran the 2019 event to support a friend who was undergoing a double lung transplant. He raced this year in support of his father, who was running his first marathon. Maddocks said, 'I'm always looking for anything that will make marathon training interesting. The beauty of running is that there's always a bigger mountain to climb.'



Murphy's Lore

BY SAM MURPHY



I LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN ALMOST COMES TOGETHER



I love creating running plans. The thrill of that blank white sheet, just waiting to be filled with the next immaculately constructed training programme. It's a task I can get lost in, like putting together a jigsaw puzzle; gathering all the pieces and figuring out where to put them. Shall I put that last tempo run there? Maybe a half marathon would work best here? I've always seen each new blank sheet as a fresh opportunity to achieve perfection. This is the one!, I'll think excitedly, as I lean back to look at my handiwork.

But life isn't a blank sheet. Nobody's life – bar the professional athlete's, perhaps – offers the luxury of 12-or-so empty weeks to fill in the exact manner you'd wish for. Even in the planning stage, there are weekend breaks, work dos, DIY projects and kids' after-school activities to factor in – odd pieces of the puzzle that don't quite fit. And once the runner (whether it's me or a client) is following the plan, all bets are off – there are colds, niggles, late nights at work and the occasional hangover just waiting to throw the plan into disarray.

Life's unwillingness to play ball with my meticulously planned race build-ups often frustrates me, but the truth is, few of us ever manage to execute a training plan in its entirety. There will always be stuff that gets missed or postponed, swapped or shortened. And even the runs we do manage are seldom perfect – interval sessions in which we don't hit the target time on every rep; long runs where we run out of fuel, tempo runs where a headwind puts us way off pace.

And that's OK. I've been reading about the Japanese philosophy of wabi sabi – the art of embracing the imperfect. The three key tenets of wabi sabi are that nothing lasts, nothing is ever finished and nothing is perfect. (I first came across it during the long months of my recent house renovation – a wabi sabi house isn't afraid to expose its history and imperfections, be it a blackened chimney breast, a mossy roof or uneven floorboards, and it sure as hell isn't ever finished!)

Yet many runners are perfectionists. Perhaps we're drawn to our sport precisely because it's something that's so controllable and measurable; the

WHAT SAM...

Read

Poet Helen Mort's first novel, *Black Car Burning*. She brings trail running to life through her character Leigh: 'Leigh was running down from Higgarr Tor. Not faster than she'd ever run before. Not harder. The path sunk into a jagged trough with large, ragged stones raised on either side. Leigh hurdled it and her feet smacked down into old bracken and water. She sprang away, toward the woods. This was faith. Trusting your body. Trusting your aim.'

Ran

My fastest 10K in seven years! 42:46 at the Chichester 10K.

Held

A workshop for running leaders and coaches in Bedgebury Forest, teaching them how to devise fun sessions using the natural environment.

result is all down to us, unlike a tennis match or team sport in which other people's actions affect whether or not you reach your goal. The idea that perfection isn't achievable may sound scary to a perfectionist – but it's actually liberating. Perfectionism can take the joy out of training. You can become a slave to your training programme – endlessly berating yourself for not scoring 100 per cent in every session. In any aspect of life, relentless yearning for, or pursuit of, perfection is stressful – and it nearly always ends in disappointment.

Recent research suggests that when it comes to running, this approach can also raise your injury risk. A study from the University of Wisconsin in 2018 found runners who displayed signs of 'unhealthy perfectionism' (a combination of lofty standards, a high degree of concern over making mistakes and self-doubt) had a markedly greater incidence of running injuries than those who did not.

So should we just stop trying? Ditch the training plan? I don't think so. A plan is your road map for the journey between now and race day. There may be wrong turns, diversions and shortcuts, but the crucial thing is that you are able to enjoy the journey, with all its imperfections. When we press stop at the end of a run, or toe a race start line, we should be embracing what we have achieved, rather than obsessing over what we haven't.

One thing that's important to note about wabi sabi is that it doesn't tell us not to try our best, it just reminds us that things don't have to be done perfectly to be worth doing.

There's a further benefit of never quite managing to execute the perfect plan: the tantalising prospect of what you could achieve if you did. It's one of the things that keeps me coming back to that blank white sheet. Who cares if it's a puzzle I will never solve? I'll have a damn good time trying.

runningforever.co.uk

YOUR
WORLD

LETTER OF THE MONTH

MAKE SOME NOISE

I felt I must reply to yourselves and Ray Brown [Letter of the month, *RW* February]. Ray complains he and others over the age of 70 are being forced to compete in the over-65 age group in many races. When I ran a particular half marathon last year, aged 71, I noticed there was no age 70+ prize. Despite not qualifying for the prize, I complained to the organiser. The next year, I noticed that there still wasn't a 70+ prize, so I told them I wouldn't be entering. To my surprise, I got a reply saying they'd heeded my concerns and put in a 70+ category. I then felt I should enter and did so. I was embarrassed to then win the category but gratefully accepted the £120 voucher. So the obvious answer is to complain over and over again – it works. I've entered again this year, who knows?

Jack Davies, Forfa



AGE OF REASON
Jack is more than happy to make his case



Very well done, Jack. Here at *Runner's World*, we strive to help bring about positive change in our sport and we take the view that age is simply a number when it comes to running. You've nicely combined the two here!

STAY IN YOUR LANE

On one hand, I applaud the efforts by *Runner's World* to pay attention to the environment; on the other hand, there is no real need to devote a whole issue (near enough) [*RW* March] to citing what can be done. Surely there are those who are already doing their bit and others who are unlikely to be swayed by what effectively is having the topic rammed down their

throats from so many commentators these days. Just because runners run doesn't mean they inevitably want to be involved in anything other than running! Of course, we can all do our bit to improve what is going on in the world but the main culprit – the motor car – is unlikely to yield to the need to change; it's BIG changes that really count!

I don't need to mention the scores of gadgets and comfort items that human beings have introduced into their lives and, sadly, it's many of these items – which have the potential to spoil the environment – that people would find difficult, if not impossible, to cease using.

I hope that *Runner's World* can keep their focus on running itself, and not get caught up in trends in current thinking, which are dealt with very well elsewhere.

Steven Young, via email

CITY SLICKER

During recent half-marathon training I was wondering whether to ditch a scheduled 10-miler because I had to go and look after my grandchildren while my daughter moved house. But over breakfast I read your feature *The Green Miles* [*RW* March] and

SNAP CHAT

#ROUTEWITHAVIEW

We asked you to share pics from your favourite running routes



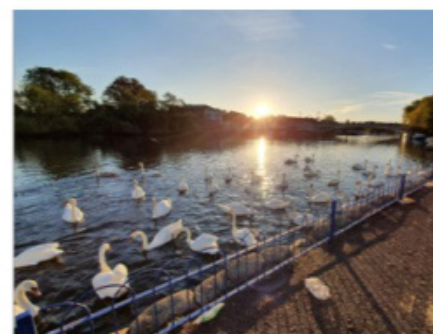
'Along the River Wey towpath, between Godalming and Guildford.'

Miles Berry



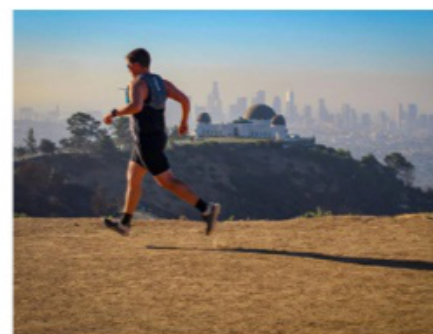
'Paignton Pier, Devon, Saturday morning.'

Dan White



'On the Thames Path in Reading.'

Dave England



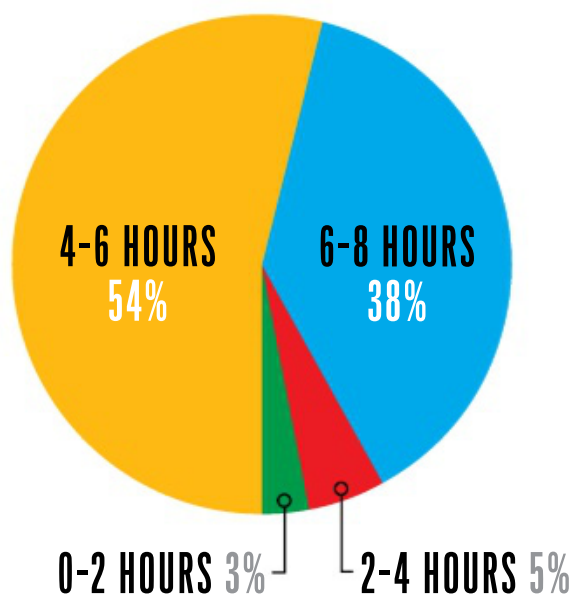
'Griffith Park, Los Angeles.'

Kyle Atkinson

Next month: #GloryShot. Show us your best postrace-celebration pics

THE POLL

Before a big race, I sleep...*





suddenly thought I could run to her place from mine. I checked the distance and found it was 9.5 miles (close enough to 10, I thought). It turned out to be fascinating trip past Buckingham Palace, then up through the diversity of London, passing supermarkets for Romanian, Polish, Turkish, Lebanese, Japanese, Korean and Chinese people, as well as remnants from London past. It wasn't the fastest pace, as I had to dodge pedestrians, children on scooters, buggy pushers etc, but I told myself I was on an urban trail run, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience of running it. So thanks for the nudge that gave me a new idea.

Naomi Stanford, via email

SOCIAL RUNNER

There is currently a debate about the acceptability of the latest Nike shoes for record-breaking performances, but at the lower end of the running spectrum, where I belong, there is another issue. At the end of a race, I ask runners with wires coming out of their ears if listening to music helps them during the race. The answer is always a vigorous nod: 'Makes me run much better', 'I pace myself with my playlist', 'I relax and forget the pain,' they say. As one who used to enjoy the camaraderie of the lower order, I deplore this performance-enhancing (and anti-social) use of gadgetry. Is this a level playing field?

David (tongue in cheek) Syme, via email

RW Actually, music *has* been shown to boost running performance David, so maybe you're onto something.

RUNNING FOR EVERYONE

Just wanted to let you know how much I am enjoying Lisa Jackson's column, *The Flamingo Diaries* – especially this month's one: 'You don't need anyone's permission to run as you please.' When I started running, a patronising personal trainer told me I had 'no chance of getting into the London Marathon' when I told him that was my goal. When I crossed the finish line in 2015, he was the first to

WE ASK, YOU ANSWER

'TELL US A SECRET THAT ONLY OTHER RUNNERS COULD POSSIBLY KNOW...'

'London Marathon actual mileage for most runners is basically an ultra.'

Stephen Wicks

'You don't need toenails.'

Helen Trante

'No to that person who is always at races with that bloody sign - No, I'm not nearly there!'

Melanie Whitto

'We often ask ourselves "Why am I doing this?" but are always glad we did.'

Lain Riley

'We don't all have bad knees, no matter how many times you tell us we do.'

Tom Beck

'Running fast downhill is tougher than running uphill fast.'

John Dickin

'Don't get Deep Heat cream and Vaseline mixed up.'

David Robertson

'Nipple chafing is runners' biggest secret. No one tells you about it until it happens to you.'

Kevin Reid

'Running is cheaper than therapy! Until

you take into account the cost of your new running-shoe addiction.'

James Cole

'Runners are the most inclusive and supportive group of people, from the elites to the plodders like me.'

Tracy Francesca Davies

'A lot of health problems go away after you pick up the habit of running.'

Lucy Lu

'If you have ever "bonked" during a marathon or long run it's not quite as good as it sounds!'

Jason Osborne

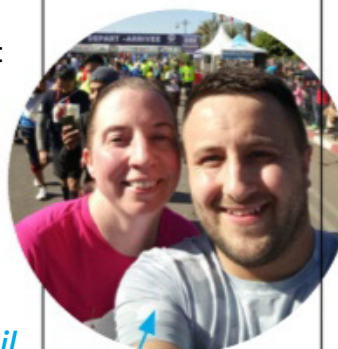


congratulate me on my achievement. I have also been told as a 5hr+ marathon finisher that I was not a good enough runner to be in a marathon team event. Since then, I have struggled with feeling I wasn't good enough to participate in races because I'm not a fast runner. Lisa's column helps me to realise that running is for everyone, and even if I'll never be a BQ [Boston qualifier], that's OK. I hope it helps others in the same boat as me.

Susan McTavish, via email

LOOK FURTHER AFIELD

I recently got back from Morocco with my husband, after spending



Clare and her husband made the most of Morocco

an amazing week in Marrakech and running the half marathon for my 40th birthday. We had last been to Morocco 13 years ago, for our honeymoon, and we had always wanted to go back. An article in *Runner's World* inspired us to go back and run the half marathon there. We followed the RW training plan throughout many a cold run in the Highlands of Scotland and it worked! It was an absolutely unforgettable experience. The people were so friendly and there was a real carnival atmosphere all the way round. We are already planning our visit for next year!

Clare Macdonald, via email



● WHAT'S INSPIRED, IMPRESSED OR, PERHAPS, ANNOYED YOU LATELY ABOUT RUNNING OR RUNNERS? THE WRITER OF THE WINNING EMAIL OR LETTER RECEIVES A PAIR OF SAUCONY TRIUMPH ISO 5s, WORTH £140

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Tonky Talk

BY PAUL TONKINSON

COME TOGETHER, FEEL THE ENERGY, EAT THE FLAPJACKS



I've always been a bit sniffy about the commercial aspects of running. All that stuff: the expos, the mountains of gear, the whole drama. It's always felt a bit unnecessary – slightly gaudy packaging around what is, at root, a very simple endeavour. But I think I get it now.

I did a book signing at The National Running Show in Birmingham a few weeks back and it was the most fun I've had in ages. As I made my way to the NEC, I didn't know what to expect. I'd mistimed my arrival, creating a scenario whereby I was late for my own signing, so it was all manic phone calls and problems with security, then a rush through a side entrance. But then I was in, the extravaganza opening out in front of me, an explosion of running stuff and enthusiasts as I made my way to stand 190.

I whipped off my coat, picked up my pen and settled into it. The signing was an absolute blast, to meet and chat with other runners is always a joy. To have everyone crammed in like this only intensified it. As I signed and chatted, and then wandered around afterwards, I became acutely aware of belonging to a real community, a church of sorts. There was something for everyone.

For the more serious runner, it was an opportunity to embrace your inner obsessive, get the latest cutting-edge advice on diet, gait analysis and trainer technology. The runner tourist could sign up for races all over the world. And if you just fancied a bit of retail therapy, you could buy a shiny new top.

The arena vibrated with an uncomplicated sense of fun. Food was a huge part of it all. At one point, I was chatting to a group of women from Birmingham who were laden down with shopping bags. 'I can't believe it,' one of them said. 'I've just spent 20 quid on fudge.' One was rubbing her chest and seemed to be on the verge of gagging. 'I've had three turmeric-and-ginger shots,' she blurted, 'They're repeating on me.' It was like a hen weekend. After recommending the flapjacks, they set off to buy some Comfyballs pants for their husbands.

That night, I did a gig, hosting the dinner for the sponsors and good folk who ran the stalls. Between you and me, these events can be a tad tedious. People

THE BIG QUESTIONS

by John Carroll

Q. I'm a man. If I wear running tights, do I have to wear shorts over them?

A. Yes. You may be a man, but you don't have to announce it every time you go for a run. Most shorts these days have an inner lining. Would you run if this lining were the only barrier between you and an arrest warrant? Well, then, why do you imagine tights alone are adequate? Tights are little more than an inner lining that reaches your ankles, yet they conceal nothing. And what are you going to do if you fancy a coffee after your run? You won't be allowed to sit on a chair – not if the owners want it to be used ever again – and you certainly will not be permitted to wander around the premises, pointing all over the place.

don't want to be there, but, smothered by a sense of corporate obligation, they'll don a suit and spend an evening saying the right things and looking at their watch, waiting for an acceptable time to exit. But this one felt different. The dress code was looser and the atmosphere was more relaxed.

Normally, I'd be at the table chatting to Ian from accounts; let me assure you, I've no problem with Ian, I wish him all the best, but at this gig, the table and the room were peppered with some impressive people. Within 10 minutes I'd chatted to a woman who was planning an attempt on the world record for running across Australia, and I met a young man planning to run the length of Africa for charity. It all put my 'Can I do the Manchester Marathon and then London two weeks later?' conundrum into perspective.

It struck me how chilled out the ultrarunners were. I ended up having a short chat with ultra-legend Camille Herron – multiple world record holder and possibly the most relaxed person I've ever met. She was so chilled out I thought she was going to collapse in front of me. She was completely unpretentious and, like the Brummie women, obsessed with flapjacks.

That night, I returned to London a tad delirious; the whole event had left me spinning a bit, inspired. Because it's growing. More and more people are taking up running every year, entering events, changing their lives. Thousands of people, all unutterably unique, but bonded by a very simple thing – love of running. They'd come to buy stuff, of course, but really it felt more like an excuse to just be together. Everyone there loved running and wanted to talk, laugh and be inspired by people who loved running, too.

This, I realised, was the real story of the event. All this...and cake!

Paul's new book, *26.2 Miles To Happiness: a Comedian's Tale of Running, Red Wine and Redemption* (Bloomsbury), is out now – read an extract on page 36.



The Flamingo Diaries

BY LISA JACKSON



HOW I REGAIN MY GET-UP-AND-GO WHEN MY MOJO IS A NO-SHOW



Everyone else seems to be doing it far more often than me – and having more fun while doing so. No, I'm not talking about duvet gymnastics, I'm talking about running. Losing your running mojo is a bit like losing your libido: most of us experience it occasionally, but few of us talk about it.

Over my two-decade running career I've lost mine more often than most, so I've had to come up with strategies to get it back. Setting new goals is my go-to option. I vividly recall how motivating it was to aim for membership of the 100 Marathon Club in 2015, the year I did 25 marathons. Suddenly, it didn't matter that I had to get up at 5:30am to drive to Portsmouth in a car so new I hadn't yet figured out how to demist the windscreen, meaning I had to sink lower and lower in my seat as visibility was slowly reduced to a four-inch strip just above the bonnet. I was suddenly so keen to run that I'd risk life and limb to get to a race.

Of course, among my other favourite solutions is – in the best tradition of Ann Summers – to play a little dress-up. Many of my friends know researching fancy-dress options is part of my pre-marathon foreplay and that I get almost as much of a thrill finding an outfit that matches an upcoming event (a cow cap for Milton Keynes, an ankle-length Dracula cloak for the Transylvanian Bear Race) as I do from sleeping with my medal round my neck afterwards.

I'll never forget sitting on the kitchen floor with my arms elbow-deep in papier-mâché, constructing a metal-and-paper shell for the 2001 London Marathon so I could run as the winning half of the fabled Tortoise and the Hare. 'It's quite sensuous,' said my husband, Graham, as he sat stroking glue-soaked paper strips onto the chicken-wire frame with me, in a scene that brought to mind the pottery-wheel sequence in *Ghost*. Sadly, the finished article ended up giving me chronic backache and had to be retired halfway round.

A running buddy is another jolt to the mojo. I met mine while marshalling at the London Marathon. Belinda and I went on a trial run to see whether we

WORDS TO GIVE YOU WINGS

'Be miserable. Or motivate yourself. Whatever has to be done, it's always your choice.'

This quote from self-development author Wayne Dyer is a perennial favourite, as it reminds me that feeling demotivated is a choice – and that it's well within my power to rectify it. At the end of 2019, a niggly knee meant I hadn't run much more than a bath for weeks, but my new Wanna-do List will, I have no doubt, see me jubilantly crossing numerous finish lines in 2020.

were compatible in terms of pace patter (I can only run with people who can keep up with my 10,000 words a mile) and before I knew it, I was running twice a week for an hour, with none of the shall-I-shan't-I? agonising I'd been prone to before. Unfortunately, my buddy moved jobs and she took my mojo with her.

I grieved for several months until I discovered the virtual companionship of audiobooks and podcasts (I'm a late-onset techno geek; I got my first mobile phone four years ago). Trotting along listening to the *Runner's World* crew discussing the running books they loved, loathed or couldn't remember reading meant I had to run another circuit of my local park to make sure I got to hear the end of the podcast.

And then there's my ultimate mojo turbo-charger: creating a Wanna-do List, something that was inspired by Vickie Edwin-Reed, a member of the online running community Run Mummy Run, who'd set herself 40 challenges to celebrate her 40th year. In 2019, Vickie did everything from flying on a broomstick and driving a tractor to volunteering at parkrun and running 1,000km – and she lost 6st along the way.

My own list comprises all the things I want to achieve by the end of 2020: learning to use my mobile phone is on there, as is orienteering and going on runs with the intention of learning to identify different types of trees. I'm also excited about signing up for Sweatcoin, an activity-tracker app that pays you digital currency – sweat coin – for any steps you walk or run, currency that you can spend on fit kit or fitness training, or give to charity. But, of course, the most important thing on my Wanna-do List is to buy a new silly hat. What could be more motivating than that?

Lisa is the author of two bestselling running books, *Running Made Easy* and *Your Pace or Mine?* The audiobook version of the latter is now available

THE RACE TO BUILD THE WORLD'S FASTEST SHOE

The big brands are ramping up their research, but how much of a boost can a shoe offer? And which one is right for you?



NIKE DIDN'T TELL RODGER KRAM AND WOUTER

Hoogkamer much about the prototype shoe, at first. 'We knew it had a new foam, called Pebax and they showed us the carbon [fibre] plate,' recalls Kram. The exercise physiologist and longtime director of the University of Colorado's Locomotion Lab, and Hoogkamer, then a postdoctoral researcher there, were writing a journal paper, published in March 2017, detailing how an elite runner might break the two-hour marathon barrier. One factor they detailed was shoe design, and the two had been given what would become the Nike ZoomX Vaporfly 4% to test.

Explaining how shoe design might help break two hours was tricky, says Kram, because while they had already completed testing on the new shoe, they couldn't include their non-peer-reviewed data in a peer-reviewed journal. So they focused on the weight of the foam midsole, which, based on previous studies, they estimated could improve an athlete's running economy by around one per cent.

'The world record at that time [2:02:57, set by Dennis Kimetto in 2014] was in the Adidas Boost shoe,' says Hoogkamer, now a professor at the University of Massachusetts. But, he adds, 'We didn't say you can make the foam better; we said, "Boost is pretty heavy, so maybe you can make it lighter."'

As for the Vaporfly testing itself, Kram and Hoogkamer approached it with one simple question: was it faster?

In May of the following year, Nike provided a teaser of an answer with their Breaking2 event, where Eliud Kipchoge came within 25 seconds of the two-hour mark on the Formula One Autodromo Nazionale track in Monza, Italy. Even though it missed the mark, it was a striking improvement over Kimetto's record and the running community debated what was responsible for the two per cent time drop – the dead-flat track, the pacers, the car-mounted clock that also functioned as a draft vehicle, or the prototype shoe Kipchoge wore.

Hoogkamer and Kram's next study, published that autumn with the innocuous title *A Comparison of the Energetic Cost of Running in Marathon Racing Shoes*, offered a more detailed assessment. The ►

BREAKING THE MOULD

Pacers at the INEOS
1:59 Challenge all
wore the Nike ZoomX
Vaporfly NEXT%



FOAM DECODER

Shoe companies market their midsole tech with proprietary names, but there are only a handful of underlying materials, which companies tweak to their specifications. What's the tech behind the jargon and what did *RW* testers think of it? Here's a rundown of our favourites.

1. SAUCONY KINVARA 10

£115

FOAM: Everun / **WHAT IT IS:** TPU, as a topsole in the Kinvara 10 with EVA midsole / **OUR TESTERS' TAKE:** One of the lightest everyday trainers; the flexibility and light weight help runners chip away at their PBs.

3. REEBOK FLOATRIDE

RUN FAST £111

FOAM: Floatride Energy / **WHAT IT IS:** Pebax, with EVA rim / **OUR TESTERS' TAKE:** This is a true go-fast tempo shoe, but without the harsh ride that is usually associated with a conventional racing flat.

2. NIKE VAPORFLY

NEXT% £240

FOAM: ZoomX / **WHAT IT IS:** Pebax, with a carbon fibre midsole plate / **OUR TESTERS' TAKE:** With a more forgiving ride and more comfortable upper (than the Vaporfly 4%), the new shoe is better even if your bib doesn't read 'Eliud'.

4. ADIDAS ADIZERO

BOSTON 7 £120

FOAM: Boost / **WHAT IT IS:** TPU / **OUR TESTERS' TAKE:** Our testers were split on whether there was enough cushioning, but several raved about overall comfort, saying it wrapped the foot and was great from the first run.

prototype shoe, compared with two top existing models – Nike's Zoom Streak 6 and the Adidas Adizero Adios Boost 2 that Kimetto used in 2014 – reduced the metabolic cost of running by four per cent. That energy saving, Hoogkamer and Kram calculated, 'should translate to 3.4 per cent improvement in running velocity at marathon world-record pace (20.59km/h).' What's more, because they normalised shoe weight across all three test samples, the benefit they found wasn't from lighter weight.

The study was instantly controversial. It was funded by Nike, for starters (Kram is also a paid consultant) and two Nike employees, Geng Luo and Emily Farina, were listed as co-authors. Subsequent studies not associated with Nike have validated the results, although sample sizes have all been small and the resulting effect varied.

Immediately, people questioned the role of the carbon fibre plate. 'Any device inserted into the shoe, and which purports to add to energy return...should be banned,' wrote exercise physiologist Ross Tucker on his Science of Sport blog. Tucker maintains that the plate is essentially a spring, pointing out that this is how Nike refers to a carbon plate in a previous patent. It was recently reported that World Athletics will not ban the shoe but there will be a ban on any new shoe technology until after this year's Tokyo Olympics.

Lost in the clamour over the benefit of the carbon plate was the role of the foam itself. In both their initial study and an early 2018 follow-up, focussing on the biomechanics involved, Hoogkamer and Kram pointed to one major contributor to the improvements in running economy: 'For now, the elastic properties of the Nike Prototype shoes provide the best explanation for the metabolic energy savings.' In plain English: the new foam was noticeably springier, which made runners faster.

This foam, which Nike branded ZoomX, helped usher in a new era in shoe design and materials, especially midsole foam. Although the race for a breakthrough foam started in earnest in 2013 with Adidas's first Boost-equipped shoe, Nike's bold performance claims around the Vaporfly 4% and NEXT%, right down to the names, have changed the conver-

sation. 'When we started doing our outsoles, our focus was reinventing cushioning,' says Olivier Bernhard, cofounder of On Running. 'Everyone you talk to now, it's about durability and resilience, rebound.'

As shoemakers continue to try to improve performance, and research accumulates showing a modest but undeniable benefit to next-generation materials, the foam wars have only become more heated.

BREAKING THE MOULD

Recreational runner Andy Jacques-Mayne is well aware of the shift in conversation. Jacques-Mayne is a former pro cyclist, a sport that prizes attention to technical detail and the marginal-gains ethos of seeking even the smallest improvements in

efficiency. On paper, he's a classic Vaporfly buyer, noting that 'from a performance standpoint, buying shoes that supposedly offer free speed sounds great', although that's far from his only consideration. But for Jacques-Mayne, like a lot of runners, foam technology is an afterthought.

Going back almost 50 years, the primary technology in running shoes, midsole foam, has hardly changed. From Bill Bowerman's original Nike Cortez to most of today's shoes, the material of choice is EVA, or ethylene vinyl acetate. Only recently has that started to change.

EVA makes an ideal midsole: in foam form, it's exceptionally light and provides great cushioning. It's also cheap and easy to make into a foam. And with decades of experience, shoe companies and the foam manufacturers who turn the raw EVA into sheets of midsole foam or compressed midsole blanks have learned little tweaks to the formula and manufacturing that offer a seemingly endless amount of variation to how a shoe feels.

But there are drawbacks: EVA's performance is highly dependent on temperature; in hot weather it tends to feel like a marshmallow, while in cold weather the midsole hardens and loses its cushioning. It has a relatively high compression set, which means it packs out and permanently loses its cushioning quickly. And while it offers good cushioning, it isn't great at energy return, where a sole is compressed and then rebounds, returning some of the force back to the runner.

While foam suppliers can tweak EVA's performance, they can't fully overcome those basic limitations because they're baked into its chemical composition. EVA is what's called a random copolymer, says Polymer Solutions founder Dr Jim Rancourt, a materials scientist with 40 years of experience in plastics, and a longtime runner. Ethylene is a hard plastic. Vinyl acetate is basically glue. Combine them, and you can get a solid-but-spongy product tuned by the ratio of one to the other. But that's about all you can control.

'The analogy I use is Lego blocks,' says Rancourt. Say ethylene [the hard component] is blue blocks and vinyl acetate [the soft component] is yellow. A shoemaker can ask a foam supplier to adjust the amount of each in the blend, but unlike other materials, EVA's blue and yellow blocks will connect in a random pattern. That basic ratio is a crude way to control properties such as softness. Another method is to vary the density of the foam by putting less or more into a mould, but less dense foams generally lose their rebound characteristics more quickly. ▶



The final option is to blend EVA with other materials, or just use something different altogether. Shoemakers have for years tried to find alternatives, all the way back to Nike's original Air Tailwind and its air cavity, in 1978. In the 1980s, says Spencer White, vice president of human performance for Saucony, the company experimented with a material from DuPont called Hytrel. 'It was just as bouncy and lively as the foams we're working with now, but we never figured out how to make it inexpensive enough to make a whole midsole out of it,' he says.

By 2007, the German chemical company BASF had found a way to puff, or expand, thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) into little spongy pellets that sprang back quickly when compressed. They called the product Infinergy but struggled at first to identify an application for it – that is, until they figured out how to fuse the pellets into a single layer of foam, and signed an exclusive footwear

license to Adidas to use it as Boost, which debuted in 2013.

But perhaps no advance has been as revolutionary as a plastic developed by the multinational chemical company Arkema, called Pebax.

BOUNCING BACK

Like a lot of plastics, Pebax has been around for decades. In solid form, it adds flexibility to rigid ski boot shells, and it's used in heart catheters. But the foam form wasn't patented until 2004, and Nike and Reebok were the first to adapt it for running shoes.

Pebax is a brand-name play on the generic name: polyether block amide (PEBA). Like TPU, it's what's called a block copolymer, a definition that's essential to its advantages. To go back to Rancourt's Lego analogy, Pebax is also made of blocks. But instead of being

randomly arranged, Arkema can actually join chains of blocks of a single colour, and vary the length of those chains, alternating hard and soft sections precisely to control the amount of cushioning and rebound.

So as a product, Pebax isn't one specific thing, says Kevin Hanrahan, chief marketing officer for Arkema's technical polymers unit. 'It's a range from very rigid to very soft, and you can get the energy-return properties of a polyether without compromising softness.' That's also technically the case for TPU or any other block copolymer, says Rancourt. But there are certain advantages to some over others. Weight, for instance: Arkema says Pebax is as much as 20 per cent lighter than TPU-based foams such as Boost. TPU, in turn, has the advantage of long life, since it has a lower compression set than Pebax or EVA. And both TPU and Pebax offer consistent performance across a wide temperature range. But maybe the signature



advantage among these foams is Pebax's rebound, or energy return.

'Energy return' is a bit of a misnomer; it's more like 'less energy lost'. Any foam midsole, when compressed under load, will store a certain amount of energy on a footstrike that rebounds back when the runner pushes off. Shoes with midsoles based on EVA foams have a range of energy return depending on how they're formulated, but generally, they peak at around 65-70 per cent. TPUs such as Boost are better, at 70-76 per cent. But the two best shoes *Runner's World* has ever tested in terms of energy return are the Vaporfly 4% and 4% Flyknit, which offer as much as 82 per cent return in deflection and rebound testing. (Kram and Hoogkamer measure it even higher, at 87 per cent.)

Why does energy return matter? Dr Iain Hunter, a professor of exercise science at Brigham Young University, Utah, found a clue that he wrote about in a study in the *Journal*

5. BROOKS GHOST 12 £120

FOAM: DNA Loft /

WHAT IT IS: EVA /

OUR TESTERS' TAKE

It's a shoe that we recommend to new runners because of its versatility. It has the right amount of bounce during pushoff, so hips and knees aren't jarred with pain. Super-soft cushioning willed us to run longer than originally planned.

6. HOKA ONE ONE

CARBON X £160

FOAM: Profly X /

WHAT IT IS: Dual-density EVA with a carbon midsole plate /

OUR TESTERS' TAKE:

The cushioning is abundant and consistent throughout the length of the shoe. Midfoot strikers will like the rocker's aggressive positioning.

7. ASICS GT-2000 7 £120

FOAM: FlyteFoam Lyte /

WHAT IT IS: EVA with gel in heel and forefoot /

OUR TESTERS' TAKE:

Among the stiffest shoes you'll find, the GT-2000 7 still appealed to a variety of testers; it's heavy but doesn't feel slow. Cushioning doesn't feel that soft but is substantial, the kind you'd want for pounding out miles on the roads.

of Sports Sciences, where he attempted to replicate Hoogkamer and Kram's 2018 metabolic cost-comparison study. Both studies found runners had a longer stride in the Vaporfly than other shoes, which makes sense from an increased-efficiency perspective: the further you travel per stride, the faster you'll go at a given cadence.

But Hunter also measured parameters that the Colorado University study didn't, such as vertical oscillation – how high the runner is bouncing with each stride. There, Hunter found that the Vaporfly led runners to bounce higher, which would normally correlate with lower running economy, 'unless it's not the body that's generating the energy to make that happen', says Hunter. His theory: the Vaporfly sole's bounciness returns more of the energy to the runner than other foams, which produces a longer stride for a given amount of ground time.

Hoogkamer also thinks that because Pebax is a softer-feeling material than the TPU-based Boost, there's more compression to begin with, leading to an overall higher rebound. 'The actual joules, or energy units, stored in the compression phase are a lot higher because it's such a soft shoe,' he says.

The Colorado study found slightly higher peak forces on impact for the Vaporfly (the opposite of the Brigham Young study), but because the shoe is so soft, Hoogkamer theorises it feels less harsh, which enables the runner to take longer strides. That may matter over the course of a season as much as during one race. At the July 2019 Footwear Biomechanics Conference, Nike researcher Brett Kirby presented data showing runners wearing the Vaporfly sustained less muscle damage than a control group wearing other shoes. Reduced muscle soreness suggests they could sustain higher training loads.

Whatever the mechanism, it's effective. In addition to the Colorado and Brigham studies, Dr Kyle Barnes, a professor of exercise science at Grand Valley State University, Michigan, found similar running economy changes in a comparison with the Adizero Adios Boost 3. And in a far larger sample size, *The New York Times* examined roughly half a million marathon times from public data such as Strava and concluded that, on average, runners wearing the Vaporfly ran three to four per cent faster than similar runners in most other shoes, and one per cent faster than the next fastest shoe, Nike's Zoom Streak. (The *NYT* authors noted 'the analysis suggests that, in a race between two marathoners of the same ability, a runner in Vaporflys would have a real advantage'.)

As a result of all the data, and Nike's marketing, shoe companies are racing to develop faster foams and smarter ways to use them. White says Saucony has tested dozens of foams over the years, and almost used Boost before Adidas snapped up the exclusive. On Running has its CloudTec system and new foam formulations such as Helion. Reebok uses Pebax in its Floatride midsole. Under Armour uses a TPU foam called Infuse in its Hovr line. Skechers' Hyper Burst foam is a CO₂-infused EVA, and the DNA AMP midsole in the Brooks Levitate is another polyurethane foam from BASF called Elastopan. And Adidas, which has been a little quiet on the foam front besides tweaked versions of its midsole tech such as Boost HD, is rumoured to be working on a new shoe that was supposedly tested at the Berlin Marathon, and which may be its answer to Pebax.

Most runners within range of the three-hour-marathon mark, if offered a simple equipment choice to knock six minutes off ▶

their time, would probably take it in an instant. But two of the downsides of Pebax foam are its cost and its high compression set. The Vaporfly NEXT% are £240 – a lot of cash for a shoe that may only last a handful of races, and more than most runners are willing to pay. ‘In the big races you’ll see a lot of high-end shoes at the front, but it falls off quickly after that,’ says Saucony’s White.

Beyond the cost issue, runners become loyal to shoes for many reasons, like a shape that properly fits their feet and the way the design supports their stride and biomechanics. A 2015 meta-review of studies of running shoes and injuries by University of Calgary exercise scientist Dr Benno Nigg suggested runners ‘intuitively select a comfortable product using their own comfort filter that allows them to remain in the preferred movement path’. Foam, especially the new supersoft and bouncy stuff, seems to fit into that ideal. But it’s an open question as to how much runners care about it, whether it’s called ZoomX or Boost or whatever. ‘I suspect most runners have no idea what we’re talking about,’ says White. ‘The majority just want a good shoe that feels great.’

FOAM COMFORTS

There’s also the still-evolving discussion of what provides the performance benefit, including the exact foam formulation, which are often variations on the base material. Nike’s version of Pebax provides excellent energy return, for instance, while Reebok’s Pebax-based Floatride foam, used in several of its top shoes, returns values in the RW tests that you’d associate with a quality EVA shoe, but below Boost or ZoomX.

And we don’t yet know how much of the improved running economy lies in other aspects of shoe design, such as air pods or carbon fibre plates, and whether that’s because those elements act as propulsive springs, or if they merely stabilise soft foams to maximise energy return. In another presentation at the Footwear Biomechanics Conference, Emily Farina of Nike’s Sports Research Lab showed data suggesting that, depending on its shape, the carbon plate in the Vaporfly might be responsible for more of the running-economy improvement than researchers had thought, although the exact mechanism wasn’t explained.

If Nike – which has a division devoted to exploring such questions – knows any more, it isn’t saying. The company declined requests to make Farina and other Sports Research Lab staff available for interviews, but emailed back a one-line statement: ‘The

magic of the Nike ZoomX Vaporfly NEXT% and the Nike Zoom Vaporfly 4% is in the full system and how all the elements work together, not in any single ingredient.’

That sounds like bland corporate jargon, but there may be more to it. Among Nike’s various patents around the Vaporfly is a pending application from 2018 titled ‘Stacked Cushioning Arrangement for Sole Structure’, which looks similar to Kipchoge’s shoes from the INEOS 1:59 Challenge. The patent details a shoe design with several distinct layers of foam, as many as three carbon fibre plates and two pairs of fluid-filled forefoot cushioning chambers sandwiched between the plates. So it seems pretty clear that the plate (or plates) do matter.

But foam matters as well, even if most runners don’t pay much attention to it. (It doesn’t help that shoe companies insist on hype-y names like ZoomX or Boost or Helion and liberal use of marketing word salad to describe technologies they didn’t invent.) Perhaps the biggest reason foam matters is the trickle-down. Pebax is expensive now, but costs may come down as foam-midsole suppliers learn more-effective production techniques. And while a ‘halo product’ such as the Vaporfly is good marketing now, Nike may choose to spread its R&D costs across more models, at lower prices.

EVA, for all its drawbacks, isn’t going away any time soon: it’s still light, cheap and easy to tweak. On Running’s new Helion foam is an EVA-based product, says Bernhard, who adds that in the beginning, the company used a mix of EVA and polyurethane foams but in testing, they found that EVA worked best with its sole structure.

On Running’s experience suggests future breakthroughs may come as much from structural elements such as sole designs or plates as from new foams, although Rancourt says other block copolymers are out there that might provide similar performance characteristics to Pebax.

For all its promise, Pebax hasn’t taken over running yet. Without broader availability of models such as the Vaporfly, or a breakthrough that provides significant price drops, it may not. Nike itself seems to acknowledge this with shoes like the race-oriented Zoom Fly 3, a near-clone of the Vaporfly, down to the carbon plate, but made with its React foam. That shoe costs £100 less.

Despite its competitors’ efforts – and calls from non-Nike athletes for

equipment regulations – Nike held its lead in the foam wars through 2019, with Vaporflys winning the Berlin, New York and Chicago marathons, while Kipchoge broke the two-hour barrier with his latest prototype. But ultimately, runners and not shoe companies will decide the fate of shoe technology like the Vaporfly, and those considerations come down not just to performance, but fit and even philosophical approach to the sport.

Mindful of the importance of on-bike form to his cycling career, Jacques-Mayne says he pays close attention to his biomechanics and stride (midfoot, with a touch of heel). He’s run in Hoka One One, Adidas and Nike, among other brands, but trains in New Balance’s 880, for its neutral support and ‘just right’ amount of padding.

The Vaporfly wasn’t available when he got into running, so it wasn’t among the shoes he tried when searching for a fit. But even now, he adds, he’s more interested in gains from improved training and stride mechanics. ‘I was a novice runner with a huge motor, so growing the mechanics and muscles to unlock speed was way more important,’ he says. And he’s a little wary of improvement that isn’t earned. While the idea of knocking four per cent off his PB sounds great, he says, he hasn’t felt the need to try Vaporflys. 🏃

8. SKECHERS GORUN RAZOR 3 HYPER £124

FOAM: Hyper Burst / WHAT IT IS: CO₂-infused EVA / OUR TESTERS’ TAKE: Light but responsive and surprisingly well cushioned.

10. MIZUNO WAVE SKY WAVEKNIT 3 £160

FOAM: Foam Wave / WHAT IT IS: A TPU sandwich (XPOP) inside two blends of EVA, with Pebax used as a plate, not foam / OUR TESTERS’ TAKE: A highly cushioned but firm neutral daily trainer with impressive durability.

9. NEW BALANCE FRESH FOAM BEACON V2 £90

FOAM: Fresh Foam / WHAT IT IS: EVA / OUR TESTERS’ TAKE: Soft, light, fast; the Beacon delivers all three.

11. ON RUNNING CLOUDSWIFT £135

FOAM: Helion / WHAT IT IS: EVA blended with block copolymers / OUR TESTERS’ TAKE: Unlike cushier trainers, the Cloudswift is designed for a firm, responsive ride.



RUNNING



How RW columnist **PAUL TONKINSON**'s quest for a marathon personal best became a journey

REDEMPTION



that helped him to conquer his demons and find redemption and forgiveness waiting on The Mall

EDPTION

SCARBOROUGH, 1981, THE FIRST RUN

IT WAS THE MIDDLE of the summer holidays. I was 12, having completed my first year at secondary school. At a loose end, in an empty house and with no tasks at hand, I thought, I could just go now, I could leave this, just go for a run. It was a delicious prospect. Why not just do it?

So I did.

Scarcely able to breathe, such was my excitement, I hurriedly strapped on a pair of white Dunlops and took to the streets.

It was a gentle downhill mile or so down the wide Esplanade, bordered with freshly mowed grass lawns, ornately landscaped for the tourist crowd. The weather was baking as I weaved through, my plimsolls slapping the smooth grey paths as I descended across the Spa Bridge, turned right at the Grand Hotel and then quickstepped down the steep steps onto the beach at the height of summer season.

I remember feeling increasingly calm as I found my rhythm. Amid the kids screaming, the crying of seagulls, the twirling cascades of arcade machines and the ruddy-faced fisherman selling mini pots of shrimp and touting for harbour trips out on the bay, it felt good, as if something was shifting inside me, dissolving. In the effortless turning of my legs beneath me, the pumping of my thin childlike arms, a startling peace was opening up within, a fantastical lift that sent me soaring through the sweet shops on the front, gliding past the Futurist theatre advertising Jimmy Tarbuck, Jaconelli's ice cream parlour, the donkeys and the ghost trains; propelled me away from that, up onto the Marine Drive.

I'd found something, a sweet spot, a new vantage point from which to view life, and wanted to extend it. I plunged on recklessly in the heat, burning myself under the relentless sun, greedily sucking in air as the clear North Sea lightly sprayed my face. Reaching the end of the Drive, I paused for a second. The sense of freedom was utterly intoxicating. I could go anywhere now; I didn't need anyone or anything, only the wit to depart and the fitness to carry it off. I could claim this, make it mine. I turned and launched myself back, loving every second; the tiredness in the limbs, the dry thirst in my mouth, the honest sweat caking my shoulders and back.

I was slowing a bit by now, excitement had faded. But I had found something, of that I was certain. Life had irrevocably changed. It was the B of the bang of my life as a runner, which

continues to this day. At 12 years old, the last piece of my emerging identity had clicked into place. On some profound level, I had found both escape and salvation, I felt that very clearly – but as home came closer, a familiar dread was descending. I'd been out a long time without permission. Although unquestionably right for me, it was hard to defend.

As I turned the last corner homewards, I knew I'd shortly pay the price.

My hands trembled involuntarily as I opened the front gates; a creeping numb sensation ran up into my throat. Maybe it'd be fine, was the house empty?

No.

As I went round the back, I sensed movement indoors. Then, the insistent thudding of clogs firing off the kitchen floor. A familiar form marched past the window. I reached for the door but, before I got there, with a sharp click, it flew open.

TEENAGE KICKS

WITHIN WEEKS, running went the way of football and tennis: an activity denied. So, faced with this, and with the determination and courage of youth, a plan began to form in my mind.

In the cupboard under the stairs, I had a pair of old army walking boots, given to me by my grandparents. Because they were off the usual rota of shoes, they avoided the daily

inspection and cleaning process. I figured if I could get hold of them, they'd be perfect. The only question was: when could I get them?

The only answer was: in the morning, before the paper round. That meant setting the alarm for 5am, stealthily sneaking out of the bedroom, across the landing ever so softly,

down the stairs gently, into the cupboard under the stairs, get the boots, tiptoe through the kitchen and out the back door, clicking it shut as quietly as possible. The whole escapade was like a burglary in reverse.

I'd creep out the front gate and set off into the dawn, released, free at last to rampage round the clifftop paths and gardens of the South Bay. The boots were heavier than trainers, of course, but that added to the drama. I wouldn't have time to run far, just 30 minutes or so in the clean cool air of a coastal morning. It was an incredibly risky thing to do, I can't imagine the drama if I'd been caught, but in a life when so much was out of my hands, it represented a reclamation of power, a moment that was purely mine.

Back in the house, I'd snake my way back through the kitchen, return the boots to exactly the same place and tiptoe back to my bedroom. Twenty minutes later, I'd be feigning sleep and she'd march in and snap the curtains open.

THE JUICE

AT THIS JUNCTURE I'd like to refer you to the title of my book: *26.2 Miles to Happiness*. Slightly overblown, I admit, but containing a kernel of truth.

Is it really that simple? you might ask. What is its great secret? you implore, reaching for the biscuits and putting the kettle on.



Well, obviously there's loads of physical stuff. Running a marathon makes you loads fitter, physically and mentally. But I'm also talking beyond that. There are other reasons. In a chaotic world, it offers order. In an occasionally unjust world, where honest endeavour often crashes on the fickle rocks of reality, it gives you a direct correlation between effort and reward. Indeed, the more you submit to its demands, the more you get; it's a sliding scale of mental and physical transformation. You act yourself into a different person; different habits embed themselves and change you.

On a personal level, where you might feel anonymous, passed over, not valued, the marathon is an event that gives you a day of

guaranteed drama with you as the hero. It's fun and tough in all the right proportions. It's a private drama played out in public, an orgasm of aerobic fun. It allows you to express anger or frustration in a safe environment without having to pay out to punch cushions.

I'm going to go one step further now, so brace yourself. I also sincerely believe the marathon offers the very real hope of personal redemption, a defeating of personal demons.

The kettle's boiled now, this is a moment that calls for your favourite mug. Lean back, put your feet up. I'm away again, off-piste, skiing haphazardly down the black slope of the human psyche with only the most rudimentary of snow ploughs at my disposal.

(Deep breath.) It strikes me that most damage occurring to us in life happens at a level beyond words. This might be caused by words or action, but they affect our brains, behaviour and thoughts on a cellular level. Possibly as a result of this, there seems to be a limit to the usefulness of purely talking therapies.

This is not to say therapy isn't useful. I reckon it is, profoundly so: it helps you relate to your life with more awareness; it can help you view yourself, and others, more compassionately. There are skills to be learned, insights gained on the chair with those wonderful people who devote their lives to helping others. I'm all for it. Religion, too. Whatever gets you through the long night and helps you face the morning. ▶



A LONG JOURNEY
Clockwise, from left: Thornton-le-Dale, 1970 – first photo and just about walking; Scarborough Beach, 1983, Paul's first trophy (he's far right) – first U15 and second overall; Scarborough, 1978 – aged 8, doing a Dennis the Menace impression; preparing for a quick start at a race sometime in the 1990s; York, the mid-1980s – tearing along in a five-mile race (he finished in 27:20); sprinting for the line in the Hampstead 10K, again in the 1990s; Methley Church, January 31, 1998, just married to Rachel



So I certainly don't want to discourage anyone from going: pain spreads its wings far and wide, carrying problems infinitely more troublesome and traumatic than my load. It's just that I saw an end to it – and at the end, not much was solved. Because there are moments in life that point out who you are, little episodes, and they told me that despite all the talking I'd done to escape and get over my past, I still carried the memories of violence with me. They'd been encoded, internalised. Triggers remained in my psyche.

Round the house, if I heard quick footsteps upstairs, I'd be transported back from my perfectly safe house in North London to Scarborough, where I was a quivering 13-year-old cowering in the corner as her clogs fired off the kitchen floor. Those sense memories are hard to erase.

Every now and again, as I settle into an evening at home, I am flooded with an overwhelming feeling of relief when I realise on a fundamental level I am safe here. It's like a little bugle of victory sounding in my heart and is often accompanied by the urge to go to Oddbins and begin celebrating. This shizzle goes deep, bruv, and no amount of talking can get you through it.

It seemed with the marathon I had stumbled upon a solution. If the problem was beyond words, then, surely, so too was the answer. It had to be something I did, an action.

(Still with me? Grab a biscuit, chocolate Hobnob if you're not training. If you are training, maybe a plain digestive or an oatcake.)

People swim the Channel, cycle across Europe, climb mountains. In doing so they are receiving something from the experience that helps them. Amid the demands of the exertion, they have found something intrinsic that puts them back together again, however momentarily, in a life that is increasingly fragmented.

Part of the reason I like marathon running is its accessibility. Anyone can do it. No real kit is necessary beyond a decent set of trainers, no travel involved. All the means are literally on your doorstep. Running, that most natural and elemental of activities. The marathon is an immense struggle but achievable. It might not have the outdoorsy appeal of climbing mountains – which is a drag, because I love nature – but what it does have, especially a big one, is people, lots of people. And people are nature. And I love people.

As I ran marathons and came up against The Wall, I began to really wrestle with the question: what did the marathon mean? As I focused down into proper training – being inspired by club mates, considering pain and how to deal with it, matters of mental fortitude – I began to see The Wall not as a force that rendered me powerless but rather as something that I could do battle with. To do this, I knew that I was going to have to get determined, angry even. This troubled me.

Maybe because I had witnessed and been victim of so much anger growing up, I had gone to great lengths to avoid it as an adult, both my own and others'. When out and about, my senses are primed to any suggestion of incident. I see the problem before it happens; my vibe detector is incredibly acute, and I pick up very quickly on changes in atmosphere. This can be very useful. It means I tend to avoid confrontation, but it can also get a bit tiring, and sometimes I might overreact. Some people are freer with their anger, and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Therapy had unwittingly fed into my anti-anger crusade. I'd spent a lot of time working out how to forgive people – or rather, the person who shall remain nameless. I'd accommodated her behaviour, rationalised it. We are after all, at some level, always doing our best with what we've got. We all come from and are a reaction to events over which we had no control, and I spent a lot of time and energy trying to understand why she might have acted like that. Perhaps in all of this rationalisation

I'd never allowed myself to get angry that it had happened in the first place.

Even while it was happening, and at an age when I could have resisted, I retreated into myself, acting like I was untouchable, not talking much. It was a form of very silent revenge. I'd become unresponsive as a way of protecting myself and getting through it all, incessant as it was.

As I grew up and my life changed, I carried aspects of this stuff with me. A lot of it was positive. I was and am a pretty chilled-out character. I live and let live, try to understand people, and generally be a force for peace, but in the process I had denied a part of me. In my effort to understand the world, and people in it, I had perhaps closed part of myself off, becoming an unreasonably reasonable man. And underneath it, there was an anger that I had never recognised, which bubbled over in odd places: the car; round the house; on the football pitch.

This is not to say I was a psychopath. There was just something in my make-up that wasn't



A RUNNER'S WORLD
Clockwise from left:
at the Just for Laughs
Festival in Montreal,
Canada; Paul's
patented sprint-finish
face – it's all about
showing the effort;
with his youngest
son, Rudy, after
running 2:59:21 in the
London Marathon
in 2019; nearing the
end of an earlier
marathon – it has
not gone as well;
stretching before
a race in 2004 with
son George and
daughter Bonnie



ringing true. Outwardly, I was the uber-chilled, do anything for anybody, Northern bloke around the village – but sometimes, I'd see myself in the mirror and my resting face was a bit scowly. Or I'd find myself lost in violent fantasy over an innocuous road rage incident that had happened months previously. On social media, I'd find myself having a row with a stranger before I'd even got out of bed on a morning. These weren't the actions of a man of peace!

Something was gnawing away at me that needed attention. There was, it seemed, a rage within that I'd never given voice to or found an outlet for. On a very simple level I'd never expressed anger at the years living with she-who-cannot-be-named and what had happened. I'd internalised it all – and it came out at traffic lights, imagined threats to my family or at 50-50 challenges at football. (May I take this opportunity to apologise to anyone who has played football with or against me, particularly between the years 2004 and 2010.)

Is it a stretch to say that we live in a fairly angry society? On the roads, on social media, there's a lot of simmering rage about. Mostly suppressed, but even that effort seems to be resulting in lots of substance problems, antidepressants, boozing and bingeing.

For me, running helped. As I ran more and faster, I began to see it as a harmless channel for residual and undefined rage from childhood. It could give me permission to fight back and said it was OK to run hard. It also had the advantage that I was only hurting myself; running was self-directed, cleansing even. Football had broken my own wrist and other players' ribs and fingers.

As I examined it and really looked at the marathon, The Wall emerged as a formidable adversary. But like all adversaries, it carried within it the potential for my redemption and self-knowledge. As the marathon approached and my goal of a sub-three clarified, I began to see The Wall not as a purely physical entity. It became a physical manifestation of the internal voices in my mind. Voices that had stemmed from she-who-cannot-be-named. The Wall became my stepmum, the stepmum became the Wall.

(Final dunking of the biscuit now.)

I reckoned that maybe it was time finally to fight back. To show myself. Put a flag in the ground and slay this demon once and for all. I had to end this nonsense, put this drama to bed. Battle with The Wall, break through. Defeat it and her.

In order to do this, I knew I had to train hard and remorselessly, eradicate every physical and mental weakness in my make-up. It was as simple and as beautiful and as easy to understand as that.

Finally, I had found my Why. The hero must defeat the monster.

THE MALL, 2019, THE HAPPY ENDING

THE FINISH DOWN The Mall is shorter than I remembered. Not a long torturous surge, more of a quick dash. I put my head down and go. My breath's an urgent, continuous gasp, I'm driving into every stride, pumping my arms as much as possible.

With 30 yards to go, I look up... 02:59:15 ... 02:59:16.

I clench my fists, swearing with joy, and realise that I am in a bubble of runners, men and women of about the same age doing exactly the same thing. We've done it. We've all done it.

I cross the line. 02:59:21. It's over, all of it.

I'm tired, but it's the cleanest tired in the world. It's the tiredness of a summer's evening in childhood, running home absolutely famished after a day's footy on the beach, the sweat turning to salt on your neck.

I'm floating around like a slightly dehydrated Jesus, there is absolutely no distance between me and the rest of humanity. I'm chatting to everyone. Open. To be grandiose, not for the first time, I am suffused with a deep and overwhelming peace, a resounding and ultimate

inner Yes. My work here is done. I have run to the end of running. It has nothing more to ask of me and there's nothing more I can give. I am as beyond stress and anger and misdirected anxiety as it is possible to be.

Compassion spreads in all directions to everyone I've ever met or will meet.

Everyone. She didn't mean any harm.

Let's face it; I couldn't have done it without her. It wasn't all bad anyway. A brilliant cook, her spaghetti bolognese has never been bettered and her rock cakes were to die for. She'd take me out on her motorbike up on Oliver's Mount. How exciting it was to hold on to her as she whizzed round corners; how dangerous and new and different she was to other mums, exotic in her way, a leather-clad Boadicea, cranking up the volume on Diana Ross records on her days off, just a lass from Whitby making her way in life who'd taken the wrong turn. I remember her crying hot tears on her 30th birthday on being so old. She made me tough in ways I wouldn't have been without her – and God knows what her childhood was like. What merry hell was she repeating?

She won't read this, but if she does, I'd like to say: It's over now. All over.

I wish you every happiness.

Whatever this is, has ended. I've drawn a line in the sand. Whatever I wanted out of it, I've got. Undeniably.

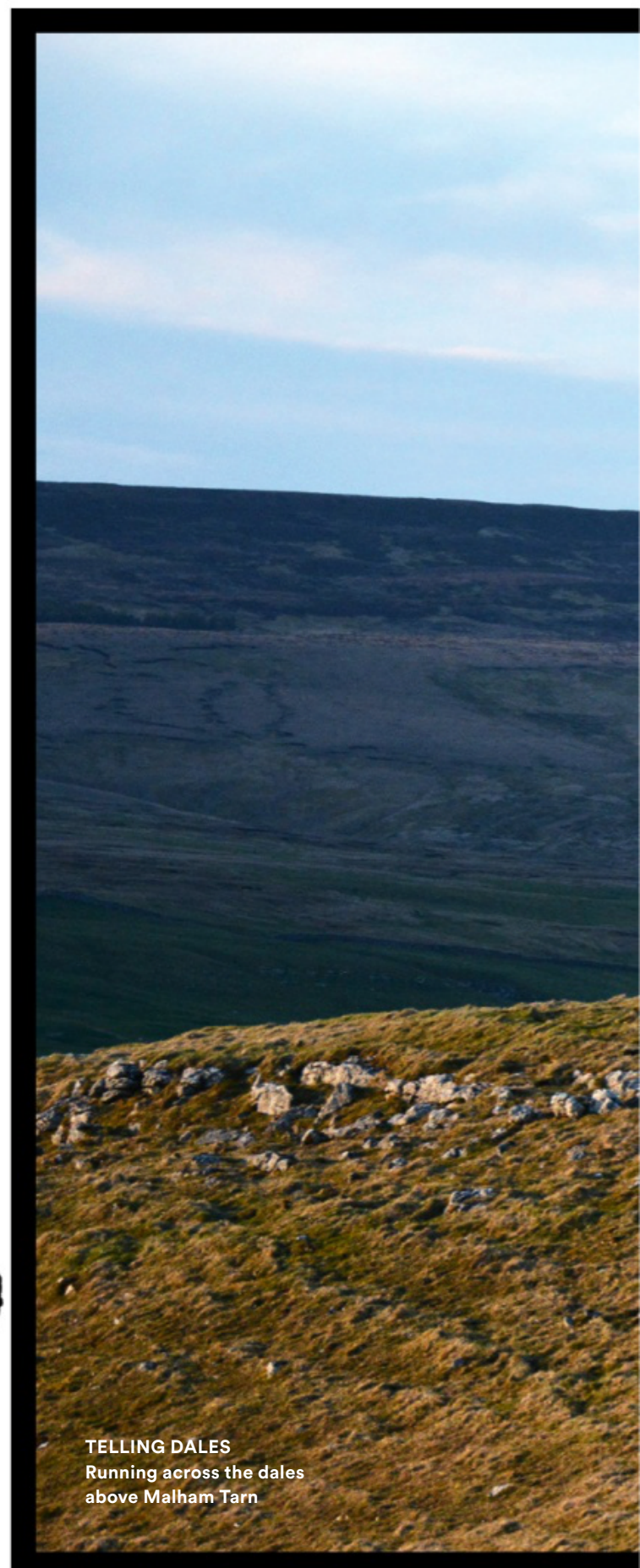
Then I'm on the phone to Ra and Rudy. It's the last picture of the day that I've painted in my head. I wanted so much to do this, to beat three hours and come back down The Mall and find them here, amid all the thousands of runners chilling out post-race. And then I see them, peeking out from behind a tree, my wife and youngest son, dear Rudy, walking towards me. 



Adapted from *26.2 Miles To Happiness, A Comedian's Tale of Running, Red Wine and Redemption* by Paul Tonkinson (Bloomsbury, £14.99); bloomsbury.com/uk

LITTLE GEMS

You don't have to sign up for an ultramarathon to fully immerse yourself in the stunning landscapes with which the UK is blessed. From the breathtaking coastal trails of Cornwall to the wild majesty of the Scottish Highlands, these seven carefully curated routes prove that even a few miles in your running shoes can take you through some of Britain's most wild and beautiful places.



TELLING DALES
Running across the dales above Malham Tarn

Malham

WHERE Malham Tarn, Settle, North Yorkshire, BD23 4DJ // **DISTANCE** 6.3 miles (10.2km) // **ASCENT** 613ft (187m) // **TERRAIN** Trails, moorland and fell

THE MALHAM ESTATE, deep in the Yorkshire Dales, covers a dramatic, open area of limestone pavement and grassland, rugged high peaks and rocky outcrops. Nestled within,

the gleaming scoop of Malham Tarn reflects the weather day by day: serenely calm one moment, wind-whipped and brooding the next.

This run begins by the tarn and follows the Pennine Way around its shore, then heads across stone-walled fields and up onto high, open moorland, offering beautiful views across the Dales. After joining the Pennine Bridleway, the final stretch descends back into the valley to return to the tarn.

THINGS TO SEE // It's a great place to visit to watch birds; from the hide, just off the boardwalk section of the route, you can see great crested grebes, tufted ducks, pochard, wigeon, teal and goosander. There are also a number of species of bat; expert-led bat walks with National Trust rangers start at Malham Tarn House. Within running distance of the tarn are the waterfall at Janet's Foss, the scramble up Gordale Scar and the limestone pavement that tops Malham Cove,

1

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

The area is perfect off-road running country and the Pennine Way, Pennine Bridleway and Dales Way all pass Malham, ideal for exploring further afield.

once a waterfall and now a rock-climbing destination.

THE ROUTE // START/END WATERSINKS CAR PARK // **1.** Join the Pennine Way and head north towards Malham Tarn. The path continues to the overflow of Malham Tarn before joining the track to Tarn House. Continue along the track, passing Great Close Scar and Malham Tarn House Field Centre. **2.** (1.7 miles) At Sandhills Cottage, leave the Pennine Way and follow signs to the Nature Reserve, following the

boardwalk through the woods. **3.** (2.1 miles) Where the boardwalk ends, join the road, turning left and following the road, bearing left at the junction. At the crossroads, take the footpath diagonally opposite and follow this across fields to reach the Pennine Bridleway. **4.** (3.7 miles) Turn left onto the Pennine Bridleway and follow it, crossing a road and descending into the steep valley to reach the Pennine Way. **5.** (5.7 miles/9.1km) Turn left onto the Pennine Way and follow this back to the car park. ►





Rhossili

WHERE National Trust visitor centre, Rhossili village, Gower, SA3 1PR // **DISTANCE** 4.4 miles (7.1km) // **ASCENT** 725ft (221m) // **TERRAIN** Grassy trails, sandy beach, quiet roads

THE THREE-MILE SANDY sweep of Rhossili Bay edges the Gower Peninsula, designated Britain's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1956. This run begins at Rhossili village with a climb to The Beacon, the highest point on Gower, with glorious views over the Bristol Channel. From here, there's an inviting trail along the ridge before an enjoyable descent to the beach. The final stretch back to Rhossili village across the firm, flat sands is best run barefoot at the water's edge.

THINGS TO SEE // Worms Head is a tidal island reaching out into the Bristol Channel at the westernmost point of Gower. A rocky causeway links (for approximately 2.5 hours either side of low tide) the mainland to the island, which has a large, flat-topped section known as 'Inner Head', a natural rock bridge – the 'Devil's Bridge' – and the smaller 'Outer Head'. The Outer Head is a breeding ground for seabirds, including



gulls, guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes and, occasionally, puffins, and is out of bounds during the nesting season between March and August.

THE ROUTE // **START/END NATIONAL TRUST VISITOR CENTRE, RHOSSILI** // **1.** Follow the road back through the village, taking the footpath by the bus stop as it bears left past the church. At the track junction, turn left and continue until you reach a gate signed to Rhossili Down. Follow the main path as it climbs the hill towards the top of the downs. **2.** (0.4 miles) Stay left, following the main path along the ridge to reach the summit of The Beacon. Follow the path as it descends steeply towards Hillend campsite. **3.** (2 miles) Go through the campsite, past Eddie's Cafe and turn onto the beach. **4.** (2.6 miles) Head left and enjoy running the full length back to Rhossili. The running is often easiest and most enjoyable where it is firmest, nearer to the sea.



Frensham Common

WHERE Priory Lane, Frensham, Surrey, GU10 3BT // **DISTANCE** 5 miles (8km) // **ASCENT** 256ft (78m) // **TERRAIN** Good paths and trails

FRENSHAM PONDS are set in 900 acres of wildlife-rich heath and woodland in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is a tranquil haven in the busy South East and a perfect car-free escape from London by train to Farnham. This route sets out from Little Pond, taking in a fantastic clockwise loop of the common, skirting Great Pond before returning through woodland to Little Pond, with its beachside cafe.

THINGS TO SEE // Frensham Great Pond and Little Pond were originally created in the 13th century to supply fish for the Bishop of Winchester on his visits to Farnham Castle. Today, they provide a habitat for a variety of water flora and fauna, and the Great Pond is a perfect place to cool off with a postrun dip, or relax on the beach.

Frensham Common is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, as well as an AONB. The diverse and rare range of habitats includes dry heath, wet heath, open water, reedbeds, alder carr and mixed woodland, together supporting a wealth of wildlife that includes sand lizards, Dartford warblers and unusual plants like the insectivorous sundew. Listen out for resident woodlarks and, at dusk, the 'churring' call of the nightjar.

THE ROUTE // **START/END TENT PEG LANE CAR PARK** // **1.** From the car park follow the footpath northeast, alongside the lane and around the northern tip of Frensham Little Pond. **2.** (0.4 miles) Enjoy the view across Little Pond, then turn right, following

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

The Gower and Swansea Bay Coast Path runs for 97 miles between Loughor, Swansea and Kenfig Dunes near Port Talbot. It is a section of the Wales Coast Path.

SAND TOUR
Barefoot across
beautiful Rhossili Bay





TRUNK MILES
Weaving through
woodland
on Frensham
Common

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

There's a great network of trails around Frensham Common and neighbouring Tilford and Hankley Commons. Hindhead Common and the Devil's Punchbowl are also nearby.

the footpath running down the eastern shore, continuing along this path through areas of woodland and grassland to the road at Rushmoor. **3.** (1.3 miles) Turn right onto a bridleway and follow this through woodland, emerging onto a lane and bearing right. **4.** (1.7 miles) At Gray Walls house, bear left, following a bridleway through trees and past a pond on your left. Continue until you reach the main road at the southeastern

corner of Frensham Great Pond. **5.** (2.7 miles) Cross the road and follow Pond Lane around the southern end of the Great Pond. **6.** (4 miles) Bear right, following a bridleway straight across the A287 (cross with care), taking the first left onto another bridleway and following this north to a footpath just before Priory Lane. Turn right, following the footpath to return to the car park. ►



Lyme Park

WHERE Disley, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12
2NR // **DISTANCE** 3.7 miles (5.9km) // **ASCENT** 617ft (188m) // **TERRAIN** // Good paths and grassy trails

LYING ON THE WESTERN FRINGES of the Peak District National Park, the National Trust's Lyme estate covers 1,400 acres of gardens, moorland and deer park. Easily reached by train, it's a glorious escape from the busy towns and cities nearby. The park is brilliantly set up for runners, with a weekly parkrun, monthly Trust10 train runs and even a regular running group – Lyme Runners – if you're keen to explore the area further in the company of runners with local knowledge. This run takes in a loop of the park, making the most of its varied landscape on trails through woodland, across open moor and along a section of the Gritstone Trail.

THINGS TO SEE // Lyme Park's iconic, Grade II-listed tower, the Cage, with its

three impressive sundials, stands overlooking the main entrance road to the estate. Originally built in the 16th century, it was demolished and rebuilt in 1737. It has a long and varied history: it was a banqueting hall and a hunting lodge, and it is said to have been used for a time as a prison for poachers caught on the estate; during the Second World War it housed children evacuated from nearby Manchester. There are several other unusual structures to be discovered as you explore the park, including the three-storey, octagonal-spired belvedere, known as the Lantern, hidden in Lantern Wood.

THE ROUTE // **START/END NATIONAL TRUST LYME PARK CAR PARK** // **1.** Turn left out of the car park and follow the main drive to the left. Where the path forks, stay left, following the Gritstone Trail across grassland and then over the wooded hill at Knightslow. Emerging onto open moorland, continue on the Gritstone Trail until you reach a road at a T-junction. **2.** (1.2 miles) Turn left onto the road and run along it, passing a couple of buildings and continuing until you reach a larger road. **3.** (2.1 miles) Don't join the road; turn left

and head between the buildings and out onto a footpath the other side. Follow the footpath first alongside a wall and then bearing slightly left across scrubland to reach a stone track. **4.** (2.7 miles) Turn left and follow the stone track all the way back to the car park.



4

TOWER PLAY
Runners at Lyme Park in front of the Cage

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

The Peak District is one of the UK's best places for off-road running. The Gritstone Trail runs from Disley station for 35 miles through Lyme Park, to Kidsgrove in Staffordshire.

COASTING

Making tracks on the South West Coast Path along Zennor Head

5

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

The South West Coast Path provides a wealth of excellent running in either direction: to the east it drops down to St Ives; heading west takes you along the Penwith Heritage Coast.

Zennor

WHERE Zennor village car park, Zennor, Cornwall TR26 3BZ //

DISTANCE 5.2 miles (8.4km) // **ASCENT** 1,053ft (321m) // **TERRAIN** Coastal, Well-maintained tracks and trails

THE GRASSY TRAIL ACROSS Zennor Head winds its way through bright yellow gorse and glorious views open out along this ruggedly beautiful stretch of coastline. The outward section of this run takes on a dramatic, rocky and undulating section of the South West Coast Path, towards St Ives. The West Penwith area has a long history of mining and farming, and the inland leg of this run crosses traditional Penwith field systems, enclosed by Cornish hedges and stiles hewn from local granite.

THINGS TO SEE // The landscape of Penwith is peppered with prehistoric monuments, making this an internationally important area for archaeologists and a

fascinating place to explore. On the high ground to the south and east of Zennor village are the

Zennor and Sperris Quoits, two Neolithic chambered tombs topped by huge granite slabs. To the southwest are the remnants of hut circles, settlements and a chambered cairn.

The Carracks and Little Carracks (from the Cornish kerrek, meaning 'rocks') are two scattered groups of wave-washed islands lying just off the coast. These islands provide habitat for a variety of marine life, with the largest (sometimes called Seal Island) being a good place to spot Atlantic grey seals.

THE ROUTE // **START/END ZENNOR VILLAGE CAR PARK** // **1.** From the car park, turn left onto the road through the village, passing the Tinnars Arms pub and the church. Just after the church, turn left down a narrow track, signed to the coast path. **2.** (0.5 miles) After the stile, continue straight ahead, following the South West Coast Path around Zennor Head in the direction of St Ives. **3.** (3 miles) Once you



have run past The Carracks – it's worth pausing here to look for seals, basking on the rocks or playing in the waves – turn right where the coast path continues straight on over a footbridge. Leaving the coast path, head inland up a small river valley to reach the buildings at Treveal Mill. **4.** (3.2 miles) Turn right, following a track that bears left around buildings at Treveal and continuing due south to Boscubben. **5.** (3.8 miles) Before you reach the B3306, turn right and follow a footpath through Wicca Farm, continuing through fields and the farms at Lower Tregerthen and Tremedda to return to Zennor village. ►

GET UP AND COE
Running in the
majesty of Glencoe

6

Glencoe

WHERE Glencoe visitor centre,
Glencoe, Argyll, PH49 4HX //

DISTANCE 1 mile (1.6km) // **ASCENT** 154ft
(47m) // **TERRAIN** Undulating trail

NOTHING QUITE PREPARES YOU for your first glimpse of Glencoe. The dramatic landscape was formed first by violent volcanic eruptions and then by the movement of massive glaciers. And its human history is no less turbulent. Inverigan, shortly after the halfway point on this run, was the site of the Massacre of Glencoe in 1692. This route is short but scenic, taking you through wildlife-rich

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

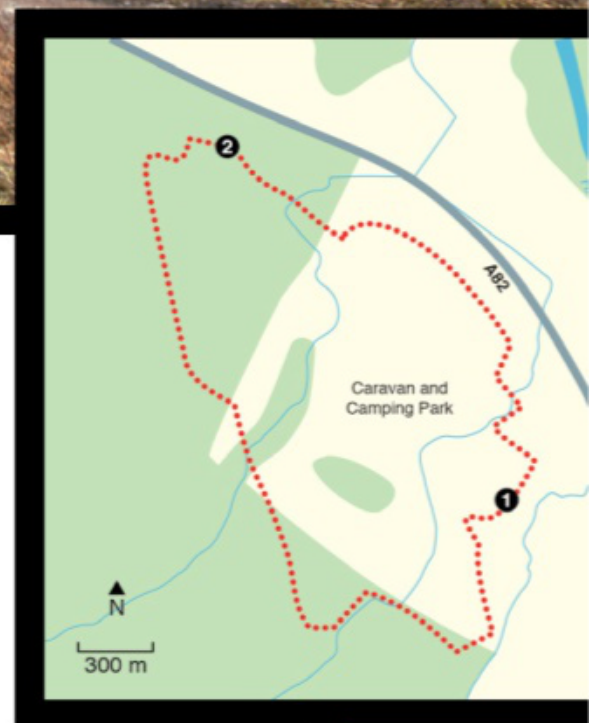
The Glencoe Lochan Trails are gentle trails around the shores of the lochan (small loch). There's another run through ornamental woodland set within the wild setting of the glen.

birch woods and through Glencoe's magnificent mountain landscape, starting and finishing at the National Trust for Scotland's Glencoe visitor centre. There's an option to extend the run to Glencoe village, should you wish, adding an extra 2 miles (3.2km).

THINGS TO SEE // With its unique combination of rare geology and range of habitats, Glencoe is a designated National Nature Reserve. High in the mountains are alpine flowers, mosses, lichens, ptarmigans (gamebirds that are a member of the grouse family) and mountain hares, while the glen is home to sheep, wild goats and red deer. Look out for red squirrels and pine martens

in the forest and many different birds, from rock-hopping dippers to golden eagles, soaring overhead.

THE ROUTE // **START/END** GLENCOE VISITOR CENTRE
// **1.** From the car park, head towards the visitor centre, turn right and follow the path around, picking up the blue Woodland Walk waymarkers. The trail takes you through an area of conifer forest. **2.** (0.6 miles) The trail reaches Inverigan; either follow the blue waymarkers from here back to the visitor centre or turn left onto the path to Glencoe village – take care crossing the A82 if you choose this route.



Ilam Park & Dovedale

WHERE Ilam Park, Ilam, Derbyshire, DE6 2AZ // **DISTANCE** 5.5 miles (8.8km) // **ASCENT** 1,276ft (389m) // **TERRAIN** Good paths and grassy trails

ILAM PARK AND NEIGHBOURING

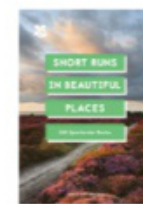
Dovedale lie in the White Peak, the southern half of the Peak District, where grassy limestone hills have been cut through by the relentless passage of the River Dove to form a deep, sheer-sided gorge. The running is brilliantly varied, with long stretches along a peaceful, flat riverside trail, edged by invitingly craggy fells where tough ascents and technical descents are interspersed with glorious views. This run begins at Ilam and heads across to explore Dovedale, following the river up past the famous stepping stones to Ilam Rock. There's a good climb through Dovedale Wood before an enjoyable, undulating stretch through limestone countryside returns you to Ilam Park.

THINGS TO SEE // In 1951, the Peak District became the first of Britain's National Parks, following decades of campaigning for access to open spaces for all. Today, the

Peak District remains true to its original purpose: an accessible area of open spaces and natural beauty. It's also one of the best places in the country for trail running, networked with hundreds of miles of well-maintained footpaths and bridleways. The character of the running differs with its underlying geology. To the north, the Dark Peak lies on a bedrock of gritstone, giving the area its windswept high fells and prominent edges, while, to the south, the White Peak boasts a landscape of steep limestone valleys, clear streams and open, fast-draining grassland.

THE ROUTE // **START/END NATIONAL TRUST ILAM PARK CAR PARK** // **1.** From the start, follow the footpath away from Ilam, with the car park on your right, heading up into the parkland. Follow the path as it curves to the right to reach the road in Ilam village. Turn right onto the road, then bear left at the triangle. Follow the road as it curves right, then turn left onto a footpath after the buildings on your left. **2.** (0.6 miles) Join the main path and turn right, following the path around the hillside and past the Izaak Walton hotel to reach the road and main car park for Dovedale. **3.** (1.3 miles) Cross the road and the footbridge over the river and run up Dovedale, with the river on your left. You'll pass the stepping stones, weirs and several caves. **4.** (3 miles) Cross the river over the footbridge and take the footpath

opposite, climbing steeply up the hill through Dovedale Wood. At the top of the woodland, follow the footpath left and along the edge of the woods to reach a cottage and farm buildings at Ilam Tops. **5.** (4 miles) At the path junction, turn left and follow the footpath south, down Bunster Hill, and continue straight ahead to reach the road just outside Ilam village. Turn right and rejoin your outward route through the village and back to Ilam Park. 



You'll find 100 little wonders throughout the UK lovingly compiled in *Short Runs in Beautiful Places*, by Jen and Sim Benson (£12.99 National Trust Books)



7

OTHER TRAILS NEARBY

The Manifold Way runs for 8.1 miles from Hulme End in the north to Waterhouses in the south, mostly through the Manifold Valley.

STEP TO IT
Striding across the Dovedale stepping stones



FRUIT JELLY'S
NUTRITIONAL MERITS
WILL MAKE YOU QUIVER



BLACK PUDDING
ROUNDS UP PLENTY
OF VITAL MINERALS

Super Foods

(and 15 unexpected nutritional villains)

MANY BENEFICIAL FOODS ARE NOT EXOTIC AND UNPRONOUNCEABLE FRUITS, OR THE CLOSELY GUARDED FERMENTATION SECRETS OF ELUSIVE NOMADIC TRIBES. IN FACT, THERE ARE MANY UNSUNG SUPERFOODS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT. HERE'S HOW SAUSAGES, POPCORN AND 25 OTHER UNLIKELY NUTRITIONAL HEROES CAN POWER YOUR RUNNING AND YOUR HEALTH

WORDS: SCARLETT WRENCH – PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL HEDGE
FOOD STYLING: TAMARA VOS AND NICO GHIRLANDO

Our panel of hungry experts



Aidan Goggins

Goggins is a pharmacist with a Master's in nutritional medicine.
aidangoggins.com



Laura Tilt

Tilt is a dietitian with a focus on weight loss and sports nutrition.
tiltnutrition.com



Toral Shah

Nutritional scientist, biologist and chef.
theurbankitchen.co.uk



Matt Hodges

The nutritionist creates meal plans for athletes.
buffboxmeals.co.uk

01 FRUIT JELLY

'Gelatin is a rich source of collagen, which is essential for skin elasticity and healthy joints,' says Goggins. What's more, a study at Jikei University in Tokyo found that glycine, another component of fruit jelly, reduces the time it takes you to fall asleep when eaten a few hours before bed.

02 BLACK PUDDING

Black pudding – also known as blood sausage, a far less appealing name – is 'rich in minerals such as iron, zinc and selenium, all vital for your immunity', says Hodges. 'It's a misconception that it's high in saturated fat, too, with only 2g per portion.' But beware: supermarket varieties are often stuffed with starch and flour, so go organic.



03 CANDIED PEEL

Citrus peels contain more than double the vitamin C found in the fruit's flesh and are a source of salvestrol and limonene, compounds that studies suggest can fight cancer. A little sugar will ease the bitterness, so hunt out the last of your Christmas cake.

04 STEAMED DUMPLINGS

They feel like a treat but the healthiest, trendiest form of Eastern cuisine – Japanese mushi gyoza and Chinese dim sum – are typically stuffed with shiitake mushrooms, a single portion of which is enough to lower levels of disease-causing inflammation.

TRUE BLUE: MOREISHLY
CREAMY AND GOOD FOR YOUR
HEART (AND CRACKERS)



05 STICHELTON

Studies show the polyamine compounds found in native blue cheeses such as stilton and stichelton could protect against high blood pressure and heart disease. 'They're also high in butyric acid,' says Shah, which has been linked to fat loss and healthier triglyceride levels. Stichelton is made with unpasteurised milk, which tends to be more easily digestible.



06 GOAT SHOULDER

'Goat is lean, has more protein per gram than beef or pork and is richer in iron, which helps to circulate oxygen around your body,' says Tilt. Slow-roast a shoulder for a week's worth of postrun meals.

yourself by blending a bag of salted pistachios until creamy.

09 IODISED SALT

Many people in the UK are deficient in iodine, a nutrient that keeps your thyroid and metabolism healthy. This will redress the balance. Plus, research at McMaster University in Canada recently found that a low-salt diet can increase the risk of heart disease in men with healthy blood pressure.

07 PORTER

This dark beer is rich in heart-healthy nutrients. 'The University of Wisconsin-Madison found flavonoids in dark beers could prevent blood clots,' says Goggins. Try Five Points Railway Porter, which comes in at 4.8% ABV.

08 PISTACHIO BUTTER

Studies show that pistachios contain more antioxidants than other nutty alternatives, with an impressive profile of BCAAs (branched chain amino acids), which have been linked to muscle repair. Make it



10 NATTO

These fermented soybeans are a traditional breakfast dish in Japan. They are an acquired taste, with a sticky texture and punchy scent. But it's one worth acquiring, says Goggins: a 200kcal serving contains half your daily iron needs and a third of your RDA of fat-burning copper, as well as a hefty hit of gut-boosting probiotics.



NOT WHAT THE LABEL SAYS...

These trendy foods aren't all that they're hyped up to be

Bee Pollen

Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop website might celebrate bee pollen as an all-round nutritional powerhouse, but you should ignore the buzz. 'It's cited as being a complete protein source that boasts anti-ageing and detoxifying effects, but there's little evidence for any of this,' says Tilt.

Green Juice

Juicers and smoothie-makers strip away insoluble fibre. 'Without fibre, the beneficial bacteria in the colon aren't able to metabolise your vegetables properly, which means they might not deliver the benefits you chose them for,' says Shah.

Coconut oil

The backlash against coconut oil began after a Harvard professor declared it has no proven benefits. 'And one tablespoon has 10g of saturated fat and 90kcal,' says Shah. ►

THEY PROMISED SO MUCH

The benefits of these health-shop favourites have been exaggerated

Iced tea

Bottled teas are no match for a fresh cup. 'Ready-to-drink green teas degrade polyphenols to nonexistent levels,' says Goggins. Stick the kettle on.

Chia seeds

Though purported to aid weight loss when soaked to form an appetite-suppressing gel, the seeds were shown to have no such effect in a 12-week study published in *Nutrition Research*.

'Natural' Protein Bars

To be a 'source of protein', as little as 12 per cent of the energy value of a food must come from protein. If your soy-coco-spirulina bar has more grams of sugar than it does of protein, steer clear.

Bagged fruit

'An apple browns within minutes when cut,' says Hodges. But pre-sliced packaged fruit is often treated with preservatives and loses most of its nutrition when exposed to air. Hit the frozen aisle.

11 BABA GANOUSH

This tasty, smoky spread offers two superfoods in one: aubergine, rich in nasunin, which relaxes blood vessels, and cholesterol-busting tahini.



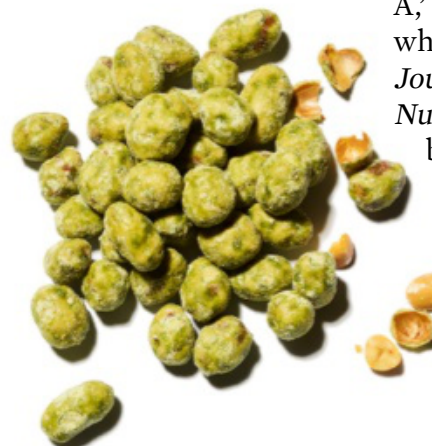
12 NDUJA SAUSAGE

This spicy 'peasant' sausage is made with pig offal such as tripe, lungs and liver. These so-called waste cuts are rich in mood- and energy-supporting vitamin B12 and iron, says Hodges, plus choline for brain health. The pigs' diet of acorns and nuts makes their meat rich in healthy fats, too. It's then cut with chilli and spice and sold in a spreadable form.



13 VIOLETTE POTATO

Low-carb advocates may chip away at the reputation of the spud, but we runners know they are a fine part of your fuelling plan. Along with the carb load, all types are rich in potassium and vitamin C, but purple ones 'have a rich anthocyanin content, like berries. Plus, they're great for colon health,' says Goggins.



14 MARMITE

Even if you loathe it you may be won over by the prospect of a healthier brain. According to studies by the University of York, Marmite can boost your levels of GABA, a chemical messenger associated with deeper sleep and reduced anxiety, making a slice of toast with Marmite a great addition to your bedtime ritual. The study authors credit its levels of mood-balancing vitamin B12 for the effect.



15 KEFIR

To upgrade any smoothie or latte, ferment your own milk. Kefir grains are, in fact, not grains but a 'symbiotic community' of yeast and bacteria that bestow your milk with probiotics. 'This improves metabolic health by boosting the blood sugar-control hormone GLP-1,' says Goggins.



16 WASABI PEANUTS

Wasabi paste 'provides isothiocyanate nutrients, which bolster our stress-response defences', says Goggins. These nutrients have been associated with cancer prevention, inhibiting blood clots and even to have anti-asthma effects.

18 PICKLED EGGS

The powers of eggs and cider vinegar are well established, but now it's time for the humble chip shop staple to don a spandex suit and show itself as a nutritional superhero. 'Eggs are a source of choline and vitamins D and A,' says Hodges, while the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that boiling protects nutrients better than frying or scrambling.



SAVE THE CRUNCHY
SNACK FROM
THE FLOOR
OF THE CINEMA



19 BUTTERED POPCORN

Low-calorie popcorn snack bags might seem like the smart option, but many are coated with powdered sugar and artificial flavourings. However, there are ways to keep popcorn's health credentials golden. A study by the University of Scranton, US, found that popcorn has a greater concentration of health-boosting polyphenols than most fruit – and these nutrients are also better absorbed when eaten with a dose of healthy fats. Drizzle with organic butter.

ARE YOU PAYING THE STEALTH TAX?

Seemingly virtuous, these fit-food staples have a downside

Instant porridge

Your microwaved breakfast may save time but it's far from being the perfect shortcut. 'Sweetened fruits and syrup flavourings add 8-10g of sugar with no extra nutrients,' says Hodges. 'You're better off buying a box of plain oats and adding fruit or nut butter yourself.'

Energy balls

In the absence of added sugars, many are sweetened with dates or date syrup. 'Dates are very high on the glycaemic index,' says Shah, 'and eating too many can cause stomach pain due to their high fibre and fructose.'

Bento boxes

The odd serving of sushi may be swimming in healthy fats, but it isn't an everyday swap for your sandwich. 'There's a risk of mercury poisoning with a high intake of raw fish,' says Goggins. Twice a week is enough. ►

TO FIRE UP ITS BENEFITS,
PICK PRE-COOKED PASTA



20 RAVIOLI

New research in the *BMJ Open* journal has linked regular pasta consumption to a lower body weight, giving it equal status to any bowl of quinoa. ‘Cook and cool your pasta,’ advises Tilt. ‘This turns its carbs into resistant starch that not only reduces appetite, but also increases your levels of short-chain fatty acids, which might protect against cancer.’ Which makes a packet of supermarket ravioli a three-minute-prep nutritional miracle.

21 MANGO

Higher in sugar than your usual bag of frozen berries, but its benefits are twofold. An Oklahoma State University study found eating mango restabilised blood glucose in overweight subjects and other research on hungover mice (yep) found liquid mango boosted recovery.



22 ELK JERKY

Gram for gram, elk is the leanest of all red meats, with roughly half the calories of your average cut of cow and a sweeter flavour. 'It also has a better balance of monounsaturated fatty acids,' says Hodges. Not planning a hunting trip to the Yukon? Simply grab a bag from jerky-house.com for 28g of protein on the go.

23 SPARKLING WINE

Memory and alcohol tend to have an inverse correlation. Not so in the case of champagne, a daily glass of which can protect your powers of recollection from age-related decline, found a study at Reading University. The researchers attribute this to the phenolic compounds in pinot noir and pinot meunier grapes.



Though closely associated with such delicacies as chicken nuggets and chips, a dollop of red sauce carries many benefits, says Goggins. A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* suggests that lycopene, an anti-cancer nutrient, is 2.5 times more easily absorbed from tomato paste than fresh tomatoes. And as lycopene is fat-soluble, pairing it with fats makes it more effective. But no, they didn't actually say nuggets. Or chips.



26 SWEETBREAD

Sweetbreads are glands (thymus or pancreas) from calves or lambs. They are rich in vitamin C, with your full RDA in a standard serving. Sweetbreads are less 'offal' than most, making them a good gateway meat for those not keen on kidneys. Soak them in brine to remove impurities, then sear in a hot pan.



27 PORK CRACKLING

In a study published in journal *Plos One* – which ranked the likelihood that a food would help you hit your daily nutritional targets when eaten in combination with other foods – pork fat fared better than cauliflower, spinach and carrots. It's rich in oleic acid, the heart-healthy fat in olive oil, as well as containing B vitamins and minerals.



FAKE FOODS

These 'super' subs are no better than the foods they replace

Vegan 'meat'

Imitations made with gluten, sugar and artificial flavours are often tough to digest.

Sweet potato fries

'Studies show they have just as much acrylamide as white spuds,' says Goggins, referring to a harmful chemical that can form in fried starchy food.

Quinoa crisps

Gram for gram, these are as high in calories and fat as potato crisps. There's just less in the bag. What you're paying extra for is air.

Brown rice syrup

'This is packed into "healthy" snacks in place of white sugar, but it's glucose,' says Tilt. 'A 20g drizzle has about 18g of sugar, over half of your daily limit.'

Gluten-free bread

Unless you have an allergy, you're not trading up. 'Made with rice, maize and potato, gluten-free bread lacks vitamins and minerals found in wholegrains,' says Hodges.



HIGH AND MIGHTY

Kip Keino races for the line
in the 1500m final at the
1968 Mexico Olympics

In the high altitude
of Mexico City,
Kip Keino's
breathtaking
1500m gold in 1968
was the moment
that sparked
the rise of
Kenyan running

WORDS: ADHARANAND FINN



Mile high

‘THE DOCTOR CAME TO SEE ME IN THE MORNING AND HE SAID, “PLEASE DON’T RUN. IF YOU RUN, YOU WILL DIE.”’

The man speaking is in his late 70s, standing in the sports shop he owns on a bustling street in central Eldoret, high up in Kenya’s Rift Valley region. It’s not a fancy place with all the latest Nike and Adidas gear, but a simple shop, with trophies on a shelf on the back wall and one large cabinet that doubles up as the shop counter. Inside the cabinet, folded in piles, are non-branded school rugby tops and athletics vests.

The man wears a long, yellow shirt and talks so softly it’s hard to hear him over the noise of the street outside. But he smiles as he recounts the story behind one of the greatest moments in athletics history.

‘I was in serious pain,’ he says. That’s why I collapsed in the 10,000m.’ The shop owner, Kipchoge Keino, more commonly known simply as Kip Keino, had been leading in the 10,000m final at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, when, with a few laps to go, he felt a tremendous pain in his side and he collapsed on the infield. When the stretcher-bearers came to get him, however, he insisted on getting up and finishing his final few laps. His compatriot Naftali Temu went on to win the race, claiming Kenya’s first-ever Olympic gold medal.

Four days later, Keino was back on the track in the 5000m final and, despite a recurrence of his abdominal pain, he managed to stay the course and win silver, with Temu running strongly again to claim bronze. The Kenyan charge was beginning, but what happened next changed everything. ►

TIGHT

Keino wasn't satisfied with his silver medal. He felt it was his duty, as one of Kenya's best runners, to bring home gold. Three days after the 5000m, on the morning of the 1500m final, for which he had also qualified, Keino was still suffering stomach pains. He was visited in bed by a doctor, who told him he had a serious problem with his gall bladder and strongly advised him not to run. 'But I told him,' Keino recalls, "I'm running the 1500m. It's a very short event, so let me run."

Keino was told to stay in bed and to sleep, but when the doctor left, he got dressed and went to catch a bus to the stadium. However, on the way there, the bus got stuck in traffic. 'I realised I was late,' says Keino. 'So I jumped out of the bus and I ran all the way, something like two kilometres, to the stadium.'

When he got inside the stadium, they were just calling the runners for the 1500m final.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

THREE YEARS EARLIER, Keino had broken the world records in both the 3000m and 5000m, but the overwhelming favourite for the 1500m title in Mexico was the golden boy of US track and field, Jim Ryun. Unbeaten for over three years, and with 47 consecutive victories in the 1500m and mile, Ryun had also recently broken the 1500m and mile world records. Although followers of the sport knew Keino was a threat, especially those who had seen him win double gold at the 1966 Commonwealth Games (in the mile and three-mile events), to most people Ryun was a shoo-in for gold.

One of those who did know about Keino was David Moorcroft, a future British Olympian and future world record holder in the 5000m. 'I remember being taken to White City [in London] for a big track meet by our club's team manager in 1967,' he says. 'I was just 14 at the

time, and I remember Kip Keino was running in the Emsley Carr Mile. Jim Ryun won, but Kip ran him close. It was a packed house and the atmosphere was amazing. But what stands out about that race in my memory was how easy Kip looked.'

But to the wider public at the time, runners from east Africa were not considered serious contenders for middle-distance and distance medals. Although the Ethiopian Abebe Bikila had won the marathon in 1960 (famously running barefoot) and 1964, Kenya had only ever won one bronze medal, in the 800m in Tokyo, in 1964. Black runners may have been winning the sprints for years, but there was a belief at the time that distance running was more cerebral and so better suited to the supposedly more 'sophisticated' white runners from Europe and America. In Mexico in 1968, the folly of such thinking was being shown up in race after race – Kenyan runners won eight medals in the Games, including three golds – but none had more impact on the sport than the 1500m final.

Derek Thompson, who was then a 10-year-old African American living in the projects in Harlem, New York, recalls watching the race on a black and white television with a fuzzy reception. 'You have to remember this was 1968, the civil rights movement was happening in America. But we didn't have any [black] distance runners – or we didn't see them. It was incredible to see Kip Keino winning.'

'Kip had no formalised training, no sophisticated coaching. He just grew up running to school and back, while Ryun was the darling of the US team – he wasn't supposed to get beaten by some guy from a village in Africa. It was like Mike Tyson losing to Buster Douglas – it just wasn't going to happen.' Thompson would take the memory of that day into adulthood and would eventually meet the man who inspired him so much.

STEPPING UP

KIP KEINO WAS BORN IN KIPSAMO in the Nandi Hills in western Kenya. In his local language, the name 'Kipchoge' means 'born near the grain storage shed'. When he was still very young, both his parents died and so he was brought up by his aunt.

Like many children in rural Kenya, when he started primary school he had to run to get there. 'I ran in my bare feet four miles to school in the morning,' he once said. 'Then I ran home for lunch, again for afternoon school and back at the end of the day. I did this every day until I left school.' When he wasn't running to school and back, Keino was often sent out to herd the family's goats, which could involve trotting

around after them for hours at a time. All of this physical activity, done in bare feet and at high altitude, laid the foundations for a career as a distance runner.

But in the early 1960s, athletics was still purely an amateur sport, so getting started for ►

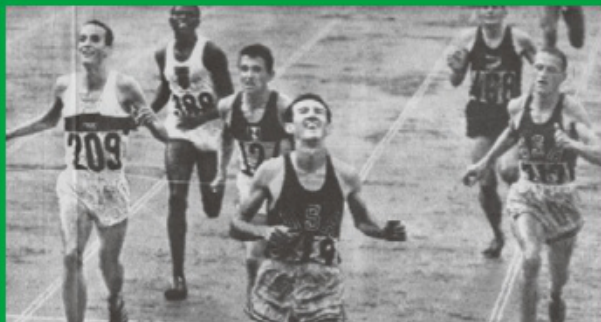
'I RAN IN MY BARE FEET FOUR MILES TO SCHOOL IN THE MORNING'

MILES AND MILESTONES

Key moments in Kip Keino's life and career



↑ **1940** Born in the Nandi Hills in Kenya.



1962 Qualifies for the Commonwealth Games in Perth, Australia, and finishes 11th in the three miles.



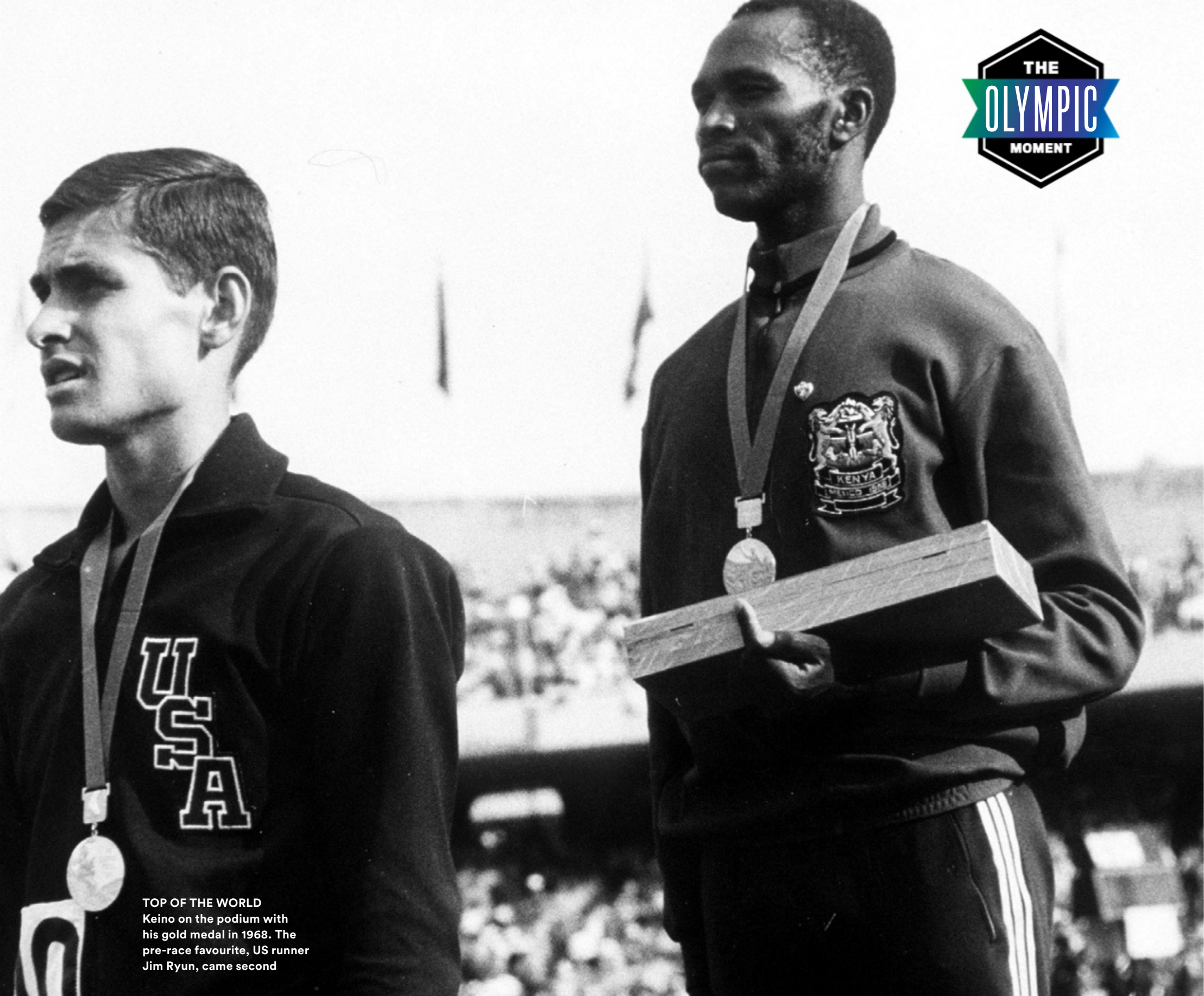
↑ **1964** Finishes fifth in the Olympic 5000m in Tokyo.

1965 Runs the 3000m in 7:39.6, a new record; also breaks Ron Clarke's 5000m world record, running 13:24.2.



↗ **1966** Wins double gold at the 1966 Commonwealth Games in Jamaica, in the mile and the three-mile races.

↑ **1968** Shocks favourite Jim Ryun to win Olympic gold in the 1500m. Also claims silver in the 5000m (above).



TOP OF THE WORLD
Keino on the podium with his gold medal in 1968. The pre-race favourite, US runner Jim Ryun, came second



1970 Wins gold in the 1500m at the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.

↑ 1972 At the Munich Olympics, wins silver in the 1500m and gold in the 3000m steeplechase, an event he rarely ran.

1973 Retires from running and opens an orphanage in Kenya.

↑ 1987 Named joint Sportsperson of the Year by *Sports Illustrated* in recognition of his work with his orphanage.

↗ 1999 The KipKeino Primary School opens in Eldoret.

2007 He is made an honorary Doctor of Law by the University of Bristol.

a poor Kenyan boy wasn't easy. After finishing school, Keino became a physical-training instructor in the Kenyan police force, where his running ability was soon noticed, and he became part of the police track team. Inter-forces sport was – and still is – taken very seriously in Kenya, so he was given time off from his duties to train, especially after he started winning races.

His first big success was when he made the Kenyan team for the 1962 Commonwealth Games in Australia, where he came 11th in the three-mile race. He then qualified for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, where he finished fifth in the 5000m but failed to make the final of the 1500m.

Fully established now as an international runner, on 27 August 1965, Keino broke the 3000m world record by over six seconds in his first attempt at the distance. Later that year, he broke the 5000m world record, which had been held by the legendary Ron Clarke. So by the Olympics in 1968, Ryun at least knew the man from Kenya was a threat, even if the outside world was overlooking him.

Wary of the impact of the high altitude of Mexico City, where the heart and lungs have to work harder to deliver oxygen, Ryun calculated that a time of 3:39 should be enough to claim gold – well outside his own world

record of 3:33. So when the young Kenyan Ben Jipcho set off from the gun at a ferocious pace, Ryun let him go. Jipcho ran the first lap in a blistering 56 seconds, well inside world-record pace. With Keino sitting close behind in third place, BBC commentator, David Coleman noted, 'The Kenyans are trying to make the altitude tell and run the finish out of Jim Ryun.'

This may well have been the plan, although Keino recalls that he just saw the pace was hard and decided to go. 'I said, "go, go,"' he says, sweeping the air with his arm and smiling. As though it was that simple.

There's little doubt that the altitude in Mexico played a part in Keino's (and Kenya's) success in 1968. With most of Kenya's athletes coming from the high-altitude Rift Valley region, they were already adapted to the conditions in a way the Americans and Europeans weren't. 'This feels like Africa,' Temu reportedly said of the conditions in Mexico City.

Moorcroft says that although people in the sport knew the altitude would certainly be a factor in the long-distance races, the effect it would have on the middle-distance races such as the 1500m was less certain. One thing that

was sure, however, was that the faster the pace, the more of a role it would play, as the athletes went into oxygen debt quicker.

With two laps to go, Keino hit the front and pushed on, reaching the 800m mark in 1:55, making Coleman splutter into his microphone that the pace was 'near suicidal'. Ryun, meanwhile, was sticking to his plan and sitting back off the leading group in about eighth place.

Everyone waited for Keino to wilt in the blazing afternoon sun, but his pace

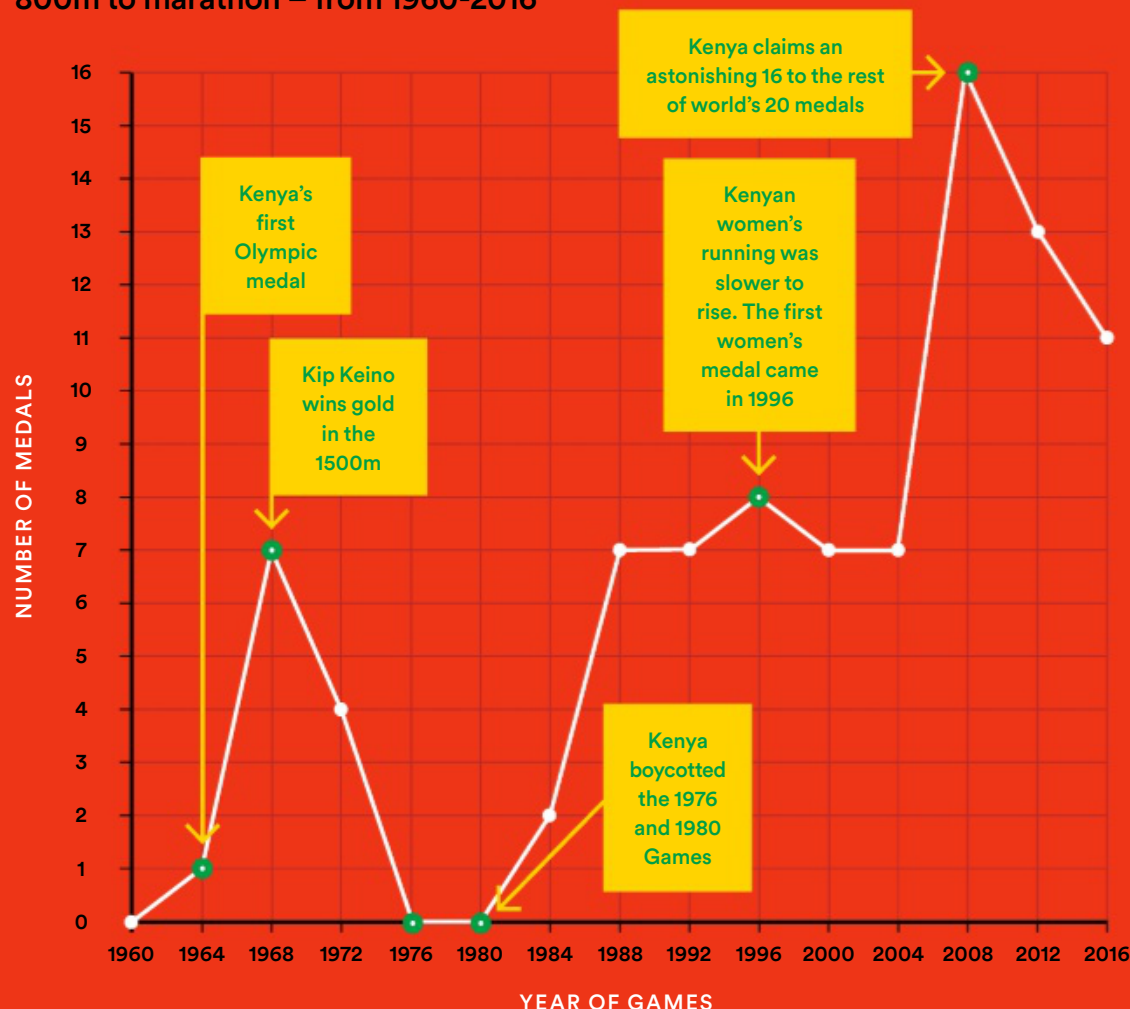
remained relentless, and by the time he got to the final 200m he was still well clear. He romped home in a new Olympic record of 3:34.91, claiming 1500m gold by almost three seconds in what is still the biggest winning margin in the event's history. Ryun, chasing hard but more than 20 metres back in second, also ran inside the old Olympic record.

Coleman had little sympathy for the American's efforts, declaring, 'Ryun has completely misjudged this. The Kenyans have beaten him tactically out of sight.'

'IT WAS WAITING TO HAPPEN. KIP IS THE DADDY OF THE AFRICAN REVOLUTION'

THE RISE OF KENYA

Kenyan Olympic medals in middle-distance and long-distance events – 800m to marathon – from 1960-2016



LASTING LEGACY

IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE ONLY – or even the first – Kenyan victory, but it was the one that resonated the most. Moorcroft remembers watching the race in awe as a 15-year-old. 'Other African athletes won medals at that Olympics, but there was just something special about Kip, the way he controlled the race, that was so impressive. There was something wonderfully spontaneous about the way he ran. He didn't have sophisticated training like Ryun, but he was smart. He out-thought Ryun. And he did it with a smile on his face.'

For Derek Thompson, it was Keino's reaction to winning that impressed him as much as anything. 'I remember how gracious he was in victory,' he says. 'After he won, he went over and hugged Ryun. I was so inspired. Here was someone who looked like me, running distance races and winning.'

So inspired was Thompson, in fact, that he went on to become track coach for the Ivy League Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and years later he took his family on a trip to Kenya in search of his hero. He ended up in the same sports shop in Eldoret.

'When he met me, he didn't know me from Adam,' says Thompson, 'but he was so gracious, and he invited me and my family to stay with

him.' By then, Keino was long retired from running, and had set up a school, a training camp for upcoming athletes and an orphanage – all of which he still runs today. 'What he was doing with the orphanage really resonated with my wife,' says Thompson. "We have to start a foundation," she said. So we started the Kip Keino Foundation.'

'Kip's philosophy of caring about people, and the young, in particular, inspired me, and one of my major goals in life has become to help young people in any way that I can,' says Thompson, who still dedicates much of his time to projects in Kenya. 'Keino was like Mandela to me,' he says.

But Keino's biggest legacy was inspiring and instilling belief in a generation of runners closer to home. Today's Kenyan dominance of the distance running, alongside Ethiopia, can in large part be traced back to that afternoon in Mexico City, when a guy from a village in Africa shocked the world.

If you spend time in Kenya today and ask the runners who most inspired them to take up the sport, you will still hear the name Kip Keino repeated again and again. 'Kip Keino is the father of Kenyan running,' they will tell you.

Take Simon Biwott, for example. The winner of the 2000 Berlin Marathon (in 2:07:42) and

FOUNDING FATHER

The KipKeino foundation has given many disadvantaged kids a better start in life

Even back when he was in the police, Keino was known for taking in orphans and needy youngsters. When he retired from the track, in 1973, he bought some land and opened an orphanage in Eldoret. In 1978, he and

his wife, Phyllis, a key driver of his projects, officially opened the Kip Keino Children's Home, which later became the Lewa Children's Home when it moved to a larger plot, north of Eldoret. In 1999, the KipKeino Primary School

was opened within walking distance of the children's home to provide a first-class education to the orphans and to other children in the community. Today, it is one of the best primary schools in the region.

marathon silver medallist at the 2001 World Championships in Edmonton, Canada, credits Keino with getting him interested in running. 'When I was at primary school, we didn't know much about athletics,' says Biwott. 'But we knew about Kip Keino. In our village the girls sang about Kip Keino, so we knew his name. We didn't really know what it was, but we thought that this athletics must be a serious business.'

'Kip Keino leaves behind not only a legacy in Kenyan running, but in Africa and the world of sports, says the Irish Patrician Brother Colm O'Connell, one of the most successful coaches in Kenya's history, who has been living and coaching in Iten, in the Rift Valley, since 1976. 'He put down a marker in middle distance running, an area which may have been considered the prerogative of the western world at the time. He played a massive role in putting the newly established independent nation of Kenya on the map.'

'It was the start of the African dominance,' says Moorcroft. 'Sure, the altitude helped, but it was waiting to happen. Kip is the daddy of the African revolution.'

After Keino, things changed quickly. At the following Olympics, in Munich, 1972, Kenyans won a further six medals, with Keino back again to cement his status as a legend by winning silver in the 1500m and an unexpected gold in the 3000m steeplechase, an event he had barely ever run before. He entered the event only because the 5000m final clashed with his main event, the 1500m.

'I had no experience [in steeplechase],' he said afterwards. 'I hadn't practised how to jump, so most of the time I was stepping on each hurdle.' All 23 of the other competitors in the final had better personal bests than him, as well as better hurdling technique, but he somehow crossed the line first in a new Olympic record. Anyone in Kenya who was not already singing about him certainly was now.

'Lots of people are inspirational in their own country,' says Moorcroft. 'But Kip Keino was a global inspiration. And this is what defines greatness, someone who is an inspiration around the world.'

Adharanand Finn is the author of *Running with the Kenyans*, which was named the *Sunday Times Sports Book of the Year* and was shortlisted for the William Hill Sports Book of the Year. Follow him on Twitter @adharanand



MAN OF THE MOMENT
Clockwise from top: Keino leaps to victory in the 3000m Steeplechase in the 1972 Olympics; in the 1972 sports series *The Champions*; one of his many awards, 1966





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72

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PERSONAL BEST

COACHING TIPS TO HELP YOU RAISE YOUR RUNNING GAME

BY TOM CRAGGS

MARCHING ONWARDS

A smart approach to marathon training and recovery can take you through the hard yards in March



Marathon training is a journey with many twists and turns, and it is physically and emotionally demanding. For those training for an April marathon, March is when your training begins to reach its peak. The groundwork in the winter has set you up for your key marathon-specific sessions and those crucial long runs, which will take place over the next four to five weeks. Here I look at how to pull marathon training together to ensure you arrive at the taper with the key work in the bank.

● **Too much of a good thing** The fear of the marathon can lead to many runners trying to prove to themselves they are ready by going too far in their longest long run, leaving themselves tired on race day.

TRY THIS In March, aim for 2-3 long runs of between 2:30 and 3:15, the majority of each to be run a bit slower than your goal race pace.

● **Easy means easy** Runners often blame tiredness or niggles on long runs or harder, faster sessions. The reality is it's often not these sessions that cause your body to break down, but going too hard on your easy runs.

TRY THIS Aim to keep easy runs at a conversational, relaxed effort. If you struggle to control this, run to heart rate, working at no more than 70 per cent of your maximum heart rate.

● **Face the elements** Are you one of those runners who tends to wait for ideal conditions before you get out and train? Bad news: race day won't wait for calm winds and cool weather.

TRY THIS See windy conditions or rain as an opportunity to practise in the conditions you may face on race day. Forget the GPS and run to effort in these conditions, but don't hide from them.

● **Race** There is nothing quite like racing to prepare you for a marathon. The nerves, the organisation required, the schedule dictated by someone else. Racing is great to include in your plan, but do so wisely and keep the bigger goal in mind; don't sacrifice your marathon performance to get a PB in a half marathon or over 20 miles.

TRY THIS If you want to run a 20-mile race, that's fine, but doing so faster than your marathon pace could jeopardise your best marathon performance. Keep it at marathon pace, or even try running the race as a negative split, with the first half 40-50 seconds a mile slower than race pace and the second half at goal race pace.

● **Mental preparation** The goal of training is not to make the marathon feel easy – it's to run it better. The marathon is tough; you can expect to find it hard. Prepare for the mental



**MARATHON
EFFORT**
March, not
April, can be
the cruellest
month

challenge, accept that at some point on race day you will need to ask yourself some tough questions and train for this eventuality.

TRY THIS Use March to work on your self-talk strategies to get you focused and centred on the moment you are in, not the miles still to come. 'Rhythm and relax' written on my wrist when I raced was far more important to me than my splits.

● **Don't over-analyse** Training sessions are there to get you fit and prepared. Some will go exactly as planned, some won't; but try not to view every training session as a judgment on how ready you are.

TRY THIS Set yourself some process goals for training that go beyond just splits and paces. How did you feel? Did you execute your fuelling strategy? How relaxed were you when trying to run your goal pace?

● **Recover, recover, recover** Your body is capable of high volumes of training. For most runners it's not the volume of training that leads to your body breaking down, it's not balancing it with adequate recovery.

TRY THIS **Improve your sleep.** This will help you adapt better to the hard miles. No smartphone viewing in the final 60 minutes before bed is a key part of this.

Adapt to succeed. Be ready to change your plan if you feel you are struggling to recover or if you are having an extra stressful period at work or at home.

Fuel your sessions and recovery.

I recommend *Training Food* by Renee McGregor as an excellent overview of effective nutrition for runners.

Create some space. Just because your mate or club does hard sessions Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday does not mean you have to. Create some easy space between your harder sessions and long runs; you may need two or three days of easy running and recovery before your next hard session, so don't be constrained by a seven-day week.

Bin the ego. Going all out on every hard session and chasing overly ambitious paces on every long run will ensure your body begins to struggle in March. Work hard in your fast sessions but only once in a while should you really go to the max.

Check your heart-rate variability (HRV). This can be a useful bit of data for runners to check how well they are recovering and adapting to training in the big-mileage months. There are lots of apps that can give you this data and help you decide if you need to cut back a little.

**RACING IS GREAT TO
INCLUDE IN YOUR
MARATHON PLAN, BUT DO
SO WISELY AND KEEP THE
BIGGER GOAL IN MIND**



6 KEY MARCH SESSIONS

1 / In and Out Within a midweek long run of 75-90 mins or your weekend long run, include 15-20 sets of three mins. Run the odd-numbered mins at marathon pace or just slower and the evens 20-25 secs per mile faster; no rest between efforts.

2 / Floats Do blocks of 2-3km at marathon pace with a shorter steady (not easy) 'float' between each, eg 8 x 2km with 2 mins steady run recovery.

3 / Sandwich session Warm up; run 15-20 mins at marathon pace; easy jog for 2-3 mins; then 4 x 5 mins at 10K to half-marathon pace with 75-sec jog recoveries; easy jog for 2-3 mins; 15-20 mins at marathon pace.

4 / Progression run A long run that progresses in pace can be great prep. Do 30 mins at marathon effort, 20 mins at 5-10 secs a mile faster, 10 mins at 10-mile effort, five mins hard with 3-5 mins easy-to-steady recovery.

5 / Long reps Long reps of 3-4 mins run at 5K-10K effort with rest intervals around 90 secs build fitness and help marathon pace feel easier. Every 7-10 days include a session such as 10 x 3 mins or 7 x 4 minutes at this intensity.

6 / Broken tempo A tempo run with 25-30 mins of work at a pace you could hold for 50-60 mins in a race is useful every 10-12 days. Try breaking this up, eg 5 x 6 mins of tempo effort with 60-75 secs recovery or 12 mins, 10 mins, 8 mins at tempo effort, with 90 secs easy recovery between each.



PACE VALUE
Race-pace training
can give you a boost
on the big day

HOW TO FIND AND FINE-TUNE YOUR RACE PACE

*Knowing how fast you can (or might) run a 5K
and beyond can add focus to your training
and help you get even faster*



YOUR RACE PACE ISN'T something you only encounter once you cross the start line – race training plans often specify race paces for certain workouts. However, if you've never actually raced a certain distance before and have no idea what speed you can maintain for that mileage, the concept of race pace can be daunting. How are you supposed to know your mile best pace or your half-marathon pace if you've never raced those distances? Well, here's the good news: you can still train with race pace. Here's what you need to know.

What is race pace?

Race pace, at its most literal, is the pace you can hold for a specific race effort. For example, your 5K race pace will be much faster than your marathon race pace, because the distance is so much shorter. Training using a variety of race paces is essentially interval training. A race training plan may take you through intervals alternating efforts at your 5K pace, 10K pace,

half-marathon pace and marathon pace. If you don't have recent race times in all those distances, think about it as a way to gauge your effort level – just like running by perceived effort, RPE or heart-rate training.

How important is it to add some race-pace training?

Switching between fast and slower efforts can help increase your VO_2max ,

muscle power and endurance; it's actually more performance-boosting than training at moderate intensities, according to research published in the journal *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*. If you're competitive, 'the more you get used to the feeling of a certain pace, the more likely you're going to be successful at those race distances', says running coach Amanda Nurse, who has a marathon PB of 2:40:45. Though it may sound strange, running shorter distances at a fast pace also helps increase your speed over longer distances – that's why a marathon runner, for example, may still do 400m repeats at a faster pace than their goal marathon pace.

How to find your race paces

You don't need to have PBs in every distance to figure out your race pace. There are actually multiple ways to figure out what a race pace should feel like. One of the easiest ways for non-competitive runners to gauge their effort is by the talk test, or how breathless you are at a certain pace. If you wear an activity tracker or a heart-rate monitor, you can also go by heart-rate zones, based on percentages of your heart-rate max, or, if you prefer being low-tech, you can self-assess your rate of perceived exertion, ranking your effort level on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being no effort whatsoever and 10 being, not too surprisingly, all-out). Here's how those paces break down:

- **Mile:** This is the hard, high-intensity pace because you can only hold it for one hard mile. It's around 9 RPE, during which your heart rate is at about 95 per cent of your max. This is all-out, leave it all on the table, full-gas pace.

- **5K:** 'This is a high-intensity pace,' says Nurse, or an 8 or 9 RPE. If you go by conversational pace, you should not be able to talk, she adds – in fact, you should be breathless by the end of the effort. During a 5K effort, your heart rate should be at 85-95 per cent of your max. 'This isn't a sprint, but the longer you're there, the more it feels like a sprint,' says running coach Matthew Meyer. If you can't hold a 5K pace for a minute, you're running too quick, he adds.

- **10K:** Your 10K pace is going to be 10-20 seconds per mile slower than your 5K pace, says Nurse. 'It's an aggressive pace – you might feel good at the start, but it's going to feel more challenging the longer you hold on,' says Meyer. You may be able to eke out a word or two to a running partner, but

your breath is pretty laboured. You should be running at 80-85 per cent of your max heart rate, and it'll feel like an 8 out of 10 RPE.

- **Half marathon:** 'Half marathon pace is essentially a tempo effort,' says Nurse, or 25-30 seconds per mile slower than your 5K pace. Your breathing should be less laboured here, enough that you may be able to get out a sentence or two at a time, but you should be working at about 70-85 per cent of your max heart rate, or a 7.5 out of 10 RPE, says Meyer. 'Half-marathon pace is where it starts to get challenging, but you can definitely sustain it,' he adds.

- **Marathon:** Marathon pace is aerobic, says Meyer – anywhere from 65-70 per cent of your max heart rate, or a 6 out of 10 RPE. 'You are definitely not huffing and puffing; it's challenging, but overall it's smooth and you could be here for a while,' he says.

Should I push the race pace?

During short efforts, it's easy to run faster than you might be able to sustain for an actual race. There's a difference between current race pace and goal race pace. 'If you were to go out and race today, that's your current race pace,' says Meyer.

Whether you're running at current race pace or goal race pace depends on the type of workout and the results you're trying to achieve, says Nurse.

Let's say you know you can run a 9:00 per mile pace for a 10K, but you can run an 8:30 pace for a three-minute 10K effort in an interval session. 'There's nothing wrong with shooting a little higher,' says Meyer. 'It's OK to push that limit – as long as you're not totally overreaching – because that's how you're going to eventually improve your current 10K pace.'

But at the beginning of training or during longer, lower-intensity efforts (like your weekend long run), you want to pump the brakes a bit and stick to your current race pace. 'For at least the first few weeks of a training cycle, when you might not be able to hit your goal race pace, you want to start out conservatively at your current race paces, so you can build confidence and endurance at longer intervals at your current ability,' explains Nurse.

However, she adds, 'You can do shorter interval workouts early on in your training at faster paces to build your anaerobic capacity and increase your VO₂ max. Over time, you'll be able to sustain those pieces for longer and enter into your goal race paces more easily.'



TRY THIS RACE-PACE LADDER WORKOUT

'Classic ladder work is a great way to work through the paces – the shorter the effort, the faster you can work,' says Meyer. The workout itself is only 34 minutes, but with warm-up and cool-down, you've got a solid 50-minute interval run.

- ▶ 10-minute easy warm-up
- ▶ 4-min @ goal marathon pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 3-min @ goal half-marathon pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 2-min @ goal 10K pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 1-min @ goal 5K pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 4-min @ goal marathon pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 3-min @ goal half-marathon pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 2-min @ goal 10K pace
- ▶ 2-min recovery
- ▶ 1-min @ goal 5K pace
- ▶ 5-min easy cool-down



THE POWER HOUR

Take your running to a new level and still have time to shower with these dynamic lunchtime sessions

OUT TO LUNCH
Go hard, then
go for a shower



YOU MEANT TO RUN THIS MORNING before work – really, you did. But you got up late, or you had an early meeting. So, you'll run tonight, right? Maybe. But you have to do that errand before the shop closes, and you're exhausted from your day. We have all been there – we know that the longer the day goes on, the less likely we are to run. The good news is that you can fit in a quality workout during your lunch break.

The key to getting value from a short workout is intensity. Laura Mizumoto, a runner and personal trainer, says adding challenges helps deliver serious results. 'Hills, changing speeds, strength training – all of these help runners build intensity into their workouts,' says Mizumoto.

The middle of the day might be the perfect time for a run, too. 'Your lunch hour is the time when you're likely to be the most awake and the least fatigued,' notes Mizumoto. Her clients say they run their best on their lunch breaks – after they've been up for a few hours, but before afternoon fatigue sets in. Afterwards, they feel more energised for the rest of the day.

How to use these workouts

The workouts here were designed by Mizumoto to provide maximum training value from just 40 minutes of movement, from the warm-up to cool-down (which gives you time for a shower). To ensure you're training at a solid pace, use a scale of perceived effort: 50 per cent effort represents an easy jog, while 100 per cent effort is your fastest sprint. If you've raced recently, you can also use your goal race paces to gauge the effort. Use the guide below to figure out your goal paces for these workouts:

- ▶ Warm-up or recovery pace = 50 per cent effort
- ▶ Moderate = 65-75 per cent effort

- ▶ Medium-hard = 75-80 per cent effort
- ▶ Hard = 80-85 per cent effort
- ▶ Very hard = 85-90 per cent effort

How to warm up

For each of the workouts on the page opposite, start with a 10-minute warm-up to gradually increase your heart rate and get your muscles ready for a harder effort. How fast you move is up to you: some days, you will be ready to run from the minute you step outside; other days, you might need to ease gradually into your workout. Your goal is to be running easily and fluidly at about 50-60 per cent effort by minute 10. Then, choose one of the four workouts and get moving.

WORKOUT 1 Smooth and steady

This is a classic tempo run. After a 10-minute warm-up, run:

- ▶ 20 minutes at medium-hard pace (75-80 per cent effort). The effort should feel 'comfortably hard' – challenging, but a level you feel you could sustain for an hour.
- ▶ If you're feeling up for it, push the pace in the last five minutes (up to 80 per cent effort or so).
- ▶ Finish the workout with 10 minutes of recovery running.

WORKOUT 2 Push the pace

After the warm-up, perform five four-minute interval blocks for a total of 20 challenging minutes:

- ▶ 3 minutes very hard (85-90 per cent effort)
- ▶ 1 minute at recovery pace
- ▶ Then, do a 10-20-second all-out sprint to torch your muscles – challenge yourself!
- ▶ Wrap up your workout with 8-9 minutes of running at recovery pace to reach 40 minutes.

WORKOUT 3 Progression run

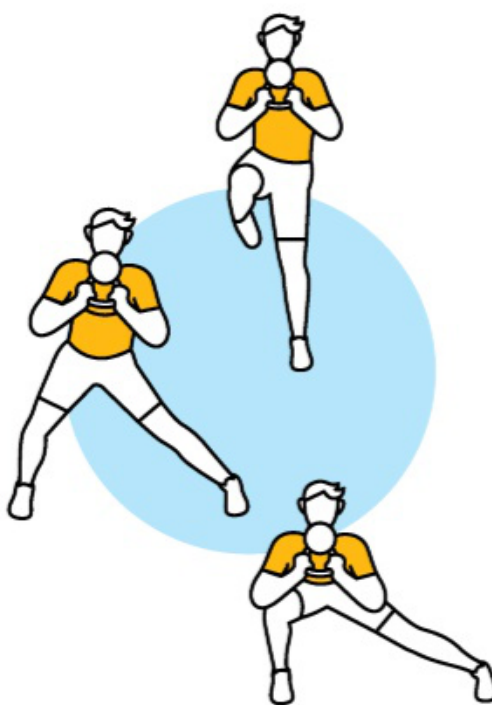
In this tough workout, start at your half-marathon race pace, then increase the pace for each time block. The time blocks get shorter and faster. After a 10-min warm-up, run these progressive intervals:

- ▶ 7 minutes at moderate pace (65-75 per cent effort)
- ▶ 6 mins at medium-hard pace (75-80 per cent effort)
- ▶ 5 minutes at hard pace (80-85 per cent effort)
- ▶ To finish: 12-min recovery run (50 per cent effort)

WORKOUT 4 Speed and strength

Push your pace and strengthen the muscles runners often neglect with this sprint-and-strength workout. After a 10-min warm-up, do four rounds of the circuit in 20 mins.

- ▶ 3 minutes running at hard pace (80-85 per cent effort)
- ▶ Squat jump: 15 reps
- ▶ Side lunge: 10 on each side
- ▶ Burpee: 8 reps
- ▶ Finish up with 10 minutes of recovery running (50 per cent effort).



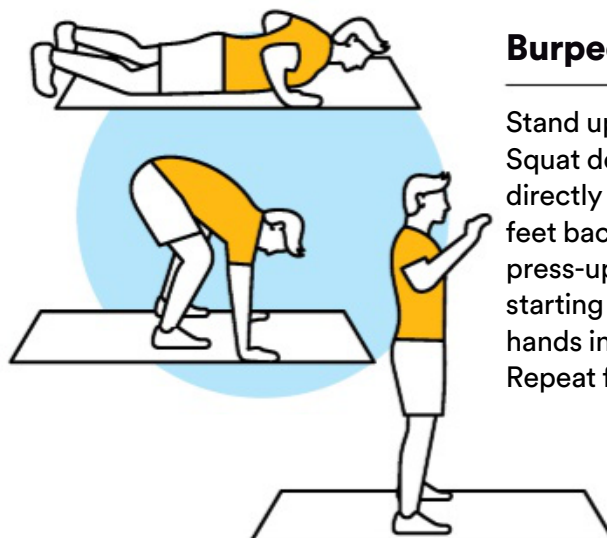
Side lunge

Stand upright with your feet hip-width apart. Take a big step with your right foot out to the right side, toes pointing forward. Bend your right knee and push your hips back to lower into a side lunge, taking care to keep your knee over your toes and your core strong during the entire movement. Push up from your right heel to return to the starting position. Repeat for 10 reps, then repeat the sequence with the left leg for 10 reps. To make it more challenging, hold a dumbbell or kettlebell at chest level.



Squat jump

Stand upright with your feet hip-width apart, hands clasped in front of your body. Push your hips back and bend your knees to lower into a squat position while keeping your core and back strong. From the squat, push through your heels to rise back up and jump, extending your arms. As you land, lower yourself back into a squat. Repeat for 15 reps.



Burpee

Stand upright with your feet hip-width apart. Squat down and place your hands on the ground directly in front of your feet. Jump or walk your feet back to a high plank position. Perform a press-up. Jump or walk your feet back to the starting position behind your hands. Raise your hands in the air as you jump off the ground. Repeat for eight reps.

USE YOUR LOAF

No longer the poor food relation, sandwiches are now the best thing since sliced bread. Here are four nutritious and delicious sarnie recipes to chew on

GOOD FOR
YOUR GUT

Gochujang chicken

Gochujang is a fiery Korean condiment made from fermented soybean paste. It packs a probiotic punch

Kcals 513; Fat 19g; Carbs 58g
Protein 27g; Serves 1

INGREDIENTS

2 boneless chicken thighs
¼ cucumber, ribboned with a peeler
½ carrot, ribboned with a peeler
½ spring onion, sliced
1 **tbsp** mayonnaise
1 **tbsp** gochujang paste (£2.60 for 500g, [sainsburys.co.uk](https://www.sainsbury.co.uk))
1 **tbsp** onions, thinly sliced
2 thick slices white bloomer bread
► Small handful coriander leaves
► Salt and pepper

MAKE IT

1 Season the chicken and roast for about 30 mins, or until cooked through. Let it cool, then shred the meat with a fork. Meanwhile, prep your veg (leave out the watery seeds of the cucumber).
2 Spread one slice of bread with mayonnaise (if using) and the other with the gochujang paste. Stuff with the chicken and top with the spring onion, carrot and cucumber, garnishing with coriander leaves and onions.



Broccoli brioche

This is as moreish as it is unusual. The broccoli is high in vitamin K, which helps maintain strong bones

Kcals 610; Fat 24g; Carbs 96g; Protein 12g; Serves 1

INGREDIENTS

100ml ginger beer
1 **tsp** white wine vinegar
100g cornflour
5g cumin
4 florets of Tenderstem broccoli
1 brioche roll
1 **tbsp** Pama Beetroot & Five Spice Sauerkraut (£6.99, [pama-raw-food.com](https://www.pama-raw-food.com))
► Handful of lamb's lettuce
► Drizzle of sweet chilli sauce
► Light olive oil (for frying)

For the hummus

50g peas
25g edamame beans
1 **tbsp** sesame oil
½ **tsp** ground ginger

MAKE IT

1 Lightly whisk the ginger beer, vinegar, cornflour and cumin together in a bowl, then heat the oil until sizzling hot. Submerge your broccoli in the batter, one stem at a time, then fry for two mins. Once fried, allow the broccoli to drain on a paper towel to remove the excess oil.
2 To make the hummus, blitz the ingredients to a coarse consistency, and then set to one side.
3 Slice and toast the roll, spread it with 1 **tbsp** of the hummus and top with the lamb's lettuce and broccoli. Drizzle with the sweet chilli sauce and garnish with sauerkraut.

STRENGTHENS
BONES



**BOOSTS
RECOVERY**



Pork and seafood roll

Packing 40g of protein and a hit of B vitamins, this will refuel your muscles and replenish your energy

**Kcals 563; Fat 34g;
Carbs 32g; Protein 40g;
Serves 1**

INGREDIENTS

120g pork shoulder
1 tbsp oil
3 king scallops
3 squid rings
► Small handful of rocket
► Brioche roll

For the herby mayo

1 tbsp parsley, chopped
1 tsp dill
1 tsp capers
1 tsp, pickled cucumber, chopped
1 lemon, zested and juiced
1 tbsp light mayonnaise

MAKE IT

1 Slow-roast your pork in advance or work with the leftovers from a Sunday roast. In a pan, heat the oil and sear the seafood until lightly browned, then add the shredded pork to warm it through.
2 Meanwhile, combine the mayo ingredients in a bowl.
3 Slice your roll lengthways and toast, then evenly spread with mayo and top with rocket. Now place the pork mixture in the bread. Done.

**RICH IN
NUTRIENTS**



Lean Mutton Shawarma

Mutton is high in vitamins B1 (thiamine), B6 and B12, and is a good source of phosphorus, iron and copper

Kcals 650; Fat 22g; Carbs 63g; Protein 46g; Serves 1

INGREDIENTS

150g roast mutton
► Handful of crunchy slaw
2 tsp garlic yogurt
1 seeded bagel, halved
For the mutton
½ shoulder of mutton, deboned
50g baharat spice
100g pomegranate molasses
► Salt

For the slaw

100g cider vinegar
50g sugar
20g salt
2 large carrots, shredded
½ red cabbage, shredded
½ white cabbage, shredded
1 green chilli, sliced
1 tsp coriander seeds, toasted

MAKE IT

1 The night before you roast your mutton, rub it with salt and spice and refrigerate. You won't need it all.
2 The next day, sear the meat in a griddle pan. Then pop it in a roasting tray and pour over the molasses and 1L water. Cover with foil and roast for 3-4 hours in an oven heated to 160C. Let it cool, then shred it.
3 Whisk the vinegar, sugar and salt with 100ml water, then combine with the slaw.
4 Toast the bagel, spread with garlic yoghurt (to make your own, mix plain yoghurt with garlic, lemon and salt), then pile it high with meat and slaw. There will be plenty for seconds. And thirds.

PURE PLANT PROTEIN

Power up post-run with
KIND Protein bars



When you finish a long run, it can be all too easy to stumble into the nearest shop and grab the first snack that catches your eye to recharge. However, for your body to properly recover, you'll need a hit of protein to help repair the wear and tear sustained by your muscles while you were hitting the streets.

That's where KIND Protein bars, made with peanuts and almonds, come in. Packing a hefty 12g of plant-based protein, these tasty snacks are high in monounsaturated fats, which are great for your heart and help signal to your brain that you're full when they're digested — so no more emergency chocolate runs. They're also high in fibre, which is essential for maintaining gut health and balancing your blood sugar levels.

With no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives, KIND Protein bars come in a variety of naturally delicious flavours, making them the ideal way to refuel after clocking up the miles.

FUEL UP FAST

With wholefood ingredients and plenty of flavour, here are three reasons why KIND Protein bars are the ultimate post-run pick-me-up



IMMUNE-BOOSTING

Almonds are a rich source of vitamin E, which supports your immune function to stop sickness from standing in your way.



CONVENIENT

The individually packaged 50g bars make for an easy, no-prep snack you can grab before leaving the house.



GLUTEN-FREE

Not only are nuts full of nutrients, they're also naturally gluten-free, making KIND Protein bars coeliac-friendly.

BOOST YOUR RECOVERY WITH KIND PROTEIN BARS, AVAILABLE AT BOOTS, M&S, SAINSBURY'S, TESCO, WAITROSE AND OTHER STORES NATIONWIDE, OR AT [KINDSNACKS.CO.UK](https://www.kindsnacks.co.uk). @KINDSNACKSUK



FRESH VS FROZEN VS TINNED

You may think fresh fruit and veg always trump frozen or tinned, but that is not always the case



Fresh fruit and veg are those that are either ripened on the vine and sold straight away (eg tomatoes) or ripened post-harvest in transit (eg bananas). Plants absorb the majority of their nutrients from the soil in the early stages of growth, and can continue to synthesise macronutrients and micro-nutrients after they're harvested. So, is freshly picked food always the most

nutritious option? It depends. Much of the food's nutritional value is down to the soil content, so if you're buying local and organic, and consuming shortly after harvest or ripening, then yes, this is the way to consume your fruit and vegetables to ensure maximum nutrition. **EAT** Anything you've grown yourself, or organic produce from your local farmers' market.



Freezing 'locks in' freshness, right? Well, that is determined by the food and the processes used in production. As a rule, frozen fruit and veg are ripened and undergo minimal processing before freezing, though some are blanched in hot water to deactivate enzymes that can alter nutritional state, colour, smell and flavour. Frozen fruit and veg can be as nutritional as fresh goods. In fact, if you're not eating the freshest food,

frozen could be the way to go. In a study, fresh peas were found to lose 15 per cent of their vitamin C after seven days when stored in the fridge, and 60 per cent when stored at room temperature. However, when frozen, they only lost 10 per cent after 12 months. **EAT** Opt for frozen peas and stock up with frozen berries for postrun smoothies. Frozen spinach is a great option if you find those leafy greens wilting in the back of your fridge.



Tinned fruit and veg tend to have a bad reputation. Some tinned foods undergo a lot of processing to lengthen their shelf lives, such as blanching and the addition of salt, syrup or additives. These processes can also affect nutrients, particularly water-soluble nutrients such as vitamin C. And some tins are lined with bisphenol-A (BPA), a chemical associated with an increased risk of cancer, so opt

for BPA-free tins when possible. But there are instances where tinned is best. The heating process used in preserving tinned tomatoes makes the antioxidant lycopene more bioavailable. **EAT** Tinned tomatoes are great for cooking up a postrun stew or curry. Tins of pulses such as cannellini beans, chickpeas and lentils tend to undergo minimal processing and, therefore, retain their nutrients.

CONCLUSION The bioavailability of nutrients we consume differs from food to food, with some benefiting from these processing methods and others suffering. Freezing and canning have their pros and cons, which can vary depending on the food. The bottom line is that packing your diet with a variety of vegetables is hugely beneficial, however you're sourcing them. Nothing beats the nutrient density (and tastiness) of grow-your-own freshness, but for convenience and health rolled into one, frozen is often a great option.

Kim Pearson is a qualified nutritionist with more than 10 years' experience. kim-pearson.com; @kimmypearson

SIMPLE STRENGTH MOVES

The RW physio on the essential moves for beginners to build a stronger and more injury-resilient body. Part 1 of 3: Muscles



PART OF THE

attraction of running is that it's easy to start

out. You just pull on your shoes and go. However, starting to run or returning to it after a long period of injury or inactivity should be done with care. My clinic is filled with runners who made it out the door only to be struck with injury just as they were getting going. This is hugely dispiriting and often leads to them giving up.

The main reason is that we all want to be running fast and far straight away, just like we used to. But with months or years of not running regularly, or at all, our bodies become deconditioned.

You need to prepare the body to cope with the forces you are applying to it. That way, you have a better chance of being successful.

You'll feel the muscles first. The calf and shin muscles, as well as the quads (thighs), hamstrings (back of thighs) and glutes (buttocks) will all be stimulated. They will ache for the first few weeks. This is called 'Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness' (DOMS) and is due to microtrauma in the muscle tissues. This overload will make the muscles stronger. The trick is to load sufficiently to stimulate 'hypertrophy'

(strengthening) but not overload and create a bigger trauma – a proper strain.

Aches and tightness are OK, but your muscles need 24 hours to recover and strengthen, which is why sensible beginner-runner plans employ an alternate or every-third-day frequency. Sharper muscle pain in a muscle suggests you have overdone it and recovery will take longer – a minimum of four days of not running, but you can swim or cycle if it is pain-free.

When starting or coming back to running, most people occasionally overdo it and need a short recovery spell. Provided you recognise it early and don't push a little strain into a big strain, it's just part of the process.

There are lots of things you can do to improve the strength of the primary running muscles. If you consistently get specific tightness in a particular muscle, your body is telling you it is not strong enough to cope. Reduce the running while you strengthen, or repeated overloading will inevitably result in injury.

Try the following moves to strengthen the key running muscles. To start with, run one day, exercise the next, then have a recovery day. Listen to your body and recover between sessions.

CALVES

Weakness in the calves is the most common problem I see in a new/returning runner, much more than calf-flexibility issues.

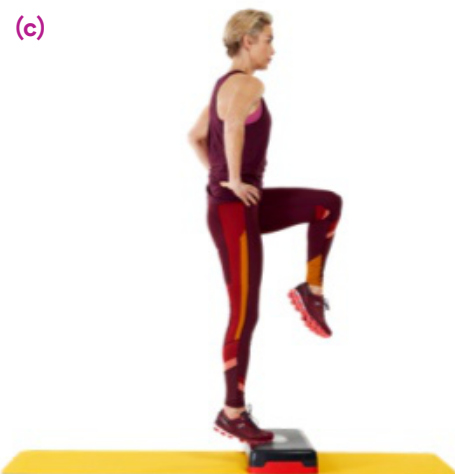
(a)



(b)



(c)



STEP CALF RISES WITH KNEE DRIVE

Basic calf-strength requirements are 3 x 25 heel rises off a step. The key is to work the whole range of movement. Start with the toes of one foot on the edge (a). Then drive up through the ankle and straighten your standing leg at the top (b), while driving the raised knee in front (c).

Once you have reached this basic level of strength, continue to build with the addition of weight – start with 5kg and build towards 20kg in a bag on your back, keeping your hands free for balance.



QUADS, GLUTES & HAMSTRINGS

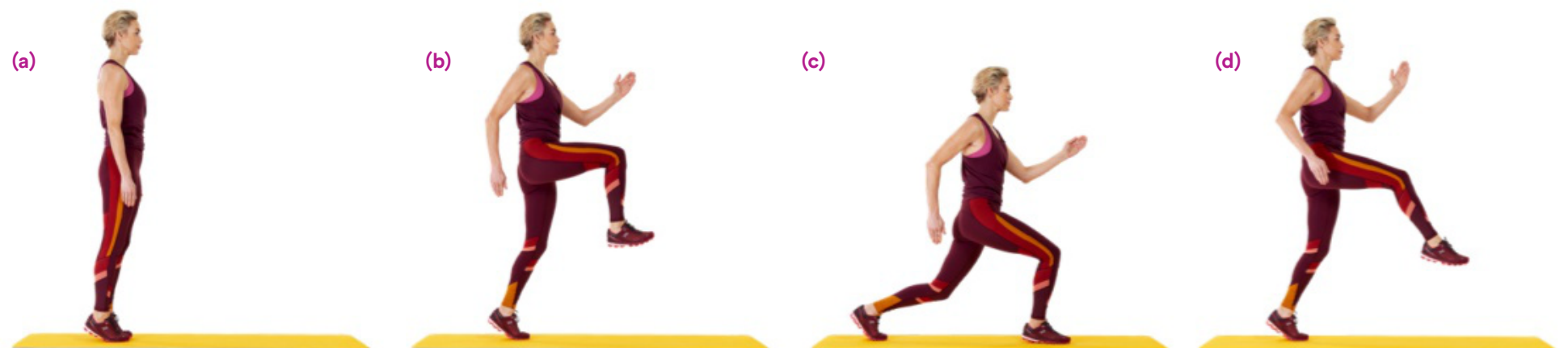
These absorb impact and this 'eccentric' type of loading causes a lot of muscle soreness. Eccentric is where you contract a muscle but lengthen it at the same time.



SINGLE-LEG SQUATS WITH DRIVE

Stand with your back foot up on a chair (a). Your front knee should stay over the top of your foot while you slowly drop down (b) towards a front-

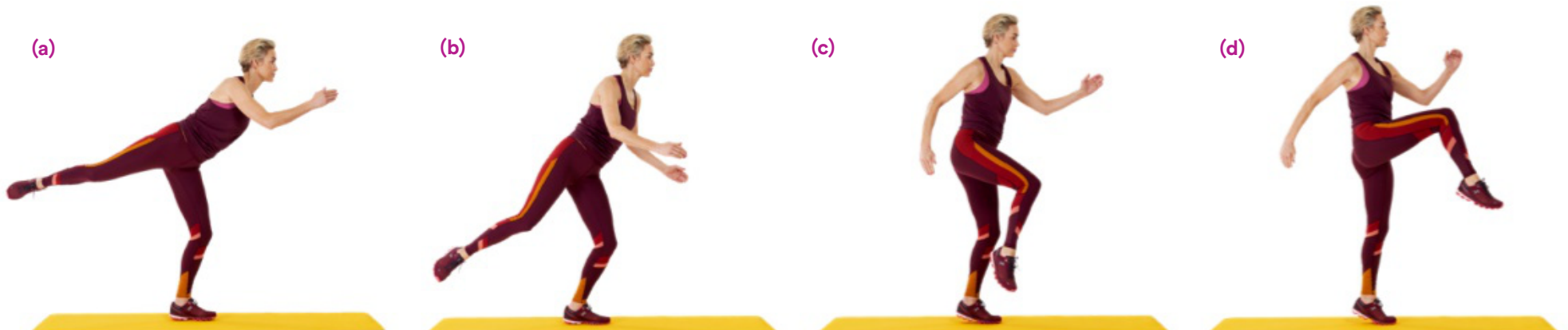
knee bend of around 90 degrees, but no more (c), before driving back up to a straight leg (d). Do 3 x 20 reps using the front leg for power.



DEEP FORWARD LUNGE AND DRIVE BACK

Stand on both feet on tiptoes (a). Next, bring your knee up high (b) and step far forward, moving into a deep lunge, leading with the toe (c).

Continuing the movement, push back with the front foot to return to the start position (d). Alternate legs for 30 dynamic driving reps.



T LUNGE TO HIGH KNEE DRIVE

This works the calves, thighs and glutes. Begin standing on one leg, with the knee of that leg slightly bent and the other leg nearly horizontal out behind you (a). Work your core for balance and, to begin with, hold/touch

a wall or chair/bench to the side for balance. Rapidly bring the back leg forward (b, c) up to a high-knee position and drive up to your tiptoes (d) then return to the start position. Do four sets of eight reps. Alternate legs.



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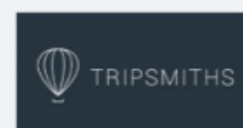
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FIND OUT MORE about the growing collection of challenges and breaks from *Runner's World* at RUNNERSWORLD.COM/UK/TRAVEL

Spring Summer Shoe Guide 2020

17
NEW MODELS
RUN IN AND
RATED

RUNNER'S WORLD SHOE-GUIDE AWARDS



BEST IN TEST
The model that
impressed the most



BEST NEW SHOE
Awarded to the best
new model in the guide



BEST VALUE
A great shoe that
costs less than average

RUNNER'S WORLD SHOE-BUYER'S GUIDES, which we first produced in 1993, are the most comprehensive on the market because we literally go the extra mile. Or, rather, many of them.

First, we liaise with shoe brands to determine which models they submit. We ask for a full range of sizes, or as close as possible, for men and women for each model to be tested.

The shoes are distributed to our network of wear testers. This is made up of current and former staff, and members of running clubs around the country.

The shoes are tested over the course of a month. We put each shoe on tall, short, slim, large, fast, slow, short, tall, old and young runners – as well as those with different gaits – to see how it performs across a variety of testing environments. We ask each runner to put the shoe through its paces over as many miles as possible and in different types of sessions.

Each tester fills out a feedback form – offering their thoughts on the fit, cushioning, responsiveness, comfort, grip, breathability and other factors – and give it a rating out of five.

We then gather all the feedback for each shoe, compare and contrast the data and the comments, look for commonalities of opinion, log an overall average score and distil all that into the reviews you see here.



HOKA ONE ONE MACH 3

PRICE £130 **WEIGHT** 245g (Men's), 204g (Women's)
HEEL/TOE DROP 5mm

PART OF HOKA'S FLY (performance-shoe) range, along with the Arahi (see p83) and Eleveon, this is an extremely light model that nevertheless offers the cushioning of a much heavier shoe. Updates from the previous version are on the minor side, with the midsole tuning being slightly tweaked to give a softer feel in the heel and a firmer platform from which to push off in the forefoot. The upper has been updated to a seamless bootie construction for a better midfoot wrap and the jacquard mesh has been made more breathable – handy if you're putting the hammer down during a fast race (precisely the sort of situation the Mach was made for). However, this isn't just a shoe for speed demons; slower, heavier runners found the Mach 3 to be perfect for their own quicker runs and shorter races, thanks to the wide platform and pleasing feeling of bounce. Note: it's best to go up half a size because the fit is noticeably snug.

UNDER ARMOUR MACHINA

PRICE £140 **WEIGHT** 295g (M), 241g (W)
HEEL/TOE DROP 8mm

IF THIS IS A SIGN OF THINGS to come, then Under Armour seems to be getting to grips with the running market. This reminds us of a chunkier Saucony Kinvara. It's responsive, quick, very cushioned (it contains 20 per cent more Hovr, UA's proprietary foam, than any other of the brand's shoes) and has a light propulsion plate underneath the midsole that contains carbon. The shoe is plush, but testers found it hit the sweet spot between comfort and response. That said, new runners might find the firmer feel in the forefoot a little off-putting if they are looking for the reassurance of full-length cushioning. As with most UA shoes, the Machina comes with a chip that records metrics – distance, pace, cadence, ground contact time – and relays them to the MapMyRun app. For now, you'll need to run with your phone to make the most of this, but later this year there will be compatible updates for smart-watch support and you'll be able to get real-time coaching cues direct to your watch, too.



ADIDAS PULSEBOOST WINTERIZED

PRICE £119.95 **WEIGHT** 340g (M), 290g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 8mm

THIS WAS CLOSE TO BEING an award winner, but the weight got in the way. These days, 340g for a running shoe counts as heavy and the downside of the superb weather protection and grip is that you're aware of the shoe the whole time. Another reason for the extra heft is that it contains a higher density version of Boost midsole foam. Why Adidas did this is not clear, but it's to be hoped this is an experiment that won't be repeated. That aside, the ballistic nylon used for the close-fitting knitted upper is excellent at repelling rain, and the AI-designed outsole features an unusual grip-configuration designed to ensure a lack of slippage even with sudden direction changes in the wet. This feature drew admiring comments from testers who used the shoe on wet, grassy runs. If you run to music, the tongue features a QR code that connects you to an Adidas playlist. A superb long-run shoe for heavier runners who want excellent weather protection and reassurance.



NEW BALANCE 1080V10

PRICE £135 **WEIGHT** 280g (M), 238g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 8mm

THE 1080 IS NEW BALANCE'S flagship cushioned shoe (and the one used by the RW Pace Team at the London Marathon each year). Version 10 is a continuation of a superb run of form and is all the more impressive because NB has not played it safe, instead providing significant updates. There's more of their supremely bouncy Fresh Foam midsole foam; the medial side has been built up slightly to give a kind of soft medial post for fatigue-based overpronation; a more aggressive rocker gives better transition and helps pop your foot off the ground a bit quicker; the heel section is sculpted to give a more secure fit without the need for extra materials on the heel counter; and, finally, the outsole grooves have been played with a little

**'THE TOEBOX
FELT AMPLE
AND THE SHOE
AS A WHOLE
HAD A SENSE
OF SECURITY
ABOUT IT'**

PAUL FENTON, 45

and NB says the new configuration gives better flex. Our testers loved all of it, raving about the plush feel, bounce and responsiveness. Veteran club runners and speedsters might find the ride a little squishy, but as an everyday training shoe for everyone else, the 1080 is leading the way.



SALOMON SONIC 3 BALANCE

PRICE £125 **WEIGHT** 252g (M), 215g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 8mm

CONTINUING ITS RECENT SUCCESS in bringing its trail quality to the road, Salomon's Sonic 3 Balance is an extremely competent and well-performing road-running shoe. The main design feature of note is that two types of cushioning foam have been used (one for shock absorption, one for propulsion). That said, this isn't the overly plush shoe you might think at first glance; it feels comfortable, yet firm and impressively responsive. This reassuring ride may give you some idea where the 'Balance' part of the name comes in, as testers felt the shoe offered performance without compromising comfort. Salomon may claim it's the 'Geometric Decoupling Axis' (a full-length heel-to-toe outsole

groove aimed at improving the speed of foot transition) that makes the ride so balanced, but testers were more impressed with the roomy toebox and breathable upper, as well as the abundant amount of grip the Sonic 3 offered, even on water-soaked roads and light trails.

'THE SHOCK

ABSORPTION

IS JUST RIGHT,

ESPECIALLY ON

THE DOWNHILLS'

ANDY DYKINS, 49



ASICS GEL KAYANO 26

PRICE £155 **WEIGHT** 315g (M), 261g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 10mm

IT SEEMS THE KAYANO, one of the most venerable models in the Asics stable, is not drifting off quietly into the night just yet. After a few versions best described as 'meh', number 26 proved a hit with our testers and just missed out on an award. It's a support model aimed at mild to moderate overpronators. The old-school medial post is not too obtrusive, offering gentle guidance to prevent the foot rolling inwards too much – and biomechanically efficient runners found it a help when fatigue set in on longer runs. The heel cushioning has been beefed up, something that was noticed and appreciated, especially by heel strikers, who felt they could just get on with their run without worrying too much about foot placement. The improved grip also came in for praise, performing well in the wet as well as unscheduled forays onto muddy grass. Neutral runners and mild overpronators alike will make excellent use of this for all but the fastest sessions.



HOKA ONE ONE ARAHI 4

PRICE £120 **WEIGHT** 273g (M), 228g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 5mm

AMONG THE TESTERS who received this shoe were several brand sceptics who had never tried Hoka but assumed, from the built-up look of the midsole foam, that they would either be spongy, or heavy, or both. They found the experience of running in them an eye-opener, as this is an extremely responsive shoe with plenty of zip for picking up the pace on tempo and interval runs. The Arahi is the stability model in Hoka's three-strong performance range; there are no medial posts, but the midsole foam is blended into a firmer composite on the inside to provide overpronation support. Hoka has increased the firmness with version 4 for better protection, as well as stripping down the upper to reduce weight and give better breathability. Overall, the shoe performed solidly, scoring decently across most metrics but the sizing was rather baffling: we had testers commenting that it was variously too small, too big or just right – so try before you buy.

NEW BALANCE FUELCELL ECHO

PRICE £100 **WEIGHT** 286g (M), 235g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 6mm

WHEN NEW BALANCE launched the Fuelcell series, it claimed to have designed a range of shoes that would make every runner faster. The Fuelcell Echo is the brand's crossover running shoe, mixing 'Fuelcell technology with fashion', but it was well received by our testers. It has a decent amount of NB's light, responsive Fuelcell foam for just about every different kind of run. One tester wrote, 'Very stable at speed, super-light on my feet, with lots of spring off my toes; it really does feel like I'm running faster.' The knitted upper has a sock-like feel that provides a snug fit. It rises quite high on the ankle, so it's worth wearing a higher sock to avoid any rubbing. All our testers were impressed with the traction of the ribbed rubber outsole, even on wet winter roads. It's worth noting that those who used them for marathon training experienced discomfort on long runs. Best suited for runners looking for an affordable all-rounder that will take them round anything from a 5K to a half marathon.

ON CLOUDFLASH

PRICE £160 **WEIGHT** 211g (M), 211g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 5mm

ON IS POSITIONING THE Cloudflash (a unisex shoe) as its 'fastest On ever, designed for pure speed'. It has all the hallmarks of the racing flat: low heel-to-toe drop, light weight and minimal cushioning. And, most importantly, it feels super-fast on the feet – one tester compared it to 'running on air'. The slick white-and-neon looks also got some admiring glances, although if you're a fan of keeping your shoes box fresh, you'll struggle with these, as they seem to draw dirt and dust. Like a Formula One car, it is stripped down to the bare essentials – the one-piece upper is made from a super-thin mesh. The trade-off, however, is that the shoes lack a little comfort and protection underfoot. One tester experienced some pain under their big toe at the end of a half marathon in the shoes. Ultimately, if you're already a fan of the On range and are looking for a featherweight flyer for 5Ks, the Cloudflash ticks all the boxes. However, we recommend you steer clear of dusty trails.



ASICS GLIDERIDE

PRICE	£145	WEIGHT	305g (M), 290g (W)
HEEL/TOE DROP	5mm		

THINK OF THE GLIDERIDE as the MetaRide’s smaller brother; it’s got a softer curve on the sole, more cushioning and it’s lighter, making it more suited to the everyday runner. Asics introduced it with the claim it would allow runners to run further, easier and longer, thanks to the GlideSole technology that propels the foot forward and, according to research conducted at Loughborough University, reduces energy loss. On the run, the rocking motion of this curved outsole takes some getting used to – testers found it odd at first but adapted after a few runs. While the shoe performs well on flat roads, throw in any undulation or uneven terrain and the rocker becomes a slight hindrance, causing some feelings of instability. Multiple testers reported pinching at the toes and recommended runners go up half a size. While the technology is exciting, they’re best suited for runners who heel strike and are looking for a road shoe to push them forward on anything from a 10K to a marathon.

BROOKS LEVITATE 3

PRICE	£140	WEIGHT	329g (M), 292g (W)
HEEL/TOE DROP	8mm		

THE OVERALL REACTION to this neutral road shoe by our testers is that it is another comfortable, responsive offering from Brooks, with good lateral stability and plenty of spring (one runner noted the biggest bonus was ‘bounce back from the shoe cushioning’). This is a result, in part, of the use of DNA AMP (Brooks’s premium cushioning foam) in the midsole. The shoe’s traction came in for high praise, even in slippery wintry conditions. The sock-like fit from the new upper was also a hit, offering excellent comfort while still wrapping the foot, though one tester found this close fit became less comfortable on long runs, especially around the heel. This may have something to do with the pull tab at the rear; it makes it easier to get the shoes on, but it also means there is a seam at the back of the heel collar. Mesh zones in the knit are designed to add breathability and did their job well. The toebox is not the widest, and while the mesh in the upper is flexible, we recommend you try before you buy.

SAUCONY GUIDE 13

PRICE	£120	WEIGHT	289g (M), 264g (W)
HEEL/TOE DROP	8mm		

FOR THOSE LOOKING for some extra support from their running shoes, the Saucony Guide has been performing the job with ease for many years and this latest version is no different (incidentally, if your last Guide was the Guide ISO 2 and you’re wondering where number 3 is – this is it. Saucony has dropped the ISOfit upper from its range and this model is the 13th iteration in all; hence the reversion to old labelling). The guidance is on the moderate rather than the aggressive side (it’s essentially a piece of lightweight TPU embedded in the instep of the midsole), so while overpronators felt supported, several neutral runners were able to wear the Guide without really noticing the stability feature. Cushioning is superb, not just in the midsole but also in the plumped-up tongue and heel collar – giving a luxuriant feel from the moment you pull the shoe on. Overall, this is a premium-feel workhorse for reliable comfort and a consistent ride on long training runs.



361° SENSATION 4

PRICE £120 WEIGHT 292g (M) 235g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 9mm

TOUTED AS A MILD STABILITY shoe, the Sensation 4 feels firmer than some other stability models on the market, proof that the Chinese brand doesn't believe support necessarily means soft and slow. This firmness led a few people to note that it took a few miles to grow accustomed to the shoes, but once they'd eased into their stride, they found that it almost compelled them to get moving. Aside from a mild medial post, the heel counter has been made plusher for greater comfort, and the vamp (the bit between the laces and the toe box) has been made roomier for the same reasons. The fit was, however, considered on the narrow side by some and this was mainly down to 361°'s Morphit sleeve, which wraps around the midfoot. Others, however, loved the reassurance and snugness of feel in such a key area – so what you think will come down to how much room for movement you like inside a shoe. A reliable stability shoe for those who prefer a firmer ride.



ASICS GEL CONTEND 5

PRICE £55 WEIGHT 291g (M), 230g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 10mm

PROOF THAT YOU don't need a second mortgage to find a decent pair of running shoes. The Contend 5 may not boast any tech to cause World Athletics headaches, but the shoe's unwavering performance means that without seeing the price tag you'd be hard pressed to peg it as a budget shoe. Our testers praised the comfortable fit and breathable mesh in the upper, and found the midsole offers decent cushioning and support, combined with perfectly acceptable responsiveness for an all-round pleasant ride. The outsole grip was also felt to perform well on a surprising variety of surfaces for a road shoe. The standout feature, though, is that all this can be delivered for the low price. 'Probably the best-

**'IF YOU HAD NOT
SEEN THE PRICE,
YOU WOULDN'T
KNOW YOU
WERE WEARING A
BUDGET SHOE'**

KERRY MCCARTHY, 40

value shoe I have ever worn,' said one tester, while another was 'shocked (in a good way) at the price'. Long-term durability may prove to be an issue, but these are a brilliant choice for new runners, or those who won't be doing huge mileage and don't want a serious dent in their bank account.

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ALTRA SOLSTICE

PRICE £95 **WEIGHT** 196g (M), 153g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 0mm

APART FROM THE BRAND'S signature wide and flat toebox, which is designed to allow for proper toe-splay and, in particular, to keep the big toe in a straight, more stable position throughout the run, the most notable aspect of this shoe is the extremely low weight. There can be no doubt that it's designed as a shoe for shorter, faster runs: the midsole is on the 'barely there' side of minimal and there's very little pop or energy return. The zero drop (no height difference between the heel and toe, which is the case with all Altra shoes) also comes into its own here, because light, fast runners will love the exceptional responsiveness and ground feel. The only downsides were that the laces had a tendency to loosen or come undone unless you really paid attention to your knotting, and the excellent breathability of the porous upper came at the price of low water protection. Perfect for track work and runs up to 5K. It will perform best in dry conditions.

BROOKS RAVENNA 10

PRICE £110 **WEIGHT** 267g (M), 235g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 10mm

THE RAVENNA 10 continues the tradition of blurring the lines between a neutral and stability shoe – offering support where needed by overpronators or when form begins to deteriorate through fatigue, but not interfering too much with a more neutral footstrike. It does so with the new GuideRails system – external inserts on top of the midsole in the heel/arch area – which aims to work with the natural motion of a runner's gait instead of controlling it, by buffering excessive movement in the ankle and heel. Other updates are more of Brooks' BioMoGo DNA foam in the forefoot to create a springy feel underfoot, and a new internal bootie to provide a snug but not-too-tight fit. These tweaks worked – testers raved about the comfort and fit and found the Ravenna to be roomier in the toebox without feeling too loose. They also praised the cushioning and stability. Overall, a superb everyday option for mild overpronators, perfect for gliding through the miles on the road.

ON CLOUDFLOW

PRICE £130 **WEIGHT** 235g (M), 235g (W)

HEEL/TOE DROP 6mm

THIS SECOND VERSION OF the Swiss brand's light, neutral road shoe gets almost everything right. The midsole, featuring 18 'pods', On's proprietary Helion foam and a curved heel unit for a smoother transition, offered an excellent balance of cushioning and responsiveness. It also provided good traction, even in wet conditions. Tweaks to the breathable mesh upper, with strategically positioned overlays and a new lacing configuration, meant all testers, regardless of gait pattern or foot size, found a fit that felt comfortable and secure – a big plus in a shoe that's designed for fast running. The only minor issue was the laces, which are thinner than traditional ones – one tester found them too long, while another found the material 'slippery' and tricky to tie and untie. The pods also collected a lot of mud and grit when testers went offroad. But, in general, the shoe impressed, converting runners who were new to the brand. It is worth a serious look for faster sessions or racing.

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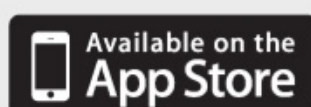
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3

A LONG DAY IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Simon Walkden tackles the 24-mile Derwentwater Dawdle and has the pics to prove it



1 / Start Race director Jeff Mitchell gives his briefing to runners outside the Victory Memorial Hall in Braithwaite Village. We'll return here after almost 24 miles and 4,300ft of ascent. **2 / Mile 2** With Barrow and Causey Pike in the background, the first climb of the day is a relatively gentle warm-up for the three big ascents that lie ahead. **3 / Mile 3** One of the most famous hikes in the Lake District is Catbells; at mile three, many of the runners are happy to take in the first view of Derwentwater while they catch their breath. **4 / Mile 4** With Bassenthwaite Lake (the only one in the Lake District to have 'Lake' in its title) in the far distance, the first part of the Catbells ascent is behind us. **5 / Mile 4** The second steep part of the Catbells ascent, taking runners to a height of over 1,430ft, with the mighty peak of Skiddaw in the background, shrouded in morning cloud. **6 / Mile 7** Climbing up to Castle Crag in a heavy downpour over extremely slippery rocks. **7 / Mile 9** The sun comes out for a warm descent into Rosthwaite village and the welcome sight of checkpoint one. **8 / Mile 12** After the steep climb out of Rosthwaite, to a height of over 1,370ft, runners enjoy the tranquillity of Dock Tarn. **9 / Mile 20** With a relatively flat final three miles ahead, we climb through Hope Park, with the town of Keswick to the right and Skiddaw towering above it. **10 / Finish** A bowl of mince and potatoes and a cup of tea for the finishers back at the Victory Memorial Hall.

This year's race is on April 25. Visit ascendevents.co.uk



THE RUNDOWN

**Derwentwater Dawdle
Lake District
(2019 stats)**
First man James Warburton, 3:59:30
First woman Louise Winter, 4:31:30
Last finisher 9:18:00
No of starters/finishers 201 and 193 (96% finished)

Finishing stats
● 5:00 8%
● 5:00-5:59 20%
● 6:00-6:59 33%
● 7:00-7:59 21%
● 8hrs+ 18%



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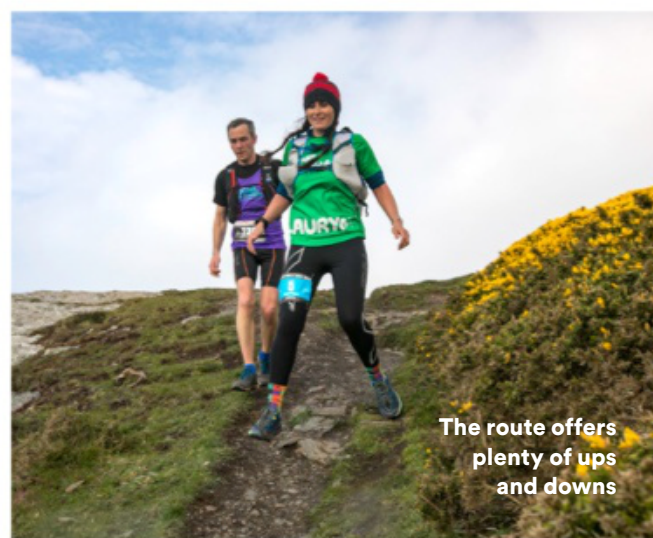
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SOUTH WEST COAST PATH CHALLENGE

Race director Adam Carswell on a half marathon loop of South Devon's countryside and coastline

'THE FIRST HALF IS through fields out in the countryside, while the second half is along the path overlooking the rocky coastline,' says Carswell. 'This is where most of the 992m you climb on the course is to be found, with a series of tough ascents and descents. The views are stunning, especially the one over Salcombe.' *This year's race is on April 4. There is also a marathon and 10K option. For more details, visit trailevents.co



The route offers plenty of ups and downs

MILE 1

After heading away from the farm, you're soon surrounded by farmers' fields as you follow the well-trodden paths offering dramatic panoramic views, including those towards Dartmoor.

START

Runners gather in the barn at East Soar Farm, which offers runners overnight accommodation ranging from wild camping to yurts.

MILE 3

The running is easy here, as you pass the holiday caravan parks, villages and hamlets in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Once you reach South Huish, you turn left towards the sea.

MILE 5

You're now on the South West Coast Path, England's longest marked path (630 miles). The spectacular views have helped it to be twice voted the UK's best walking route.



MILE 6

You pass the seaside village of Hope Cove. During the Second World War, RAF personnel were based here.

MILE 8

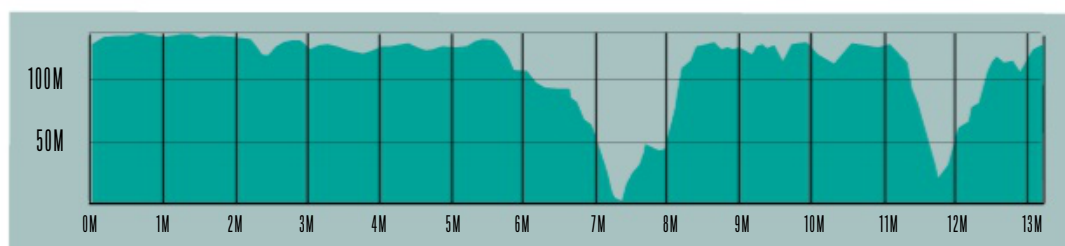
Enjoy the flatter section on the National Trust-owned Bolberry Down. In springtime, it's a haven for birdlife, such as the Dartford warbler.

MILE 7

Once you round Bolt Tail headland, where the remains of an Iron Age hill fort can be seen, the path becomes tougher along the clifftop.

MILE 12

There are some tricky technical climbs on this section. But by the time you reach Overbeck's, an Edwardian house with renowned formal gardens that are open to the public, the worst is over.



FINISH

After turning back inland, you have a final steady climb towards the finish at the farm, where your medal and the beer tent await.

THE START LIST

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

Magna Carta Marathon and Half Marathon

With only 300 places available, this is an event where many of the field may well be running history buffs, who will love following in the footsteps of King John, who, in 1215, reluctantly signed the charter conceding that the monarch is not above the law, and granting some rights to commoners. The Magna Carta (or Great Charter) still informs British law to this day, over 800 years later. If that doesn't inspire you to a running performance for the ages, nothing will.

Egham, Surrey, April 11, hermesrunning.com

TAKE YOUR PICK

Kielder Ultra Trail

There's plenty of choice at this ultra marathon on the Scottish/English border. You can do a 32km or a 50km, or, if those options seem a bit easy, you can do both for an 82km. Kielder Castle is the start and finish for all distances, the routes are well marked and there is food at the finish line and at the numerous feed stations. You'll need them: this is a hilly route, with 640m of ascent for the 32km and just under 900m for the 50km.

Kielder, Northumberland, April 4, highterrainevents.co.uk

POLL

What's your ideal number for a race field?*

23%

As small as possible

42%

500-2,500

16%

2,500-10,000

19%

The bigger the better!

LOG A FAST TIME



Maverick Adidas Terrex Original

This is a new event in rural Suffolk geared towards those looking to start their trail-running adventures. The distance options clock in at 9km, 17km and 24km and all courses are relatively flat. As one of the less-flashy Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the UK, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths are a great place to get all the gorgeous scenery you'd expect but with less of the heaving crowds that come with some of the UK's other hotspots.

Woodbridge, Suffolk, April 25, maverick-race.com

TRIPLE THREAT

Three Peaks Race

This race has been on the go since 1954 and the men's course record has stood at 2:46:03 since 1996. Decent but not mind-blowing for 37.4km, you might sniff. But it takes in the three highest peaks in the Yorkshire Dales – Pen-y-Ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough – for a total ascent of 1,608m. The Ribbleshead Viaduct, at about 16km, is a stunning piece of engineering and since the route goes past but not under it, you may have to make a return visit to see it up close.

Horton-in-Ribblesdale, North Yorkshire, April 25, threepeaksrace.org

– is perched upon isn't particularly high: there's one short but steep ascent in this 10K, but the route is generously set up to give you almost a kilometre of descent straight after.

Lancaster, Lancashire, April 5, lancaster-race-series.co.uk

TIME TO CRACK ON

The Llandudno Easter 5K Promenade Dash

Easter eggs are delicious, but an Easter egg that you've earned with your sweat is always going to be that much better. Llandudno is scenically sandwiched between the Great Orme and Little Orme hills, and the good news is that this event doesn't venture up either of them. With this flat promenade run, a decent time should be possible – just keep thinking about that Easter egg at the finish line.

Llandudno, Conwy, April 11, nice-work.org.uk

Race to the Castle 10K

While it was wise to position castles on hills, these days it's rather annoying for those of us who want to run to them. Luckily, the hill that Lancaster Castle – until 2011 a functioning prison



M2L Manchester to Liverpool Ultra

For hard-core Manchester United fans, running an ultra will be nothing compared with the idea of visiting Liverpool towards the tail end of a football season that has seen their bitter rivals run rampant. Still, at least they'll get to start this race at the Theatre of Dreams itself, Old Trafford, and will then have 50 miles along the Trans-Pennine Trail, the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey to meditate on the meaning of life in a world where Liverpool might well end up as league champions. [Football opinions are writer's own – Ed.]
Manchester, April 10, gbultras.com

BHF Health-on-Line Bournemouth Bay Run

There's a distance here for everyone – choose between a half marathon, a 10K, a 5K and a 1km. It's all for a good cause, too: each entrant is requested to raise as much as they can for the British Heart Foundation. The routes head east along the seafront, which guarantees you fine views of the pretty beaches as you give your own ticker a workout to keep it in shape.
Bournemouth, Hampshire, April 5, bournemouthbayrun.co.uk

RUN TO THE LIGHT



Forest of Light Run

Here's an interesting new event that takes place in two locations (Thetford Forest in Suffolk, and Sherwood Pines in Nottinghamshire) on two different dates this month. In both cases, the forests will be lit up with a dazzling array of coloured lights and runners are invited to complete as many laps of the course as they like (3km in Thetford, 2.5km in Sherwood) inside two hours. Runners only need to complete one lap to get a medal.
Thetford Forest, Suffolk, April 4; and Sherwood Pines, Nottinghamshire, April 25, inspireraces.co.uk

Is there anything in a race description that would make you immediately decide not to do the race? (eg any mention of fancy dress or the the word 'quirky' is a no-no in the RW office)

"No medal" = no run. it's all about the bling.
– Helen Marsland

'Point to point. Hate having to get back to the start to pick my car up.'
– Tim Saban

'When it advertises itself as a "fun run", "not a race" or says that timing and placing isn't done.'
– Adam Budd

'Anything with "Hell" or "Tough" in the title! Followed by a mention of two or more laps.'
– Sinéad Malone

Hundred Acres CX

This weekend event in the Forest of Bere has sand, gravel and tarmac sections, as well as some muddy bit. There's a 5K and a 10K on the Saturday and, after they've nicely churned up all the mud, the half marathon and the 10K canicross take off on the Sunday. There are only 750 participants across all events, so there'll be plenty of mud for everyone.
Fareham, Hampshire, April 4-5, ruralrunningevents.com

THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

The PodPlus Kent Spring Marathon & Half Marathon

A quick perusal of online reviews of this event shows that the word 'lovely' pops up at least once in every assessment. It refers to the scenery and surroundings (rural Kent), the friendliness of the marshals and organisers, the small running field and, possibly most importantly, the Jaffa cakes at the plentiful water stations. And the final 1.5km is downhill.
Charing, Kent, April 5, nice-work.org.uk

The Chasewater Easter Egg 10K and 5K

Most runners find that outstanding performances come when the proper motivation is in place. A race on Easter Sunday is a great opportunity to take a shortcut to single-minded focus. Step 1: recruit a loved one to lock away all Easter treats; step 2: agree that said treats will be released only after the race and in quantities proportionate to running pace; step 3: enjoy your PB and treats, thanks to this undulating but fast course and your iron will.
Burntwood, Staffordshire, April 12, nice-work.org.uk

CATTLE RUN

The Longhorn

There is something for everyone at this event, be they runners, Nordic walkers or canicrossers, with 13 events over six distances, from 5-60km. Dogs must be on a running leash and imperturbable in the company of Longhorn cattle, which roam Thoresby Estate. Their horns may look fierce but apparently they are docile breed.
Newark, Nottinghamshire, April 19, sbrevents.co.uk

SET FORTH IN THE NORTH

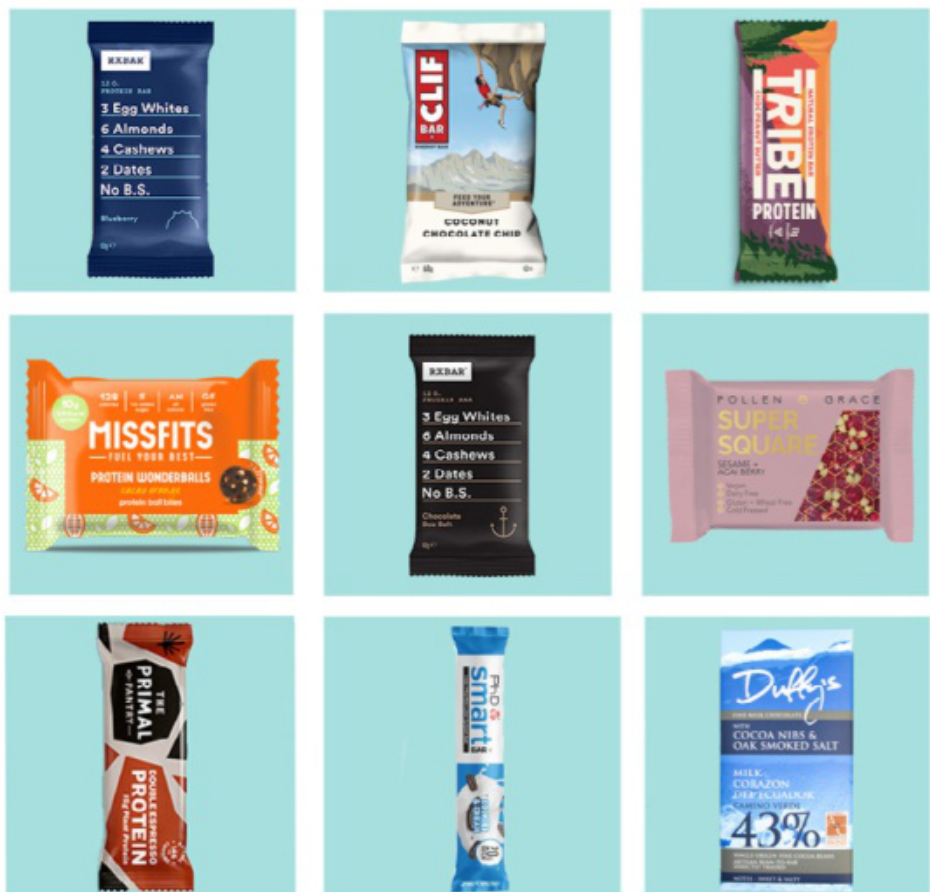


Northern Traverse

The word 'traverse' in the name is a clue to the nature of this event, but the task is so monumental that it isn't quite believable. It starts at Saint Bees, by the Irish Sea, and heads east across the width of the north of England, to finish at Robin Hood's Bay on the North Sea – 190 miles in total. Yes, you have to cross three national parks; yes, there are 4,000m of ascent; and, yes, it's probably the kind of experience that will change your life.
Saint Bees, Cumbria, April 18, northerntraverse.com

RW ONLINE RACE LISTINGS
Thirsty for more? Go to runnersworld.com/uk and click on 'Events' in the menu bar. This will take you to our comprehensive race database (powered by letsdothis.com), where you can search hundreds of events by location, distance, date and more.

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www.decathlon.co.uk

DECATHLON | KALENJI

KATHERINE PARKINSON

THE BAFTA-WINNING STAR OF THE IT CROWD, 41, ON PRE-THEATRE RUNS – FOR LUCK



'Because I run mostly on my own, when I do run in races, I find it very emotional'

I DIDN'T FIND A NATURAL home playing team sports at school and we weren't allowed to play football. But I discovered in my early teens that I liked running, so I started doing 400m and 800m for the athletics team. It was from there my love of running grew.

I STARTED SMOKING WHEN I WAS AT UNIVERSITY, studying classics. I blame ploughing through all that dry Latin and Greek for turning me into a smoker, which also stopped me running for a

few years. But after giving up smoking, in my 30s, I joined a running club and realised how it had affected my body.

I LIKE RUNNING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, but I'm scared of dogs and I seem to come across loads there. I also live near Greenwich Park, London, and so avoid a particular time of day, when the park is full of people walking their dogs.

ONE OF MY FAVOURITE PLACES EVER TO RUN was on the Cornish coast

● Katherine is an ambassador for Barnardo's. To fundraise for Barnardo's at a future London Marathon or other race, visit the 'get involved' section on its website. barnardos.org.uk

when I was in the TV series *Doc Martin*. With long days on set, runs on the beach at Port Isaac, where it is filmed, gave me a huge rush of energy.

I'VE STARTED DOING YOGA because of stiffness in my shoulders and hamstrings. I'm more of a natural runner than a natural at yoga.

I DON'T HAVE ANY GPS WATCHES or technology. In fact, my character in *The IT Crowd* is totally based on me because I'm hopeless with computers and smart devices. One of the things about running for me is getting away from all that, so I don't usually have any music on, either.

RUNNING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE for me because it gives me time to clear my head. If I'm wound up by something when I start, by the end I've burnt off some energy and things are usually more sorted.

I'VE DONE PLENTY OF 10KS and half marathons, but I'm a bit frightened of doing a marathon. I'm most worried about getting an injury that will impact on my family life and work.

I'VE SUPPORTED BARNARDO'S FOR A FEW YEARS, after being invited to do a reading at one of their events. I've now done several races for them and had signed up for the London Marathon before, but I got pregnant, so I had the perfect excuse to pull out.

BECAUSE I RUN MOSTLY ON MY OWN, when I do run in races, I find it very emotional. With the crowds urging you on and reading heartfelt messages on other runners' T-shirts, I'm usually crying my eyes out when I finish.

BEFORE GOING ON STAGE FOR HOME, I'M DARLING, I used to go on a run. It was a great warm-up for a physical show in which I wore 1950s high heels. I got so superstitious that I made sure I never missed doing that run.

RUNNING HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY THING. I don't play an instrument or do any other sport. I thought about maybe doing triathlons, but I can only swim on my back. I think I'll stick with running, as it is a constant in my life.

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