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Go Wild

WHEN RUNNING AND ADVENTURE GO HAND IN HAND

p26



ACTIVE RECOVERY HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR INJURY LAY-OFF p32

AMAZING RACE THE BEST EVENTS OF THE YEAR, AS VOTED FOR BY YOU p81

FAT TO FAST "HOW I LOST 15% BODY FAT AND RAN A SUB-18 5K" p14

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© MATT MAYNARD

GREAT ESCAPE

We all like the freedom running affords. It's the purest form of escapism; clearing cluttered minds and easing the stresses of everyday life. The trouble is, in our increasingly inter-connected, urban world, that escapism loses some of its potency. It's difficult to get truly lost in your own thoughts when you're jumping out the way of the Number 45 bus or, more pressingly, trying to condense the morning's intervals session into a 140-character tweet.

To really get away from it all requires a sense of adventure and a willingness to part from the familiar. So, in the spirit of going where the wild things are, we sent Matt Maynard to the remote forests of Västmanland, Sweden, to see how it feels to run where nature rules (p26).

Clearly, though, you can't go running wild without the right kit. So before you set off to find yourself, check out the Men's Running Awards - back bigger and better than ever (honest). Our team of 48 independent, real-runner testers have spent months trialling over 1,000 products and now the results are in. Turn to page 36 to find out the best shoes, tech, kit and nutrition of 2017.



Williams

Isaac Williams, editor

@ISAACWILLIAMSHQ

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM...



MICHELLE NEWITT
Sports nutritionist Michelle works with athletes and amateurs to boost performance, with a focus on simple and natural food



ROBBIE BRITTON
Living in the French Alps (tough gig) - and running ultras for a living - Robbie's well placed to impart some hill running advice on p21



PETER LIDDIARD
A long-time illustrator for the mag, Peter brings the multi-layered Winter Warrior to life in this month's Survivor's Guide (p17)

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RUNPOWDER PLOT
THIS NOVEMBER



December 25th - January 6th
Feel fit and festive with 5K
during the 12 days of Christmas
THE FESTIVE FIVE



December 21st
How far can you run on the
longest night of the year?
**THE DARK
& LONG ONE**



October 6th - December 31st
Support CALM from anywhere with the
#RACEFORAMATE VIRTUAL RACE

Can't commit to a live event, but still want to help raise money for CALM and earn an exclusive medal while you do it? Fear not, with our virtual run you can run 10K and #RaceForAMate wherever you are in the world. Open to men and women who are running for a friend, simply run 10K between 6 October and 31 December and submit your evidence, then we'll send you a CALM #RaceForAMate medal direct to your door.



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PACEMAKER

NEWS | INTERVIEW | INSPIRATION | INSIGHT

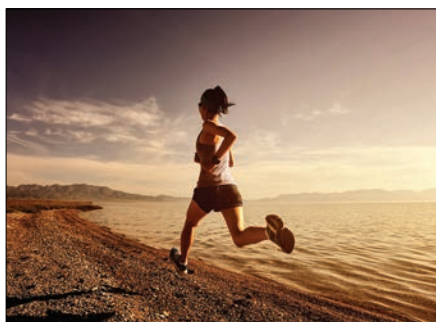
Give a f***!

A new study⁽¹⁾ suggests swearing can have a positive effect on performance. In the study, cyclists increased their power output by a considerable 24 watts by simply uttering profanities. Sounds obscene.



1. NATURE COMMUNICATIONS

© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM / PETER LIDIARD



CHECK THIS

Why women tend to fair far better than men over ultra-long distance
- p10 -



TRY THIS

Delivery driver James Gladman's weight-loss tips - that helped him to a seriously quick sub-18 5K
- p14 -



SPOT THAT

Leaving no patch of skin open to the elements, it's the ever-cautious, always-layered Winter Warrior
- p17 -

LEADING LADY

Got an ultramarathon in the pipeline? Expect to face stiff competition from the female side of the field. A recent study⁽¹⁾ – in which a group of men and women were asked to flex their feet against a series of sensors, as quickly as they could 200 times – suggests women have far greater muscle endurance than men. The speed, power and torque – rotational force – of their movements, and electrical activity of their muscles, was recorded. The results showed men were faster and more powerful at first, but became more exhausted much faster than the women. The study author, Professor Brian Dalton, said, “We’ve known for some time that women are less fatigable than men during isometric muscle tests – static exercises where joints don’t move, such as holding a weight – but we wanted to find out if that’s true during more dynamic and practical everyday movements. And the answer is pretty definitive: women can outlast men by a wide margin.” The results of such a small study can’t be taken as fact, but it ties in with a study⁽²⁾ of 1,815,091 marathon results, involving 131 marathons from 2008 to 2014, that revealed women – despite having a finishing time, on average, 20 minutes slower than men – are 18.61% better at maintaining their pace.



1. APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY, NUTRITION AND METABOLISM 2. RUNREPEAT 3. TURKU PET CENTRE 4. AXA PPP HEALTHCARE

HIIT up some intervals for an instant release of feel-good endorphins

HIIT, MAN

Running is lauded for its mental health benefits, but a new study⁽³⁾ suggests the greatest runner's highs occur after short, sharp training. Finnish researchers at the University of Turku measured participants' opioid receptors – responsible for the release of endorphins in the brain – after 60 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise and then again after a high-intensity interval session (HIIT). The results showed HIIT to be far more effective at producing exercise-induced endorphin release than training for longer, at a more moderate intensity.

2:03:46

THE FINISHING TIME OF 26-YEAR-OLD ETHIOPIAN GUYE ADOLA AT THE BERLIN MARATHON...IN HIS FIRST EVER 26.2-MILE RACE.

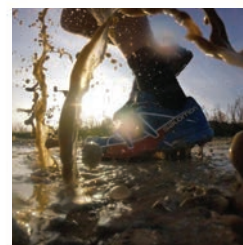
DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly half of UK employees admit they do not do the 30 minutes of daily exercise, five times a week recommended by the NHS⁽⁴⁾, and 62% with good intentions to exercise at work find they're cancelling their exercise plans due to workload.

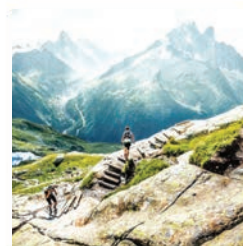


TAKE YOUR PIC

Inspiring shots from the world of Instagram



@davz.1 - Time to hit those winter trails and get muddy!



@jsaragossa - Some crazy pictures from #Buffmountainfestival



@ronpoons - The only way is forward...MDS2017



@mathis_dumas - Ready for the UTMB

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FOOTWEAR

NIKE SHIELD PACK

GET SOME PROTECTION THIS WINTER

Nike's most iconic running footwear styles get a winter do-over this season to offer you superior protection from the elements and exceptional visibility in the dark. Water repellent uppers shield your feet from the wet, while 360° reflective elements help you remain visible in low-light conditions.



Nike Pegasus 34 Shield

360° reflective elements

Dynamic Fit

Heel drop - 10mm

QR: 169634 - £110



Nike Structure 21 Shield

Zoom Air unit

Dynamic Fit

Heel drop - 9mm

QR: 169644 - £115



Nike Free RN Shield 2017

Knit upper

360° Reflective elements

Heel drop - 8mm

QR: 169632 - £105

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MOST WANTED

ADIDAS ALL TERRAIN

Ultraboost goes extreme this season with the men's All Terrain. To deal with the harsh winter conditions it's been equipped with a winterised water-repellent Primeknit upper and a high collar, while an all-terrain lug configuration on the Continental™ rubber outsole provides exceptional traction wherever you're running.



adidas Ultraboost All Terrain - QR: 168300 - £170

"I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT MY BODY NEEDS TO PERFORM AT ITS BEST"

DELIVERY DRIVER JAMES GLADMAN, 42, FROM SHOREHAM-BY-SEA WANTED TO REDUCE HIS BODY FAT PERCENTAGE TO BECOME A LEANER, LONGER LASTING RUNNER

Like many men, James Gladman wasn't looking to lose a huge amount of weight. At just under 13 stone he was coming in at around average for his age and height.

But as an aspiring runner, he was aware that the more excess baggage he was carrying, the longer it would take him to hit the finish line. "I was also unhappy with my body shape and, despite being an active person, I struggled to shift the extra body fat that was stopping me from improving my running times," explains James.

"As a kid I'd run for a local club in Kent, but my job as a delivery driver meant long days sat in the cab of the truck eating convenience food. I'd have around two litres of energy drink every day - but I wasn't burning off any of the sugars they contained.

"I also had health concerns due to my dad having diabetes and wanted to take preventative measures to keep me in good health," he adds. It was a wise move, as a 2016 study presented at a European Obesity Summit revealed, reducing one's weight by 10% can cut the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 90% in those most susceptible - including those with a family history of the disease.

TWO-PRONGED ASSAULT

"As I've always been into running, I knew I had to make some simple food swaps that would help me lose some body fat that, in turn, would benefit my performance," says James, who began a Herbalife challenge with a nutrition coach friend. "It meant switching from the sugary energy drinks, processed foods and fast snacks for healthy, balanced meals," he explains.

"Out went the snacks and the biscuits, and in came healthy shakes for breakfast, protein supplements, multivitamins and plenty of pasta. I converted to five meals a day - each one a healthy portion size - and including plenty of fruit and vegetables. I'd also take H24 sports nutrition shakes to fuel my running and support the development of lean muscle mass."

Alongside the dietary changes, James' exercise regimen kicked in. "I taught myself to run again using the

knowledge I'd picked up as kid. I'd run three evenings a week, mixing endurance work with shorter, interval sessions. I bought a multi-gym, too, and that helped me develop muscle strength which in turn aided my stamina."

RUNNING RESULTS

"I was really keen to see how changing my nutrition and training habits could help me improve my running - and I've been staggered by the results. I find that I can now train for longer, with more intensity,

while recovering quicker for the next day's training," he explains.

His nutrition coach noticed how well James had performed at a half marathon in Littlehampton and encouraged him to join a local running club:

Arena 80. "That took things

to a new level for me. The

biggest motivator was watching my PBs improve with each week. This encouraged me to keep going and set myself new challenges to keep me on track."

WAIST AND SEE

The benefits of the changes James undertook haven't just affected his body fat percentage and the weight registered on the scales. "My waist measurement has gone from 38" to 30", but I think the biggest difference has been the increase in stamina, endurance and strength. I'm also in





Flying towards a 10K PB at the Vitality London 10,000

© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



James prior to becoming a runner

Words: Rob Kemp

GLADMAN'S GOALS

THE INITIAL RUNNING GOALS I SET MYSELF WERE: 20 MINUTES FOR 5K, 40 FOR 10K AND 1:45 FOR A HALF MARATHON. HERE'S HOW I'VE PERFORMED SINCE MY WEIGHT LOSS:

5K
SEPT 2015
18:58
TO DATE
17:36


10K
SEPT 2015
37:21
TO DATE
36:59

HALF
SEPT 2015
1:33:57
TO DATE
1:21:53

a better frame of mind mentally and have a much better understanding of what my body needs to perform at its best."

James credits the development of body strength through exercise and switching from sugary drinks to thermogenic tea and shakes packed with frozen fruit as being key contributors to his body fat reduction. "Now and again I'll have the odd chocolate bar or sugary snack, but only when I know I'm going to be running 20K the next day.

"The toughest part of the challenge to lose weight was kicking the habit of starting the day with an energy drink. I think my body was so used to the extra sugar, it took me a while to adjust!

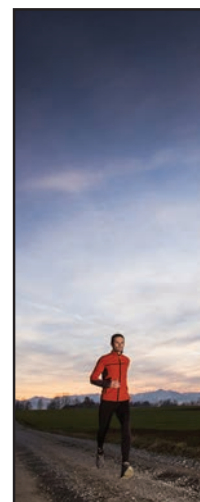
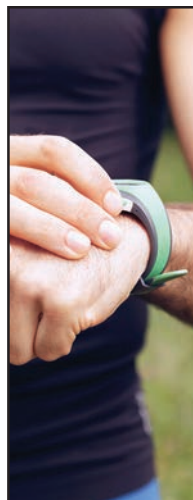
"When I embarked on this journey I had a body fat percentage of 22.9%," says James. He also had his visceral fat score taken. This is the toxic fat that accumulates around the vital organs, especially the liver. "The visceral fat measured 8.5 - but within a little over two years I've reduced my weight by almost three stone, my body fat percentage is down to just 6% and that lethal, visceral type is now only scoring 1.5. I knew they would be key to my health outcomes and I've found that the diet changes and running endurance distances has helped turn my fat figures around." 

JAMES' GUT-BUSTING TIPS



Get a home workout. "I start work before the gym opens and I'm on the road all day, so having a home gym helps me work on muscle development whenever I want."

Have moveable targets. "I'd set out to run 150-200K a month but didn't cast anything in stone; you need to be flexible and keep positive if you don't hit your target every time."



Mix it up. "Keep your training varied with different routes, different types (intervals, hills etc) and even running at different times when you can to stay motivated."

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WINTER WARRIOR

WITH MORE LAYERS THAN AN ONION,
IT'S THE COLD-CURSING RUNNER

BEANIE

Every Winter Warrior has a ridiculous hat he can't bring himself to throw away. The good news is that winter running often happens after dark...when there are fewer people on the streets to pass judgement. Heading off-road? A hat helps an otherwise bouncing headtorch sit nicely against the noggin.

GILET

A gilet is the fancy French name used to sell jackets without sleeves. If you fancy yourself a bit continental, go for a synthetic fill rather than down. If it rains, you will thank yourself when still warm and not jogging inside a saggy bag of feathers. Gilet converts will appreciate the flexibility it allows around the shoulder joints.

TIGHTS

Hey, they aint just for Robin Hood - and they don't just come in green. Infrared imagery of runners in cold temperatures has shown dramatic differences in surface skin temperature. Joints tend to be much colder than muscles when winter running. Tights will help keep your creekly, cold parts nice and toasty. Get a snug fit to avoid the cold air "chimney effect" - and consider an over-short. No one needs to see that.

SNOOD

What is our Winter Warrior wearing? Is it a ginger neck-beard? Is it a scarf? No it's a kind of neck hat, with a hole in it, that's useful for wiping away frozen tears. Some winter runners say it also helps trap heat. Winter running is all about flexible clothing options and a snood can be pulled up over your blue lips, or taken off altogether and double-wrapped conveniently around your wrist if the weather perks up.

BASELAYER

The Winter Warrior knows not all baselayers are born equal. Synthetics can feel more athletic and wicks sweat away from your body. But even the toughest winter runners might want to consider softer, against-the-skin wool. Unlike synthetics, wool doesn't give off nasty microfibers that block washing machines and choke oceans. Nor, once you've returned from battle, does it get radioactively rancid, stinking up anything else in your washing pile.

GLOVES

Wind chill can have a bigger effect on the Winter Warrior than air temperature. Turn a corner into a draft, and a 4-5m/sec blast can chill your surface temperature by 5-7°C within 30 seconds. Hands, with their large surface area to volume ratio, love soaking up all the cold there is going - and become quickly useless if left exposed. Gloved up and still chilly? Pump your arms more, and open and close your hands repeatedly to get circulation moving.



ENTRIES STILL OPEN!

It's not too late to apply for the Big Marathon Challenge 2018

Thanks to everyone who has applied for a place on our BMC team. This year, we've received a record number of entries and, as ever, narrowing down a shortlist has been extremely tough. The good news, if you haven't yet applied, is that there's still time for you to make our lives even tougher...

To recap, we're searching for three men with big marathon aspirations for 2018. Whatever your marathon goal – whether it's performance-related or something more personal – if you want the coaching and kit that can help you achieve it, we want to hear from you. Your progress will be charted in the magazine and on the website (mensrunninguk.co.uk), as well as on Facebook (@mensrunningmagazineuk), Twitter and Instagram (@mensrunninguk).

TO ENTER, YOU MUST...

- Be available to run the ASICS Manchester Marathon on 8 April 2018
- Have a clean bill of health, and currently be injury-free
- Have a positive attitude
- Be active on social media
- Be willing to write regular blogs for the website
- Be available to take part in a photoshoot in London on Monday 20 November
- Be able to pay for your own travel to three training days during the course of the Challenge

IN RETURN, YOU WILL RECEIVE...

- Step-by-step coaching and training plans from the marathon experts at Full Potential
- Top-to-toe running kit from ASICS
- Complimentary accommodation in Manchester, the night before the marathon
- Expert nutrition, physiotherapy and psychology advice
- Ongoing support from the MR team for every step of your marathon journey

Email mensrunning@wildbunchmedia.co.uk and tell us about your big marathon goal, your running background and why you would like to be part of the Big Marathon Challenge.
Closing date: **31 October**

TRAIN

WAY'S WORLD | BRITT SCHOOL | WORKOUT



THREE-WAY TIP

SURE-FIRE WAYS TO GET QUICK, FAST

Practise posture. Don't be a scruffy runner. Run tall, lift your hips, drive your knees and relax from the eyebrows down. Use technical drills and effective form to find your fast.

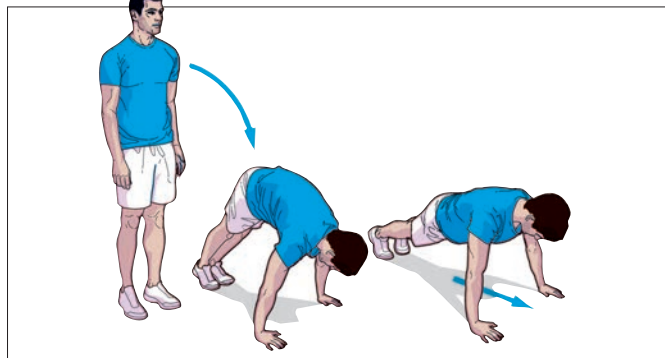
Run fast. Do short, fast intervals (10 x 1min with 1min rest, for example) on a weekly basis.

Stretch and flex. Improving your flexibility and range of motion will help you increase your strength and power throughout your full range of movement. Be strong and flexible to go faster.



HOW'S THAT?

How to tackle hills – from a man who's run up a few of them
- p21 -



TRY THIS

A four-move bodyweight circuit designed to torch fat and bolster your balance
- p22 -

SIDELINE FITNESS

INJURY CATCHES UP WITH AS ALL AT SOME POINT, BUT LEARNING TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME ON THE SIDELINES CAN HELP REDUCE THE HIT ON YOUR PERFORMANCE

Hit the road with marathon man Steve Way's expert advice



Tip of the Month

WATER YOU KNOW?

Most forms of cross-training involve being indoors which will lead to you sweating an awful lot more than you would if running. This means you need to pay more attention to your post-exercise hydration. To get an idea of your fluid loss, weigh yourself before and after a big cross-training session (1Kg = 1ltr).

A serious injury preventing you from running may feel like the end of the world at the time, but long term it may just be exactly what your body and mind needs, forcing you to take a break away from the sport.

I see it all the time, athletes returning from extended time off due to injury coming back stronger and faster than ever within six months of hitting the roads with a whole new sense of drive and enthusiasm. What you can be certain of, though, is these runners have not just been sat on the sofa stuffing their faces with pizza for the last two months feeling sorry for themselves!

Cardiovascular fitness is the cornerstone of your running performance and it's also the component that takes the longest to build up. Frustratingly, it disappears very quickly if you stop exercising, so your main priority while working through a period of injury is to maintain a consistent level of aerobic exercise - ensuring you

don't lose all the aerobic benefits of your previous training and hard work.

The specific type of cross-training is not that important, find something that doesn't irritate your injury that you can mentally cope with for extended periods of time. It could be cycling (either outdoors or an indoor turbo trainer), aqua jogging, elliptical trainer or any other cross-training device you may have access to. You will be working different muscle groups compared to normal which will obviously mean you will lose a little running performance but to be honest, strengthening other parts of your body through a period of injury will be no bad thing.

The key thing to bear in mind while cross-training is not only to exercise for similar amounts of time to when you were running but to also try and work at a similar heart rate and effort level. This is probably the trickiest

aspect of cross-training. Running is one of the most cardio-intensive forms of exercise out there, so demanding a runner maintain their long run heart rate while on an elliptical trainer for two hours is an unrealistic ask. Instead, long internal workouts at a high aerobic level are the way to go which will not only help keep the effort levels up but will also keep you busy, helping with the mental challenge of spending extended periods of time on these machines! Check out this month's workout suggestion for a great example.

One word of warning though, based on my own recent experiences of using cycling while nursing a few running niggles. If like me you have no bike handling skills, don't risk your safety riding at speeds you can't handle in order to keep your heart rate in the right zone. For me it ended up with me sliding off my bike around a corner, cracking a few ribs and injuring my left glute which ironically then meant I couldn't run without a considerable amount of pain for another month!

CROSS-TRAINING WORKOUT

This one-hour session can be performed on any cross-trainer but a stationary bike or elliptical are probably best. Attempt to hit just over marathon effort for the intervals which will get harder as the session goes on, as your non-running muscles start to fatigue quickly.

- 5min easy effort warm up
- 15min/10min/5min/5min at 80% intensity (roughly marathon effort) with 5min easy between each
- 5min easy effort warm down

© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



PRO ULTRARUNNER **Robbie Britton**
WITH SOME LESSONS FROM THE FRONTLINE

LEARNING TO LOVE HILLS

Anti-ascenters, listen up, it's time you viewed inclines in a positive light



TAKE IT EASY

If you're running uphill on the first climb of an ultra and it feels like hard work, don't push through, take it easy. Would you be running that climb in the last 5K? If not, don't run it in the first 5K. Ultrarunning is more about efficiency than speed, remember that.

Running uphill will always be hard work, you're fighting against gravity, but the trick is learning to love the work and embrace the toughest part of the game.

As a Londoner who really started his running career in Norfolk, hills and I haven't always got on. We still don't, per se, but we're becoming better friends year on year. Maybe not friends actually, but I am learning to love the toil that is going uphill.

Having trained for the UTMB in the South East of England, the struggles that this entails are no stranger. There are only so many times you can run up and down Crystal Palace Hill before you have to stop and go into one of the fried chicken shops. "Kinda' Favourable Chicken" isn't the best mid-run fuel.

One of the main joys of running isn't the finish line, but the journey and the personal growth we all experience. It's this that keeps us coming

back, the drive to better ourselves and it's this sensation that we need to tap into when training to run uphill.

On a very basic level uphill running, like cycling, is about power to weight ratio, but just losing weight isn't the best idea, mainly because we need to get back down the hill and can't just coast, impact-free, on a bike. Runners need strong muscles and bomb-proof bodies to deal with all aspects so increasing power is the best option.

Being at the best racing weight, while still remaining healthy and having the strength to run back down the hill is a complex issue and getting into the 'lighter is faster' train of thought is a dangerous game. Leaner runners ascend better, not lighter ones. We need that muscle.

If you want to improve your hill running then you've got to run up hills. Simple, eh?

The trick is making the most of what you have around

and realising that getting to bigger hills, like Box Hill, the Brecons, Snowdonia, the Lakes, Scotland, even the Alps, isn't that difficult and a weekend away could be the best preparation for your race, depending on the hills you will face.

Think not of the struggle of getting up these hills, but the view at the top and the joy of running downhill. Don't look at it as the hardest part of a race, but the area where you excel and run stronger than your rivals. Learn to love those hills and one day they may get a little easier... 🏃

TO HILL WITH IT

A good hill session depends on what is around you and what race you're training for. If it's the Alps or the Coastal Path you're prepping for then adjust accordingly, but a favourite of one of our best mountain runners, Sarah Tunstall, is 6 x 3mins with 90secs rest. This is a workout aimed at improving your VO2 Max so work hard and recover by walking in between.

BODYWEIGHT BLAST

TRY THIS FOUR-MOVE CIRCUIT TO MELT FAT, IMPROVE YOUR BALANCE AND BOOST TOTAL-BODY STRENGTH

Try this workout to improve balance and flexibility, as well as glute activation and leg strength. The benefits of this kind of workout include being able to maintain good running posture for longer and helping to reduce the risk of injuries – allowing more consistent

training and therefore helping longer term performance. After completing an initial warm-up for about five minutes, complete as a circuit. Perform each exercise for a total of one minute and, once all four exercises have been completed, rest for two minutes before

completing another circuit. Do the circuit three to four times. You can extend the total time of each exercise to make it harder, or split the time between activity and rest to make it easier (e.g. 45 seconds work and 15 seconds rest for each exercise.)

BODYWEIGHT SQUATS

How:

- Stand with your feet slightly wider than your hips and engage your core.
- Look straight ahead and pick a spot on the wall in front of you.
- Place your fingers on the back of your head, pulling your elbows and shoulders back and sticking your chest out.
- Avoid rounding your back: keep it straight. Gradually lower your body as far as you can, pushing your hips back as if you were sitting on a chair.
- Keep the weight in your heels; you should still be able to wiggle your toes.
- Pause at the bottom before slowly pushing back up through the heels to the starting position.

What's working:

Quads, glutes, hamstrings, calves, core.

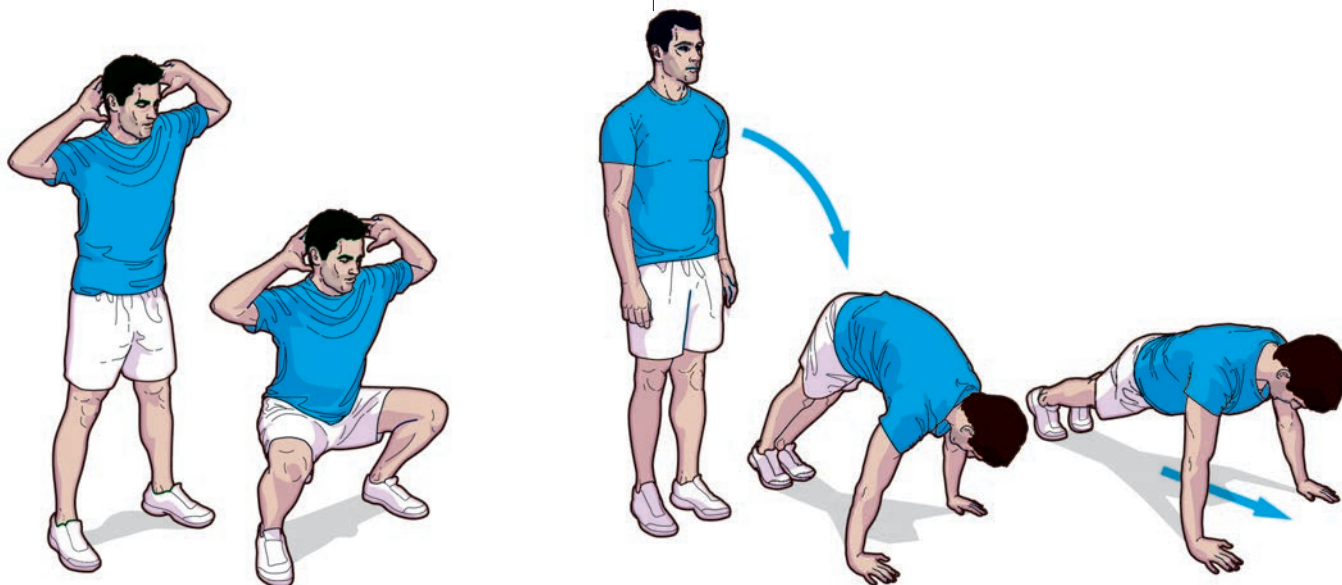
INCHWORM

How:

- Stand tall with your legs straight.
- Hinge forward at the waist and touch the floor with your palms. Bend your knees, if necessary.
- Walk your hands forward until you are supporting all your weight on your hands and toes. Your body should form a straight line and your hands should be underneath your shoulders, fingers facing forwards.
- Walk your hands back to meet your feet. Keep your palms on the floor and bend your knees, if necessary.

What's working:

Arms, chest, core, shoulders.



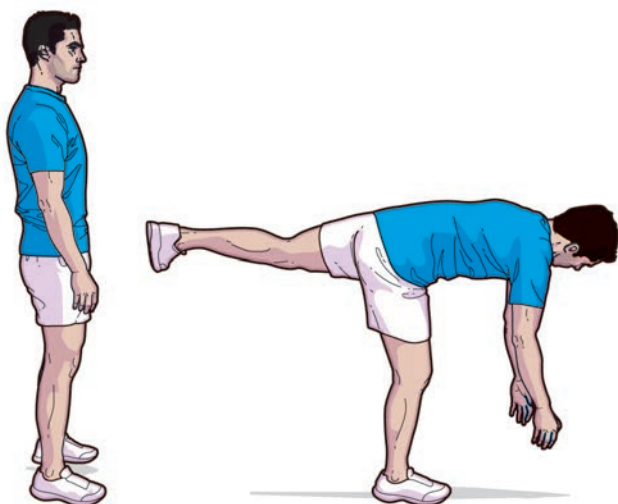
SINGLE-LEG DEADLIFT

How:

- Start from a standing position. Keep your back straight and bend forward at the hips while lifting one leg straight behind you and lower until your torso is parallel to the floor.
- Return to the starting position. Repeat for 30 seconds, then switch legs.

What's working:

Glutes, hamstrings, lower back, core.



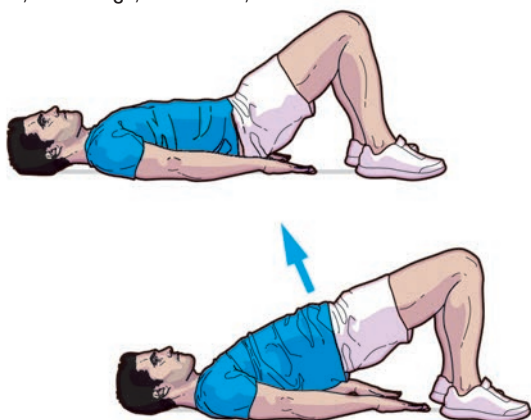
GLUTE BRIDGE

How:

- Lie face up on the floor, with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground. Keep your arms at your side with your palms down.
- Lift your hips off the ground until your knees, hips and shoulders form a straight line. Squeeze your glutes hard and keep your abs drawn in so you don't overextend your back during the exercise.
- Hold your bridged position for a couple of seconds before easing back down.

What's working:

Glutes, hamstrings, lower back, core.



TREATMENT ROOM

SportsInjuryFix.com member Steffen from Dynamic Health in Jersey provides advice on running-related lower back pain

A common cause of lower back pain in runners is a weakness of core muscles, so as your foot strikes the ground the lower back may over-extend, overloading the facet joints of the lower back. A classic sign of core weakness is back pain aggravated when running downhill but relieved when running uphill. Test your core strength by performing the side plank test: on your side with your spine straight, supported

by your bottom elbow and both feet. Hold this position for as long as you can, with good alignment, noting the time then repeat on the opposite side. Less than 60 seconds on either side or a 5% or greater difference between sides can indicate core weakness or imbalance. This side bridge is also a great way to train the core as it works many key spinal stabilising muscles but with relatively low load on the spine, making it extremely safe.



SIDE BRIDGE PROGRESSION

• Side bridge from knees

Lay on one side on your knees, feet and forearms, with hips and knees slightly bent. Next, lift your hips forward and up in a squatting motion to bring your shoulders, hips and knees inline. Hold for two breaths before lowering back down to the start position. Aim for 12 reps per side.

• Full side bridge

Set up in a full side bridge. Start by performing 3-6 sets of 10-second holds. Slowly increase the length of the hold until you can perform holds of 1 minute. Aim for 5 sets of 1 minute.

• Side bridge with leg lift

Increase the intensity of the side bridge further by lifting your top leg. This increases the challenge on the stabilisers of the hips which work together with your core to support your back when running.

Find your nearest running injury specialist at
SportsInjuryFix.com

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Running with the pack

YOUR MIND CAN PLAY TRICKS ON YOU AFTER DUSK. WHO HASN'T BEEN SECRETLY AFRAID OF A SNARLING SHADOW OR A MYSTERIOUS HOT BREATH OF WIND? THIS SEPTEMBER, MATT MAYNARD RAN THE FOREST TRAILS AND LAKE SHORES OF VÄSTMANLAND, SWEDEN. ONLY THIS TIME, HE HAD GOOD REASON TO BE AFRAID. THIS IS HIS STORY OF RUNNING WITH WOLVES

WORDS & PHOTOS: MATT MAYNARD

When did humans last run? You know, really run. To spear a woolly mammoth so we wouldn't go hungry. Or to chase away a wild animal who is circling our campfire. All that good stuff died out somewhere between the last ice-age and the invention of the light bulb. Granted, Deliveroo is far more reliable than throwing a sharpened stick, and Netflix is a fall back if you need a good scare. But somewhere in Homo sapiens' progress from lion-skin leotards to long-johns and lycra, perhaps we lost a little something along the way.

With these primal feelings awakening, I did a little research this autumn. While the UK's most fearsome woodland animal is the rogue energy-gel-stealing squirrel, in Europe it's a different story. Moose, wolverine, lynx, brown bear and yes, wolf still stalk the forests. In fact, the wolf has recently been making a resurgence and there are now

12,000 grey wolf across the continent.

Resolved to run some trails, while reconnecting with my inner savage, I hastily booked a ticket. Västmanland in Central Sweden, I discovered, was as stocked with wild animals as any self-respecting safari park. And to ensure I didn't turn chicken when heading out among the wolves, I recruited my younger sister to add the necessary social pressure. In less than a month, we were on the ground in Scandinavia.

FIRST SIGHTING

We launch our trip from the pint-sized city of Västerås, or as the Swedes pronounce it, "Westeros", (this *Game of Thrones* rip-off is a point of pride for local Swedish fans). The fantasy world connection continues as we study maps of the endless enchanted woodland that stretch beyond the city limits. A whopping 70% of Sweden is covered by trees. The UK barely scrapes 10%. It's

almost dusk by the time we lace up on the first evening – and we pack our headtorches. Picking up a convenient and quiet river trail, we jog north towards the city limits. Houses peel away almost immediately, replaced by tall stands of Scots pine. The Swedes are an outdoorsy, playful folk. On this warm autumn evening many are out strolling, exercising the dog or partaking in an impromptu school-sports-day style sack race...with no children in sight. After five miles the trail suddenly narrows, and the trees change from coppiced wood to thick, undergrowth-heavy forest. We stop here, and just before beating a hasty retreat, we peer deep into it with our headlamps. There's a shudder of leaves. A horned roe-deer races away into the night. Have we finally reached where the wild things are?

INTO THE WILD

The next day we drive 40 miles deeper into



Marcus Eldh raids the Pensionat Udden underground wood store



Breakfast time in the Kolarbyn hobbit hole



Swedish woodland hospitality

A full-page photograph of a forest at night. Tall, thin trees are silhouetted against a dark sky. In the lower center, a bright campfire glows, illuminating the surrounding area. Several people are visible sitting around the fire, their forms partially lit. The foreground is dark, and the overall atmosphere is quiet and mysterious.

**"MOOSE, WOLVERINE, LYNX, BROWN BEAR
AND WOLF STILL STALK THE FORESTS"**



"THE TERRAIN IS OFTEN FLAT OR ROLLING, MAKING FOR FAST RUNNING"

the Västmanland province, towards the small town of Skinnskatteberg. Rural roads in Sweden are well maintained and wide, but the tunneling effect of the ever-present pines makes us feel like unnatural imposters in our brightly coloured box. Our garish gold hire car, we hope, however, is a big enough bullet for stray moose to dodge. Every year it's estimated that 4,500 cars collide with these super-sized deer. That's more than 12 Swedish drivers smashing into half a tonne of beast every day. Sweden's environmentally responsible car giant Volvo – as well as going 100% electric or hybrid by 2019 – is now installing "moose-dar" technology across its fleet.

After last night's adventure, we take today for rest, recovery and strategic wolf

planning. Over the next few days our plan is to run further into their territory, so we recruit the advice of Marcus Eldh. Besides sporting a wicked wild-man beard, Marcus is famous for his wolf howl, and his company Wild Sweden have been leading trips into the territory of the Aspa wolf pack since 2004. Meeting him at the Pensionat Udden guesthouse on the outskirts of town, he reassuringly tells us that attacks on humans are very uncommon. Wolves apparently don't see us two-legged creatures as prey. We'd also have to be quite lucky to see one (or run very far indeed). The territory of packs extends between 230-300sq. miles.

The evening is spent creeping through darkening woodland on the trail of the Aspa wolf cubs. "Wolf urine," whispers Marcus

enthusiastically at one point with his nose to the ground, "pass it on." We sit around a campfire until the early hours, as Marcus howls into the night hoping to attract a response. The forest is silent. On the return drive we see shadowy SUV-sized moose grazing among the clearings. Tomorrow night we resolve to lace up and cover more ground.

MOONLIGHT SCARE

As the light begins to leak out of the forests once more, we jog away from our car, picking up a single-track trail close to the shore of Lake Skärsjön. Wolves hunt at night. Their prey, the moose, try to make it as difficult for wolves as possible by grazing under the cover of darkness and sleeping



during the day. We had not been so indulgent on our trail running holiday. Instead we squeezed in a spot of daylight cross-training on Canadian canoes, spying busy beavers and bounding deer. Now, however, as we begin to patter through the spongy woodland trails, I begin to wish we had rested. I keep reassuring myself of the wolves' menu choice: "Four legs good, two legs bad." But I dart ahead of my sister all the same, pretending to bravely lead the way.

Gravel roads weave through the interior of Sweden's forests. The terrain is often flat or rolling, making for fast but remote running. As we pick up one of these wide tree-lined cut-throughs, the miles begin to click away. The temperature is dropping, too, and birds are calling out to announce their



The floating sauna at Kolarbyn



Olivia Maynard chops wood the Swedish way



Beats the nine to five



WILD RUNNING SAFETY TIPS

LEAVE YOUR DOG AT HOME.
BEARS AND WOLVES MAY SEE IT
AS A THREAT

TELL PEOPLE WHERE YOU'RE
GOING

TAKE A PHONE AND A MAP, AND
CONSIDER PURCHASING A SPOT
GPS DEVICE

MAKE NOISE, ESPECIALLY ON
BLIND CORNERS, TO AVOID
SURPRISING BEARS

KEEP THE ANIMALS SAFE.
RESPECT THEIR TERRITORY.
LEAVE NO TRACE

evening landing in nearby lakes. Out here on the exposed road, each footfall makes a monstrous crunching noise compared to the mossy sound-proofed single-track. Soon I notice how we are both running on the balls of our feet, perched higher and pacing quietly like alert prey animals.

We are now in the territory of the Billsjön wolf pack. While we don't run into any wildlife this evening, we do run into some trouble when turning back. Under a full moon and thick mist, we spend a few anxious minutes disorientated in a flooded field on the shore of Lake Dramboln. The single-track options in Västmanland will lead you astray if you let them. Resolutely we follow the gravel track for the return leg, but it's hours after sunset when we finally make it back to our woodland accommodation at Kolarbyn Eco Lodge.

WHIPS, SAUNAS AND THE LONG RUN

The line between smelly runners and wild animals becomes even more blurred the next morning when we wake up underground. Kolarbyn Eco Lodge comprises a cluster of simple wooden apex shelters, each half-buried and sealed beneath pitched roofs covered with moss, bracken, wild grasses and fungi. Each hobbit hole has two sheep-skin sleeping berths inside, and a small open-fire pit.

Today is long run day. To prepare I head down to Lake Skärsjön for a swim and a wash. Towards the end of a peninsula I discover a wobbly jetty leading to a small floating hut with smoke already billowing out of its chimney. "It's a floating sauna," explains a topless Scandinavian, emerging from behind some beech trees. "We use these," he says, gesticulating with the knife in one hand to the freshly-cut leaf throngs in the other, "to whip one another once inside." Right, I think to myself. When in Sweden...

Washed, whipped and sweated, I lace up my off-road shoes at today's trailhead in Ulvsbomuren. It's a 30-minute drive from Kolarbyn, but you can pick up the Bruksleden Trail here and run a decent 15-mile loop. The distance is at the limit of my training right now, but the weaving forest trails, adventurous route and spine-tingling sensation of track-sharing with predatory animals keeps motivation high.

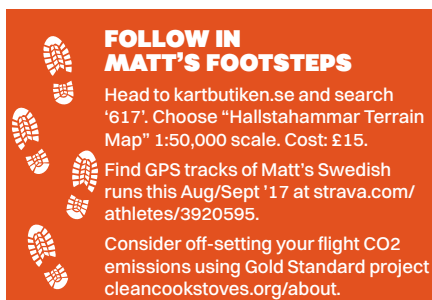
Darting solo through the depths of the Scandinavian forest certainly has a touch of pioneering spirit to it. (Wise sister has stayed indoors with our host at the Ulvsbomuren Wildlife Safari and Lodging.) Sure, I have a map in hand for backup (see below) and there are orange trail-marking blazes on both trees and boulders, but this humid forest is not made for man.

Across the forest floor, thick beds of coral-shaped reindeer lichen create a pale-green sea. Sprouting through their ranks comes the Destroying Angel – a mushroom so powerful that a tiny piece blended into a soup would kill all who consume it. Gnarled tree roots, boulders and branches make a twisting, ducking, side-stepping obstacle course for the runner. And somewhere out here – among the shadowy trees in this damp forest – is the Färna wolf pack, digesting last night's meal. Nature here is king.

SWEDISH TAKE AWAY

After seven miles of trail, I begin to close the loop at the town of Ramnäs. From here I pick up a back-road for three miles to Seglingsberg, passing ancient ironworks and quaint little homesteads. The mist comes down and the rain sets in over the final five miles of dirt track through fields and forest. I arrive like a stupidly happy wet dog.

On our last day we run a steady out-and-back on the Bruksleden Trail, venturing five miles further east from Ramnäs. Once back at the car, we take a wash in the lazily flowing river. On this trip we didn't see any wolves. But by living and running outdoors, we awoke that primal feeling. The wolves were certainly out there with us. Exchanging concrete living for earthy forest territory is enough excitement for any man. 🐾



Tread carefully and the animals appear



Matt runs the wooden boardwalks of the Bruksleden Trail



Fry-up and river safari
with Edens Garden



Mushrooms and mud
are an autumn theme
in Västmanland



Dawn is the best time
for animal sightings



RECOVERING POSITIVELY OVER INJURIES

WHY TAKE YOUR INJURY RECOVERY LYING DOWN? RESEARCH SHOWS THAT IN ORDER TO REGAIN BOTH YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRENGTH FASTER YOU NEED TO KEEP ON YOUR FEET

WORDS: ROB KEMP

W

hen injured, a runner's 'I've got to remain active' mindset is not unique among athletes. The physios, doctors and running repair specialists

even agree that it pays to keep blood, body and mind circulating as much as possible during a lay off. "Non-impact exercises are great for rehabilitation," suggests Peter Dipple, MSMA Soft Tissue Therapist. "It offloads the injured area whilst enabling you to maintain fitness, build muscle, increase flexibility, burn calories and promote blood flow which helps speeds up recovery."

Dipple lists stationary cycling, deep water walking/running, swimming, rowing, Pilates, core workouts such as dead bugs and some forms of yoga as great non-impact exercises. "Just speak to a specialist to see which activity will best help you recover," he adds. "Sports massages, foam rolling and stretches throughout your rehab will help with flexibility and mobility, take pressure off of injured and healthy muscles and reduce tightness and potential new injuries."

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY

If you are having to miss a few days of training, or regular runs, you should follow a few principles that will smooth the road to



recovery – and keep both body and mind active.

Start from scratch

If you're injured midway through your build-up programme to an event, avoid trying to make up for lost training or missed miles. "Forcing miles under your belt is the quickest and surest route to injury and overtraining," warns Dipple. "Remember the long game, doing loads now doesn't mean you will return to running quicker - it can actually have the opposite effect."

Don't fret about fitness

'Use it or lose it' so the old adage goes. But fears over your fitness levels taking a bigger plunge than a post-Brexit pound should be allayed by some well-established research into 'detraining'.

US researchers found that although anaerobic threshold and VO2 max levels dropped fairly rapidly in a test group of athletes told to take time off of training – by almost 20% after the first three weeks – it levelled out. The researchers concluded that for runners with the most common short-term forms of injury, there is no substantial effect on overall fitness. Nevertheless, you should know the risk



PAUL REYNOLDS 40, CHICHESTER.

Ultrarunner with a knee cartilage condition.

"I'm booked in for a new 'Vertical' MRI scan to help with a long-term injury that I can't fully recover from because I'm awaiting further diagnosis," explains Reynolds. "I completed the Outlaw iron last year and the Cotswold 100 - I'm about to do the first of two 'Rat Race' runs this year, the Man vs Lakes and Scotland Coast to Coast."

"My physio has indicated that I have debris and worn cartilage in my left knee that's 'acting like sandpaper,'" Reynolds reveals. But in order to get clarification of the extent of the problem and

determine a course of action he is pinning his hope on the ability of a revolutionary new diagnosis device – an upright MRI scanner – to assess the problem in a way that contemporary systems cannot. The upright scanner, at the Medserena MRI clinic (mri-london.com) in London, enables a joint to be scanned under its natural load.

One athlete who's already benefitted from using it is Scottish 1500m champion Myles Edwards. Edwards, treated for an Achilles problem, was scanned in a standing position then sent for a 40-minute run outside the clinic, then scanned again. "This real-time scan shows changes in tissue and muscles responses. When I move into positions that cause discomfort the specialist can identify the exact cause," he says. For Paul Reynolds the opportunity to be scanned on an upright MRI can't come too soon. "I want to keep on running but I know I'm going to need to get the true cause and extent of my knee problem solved first. Previous attempts at pinpointing the cause and applying the appropriate physio haven't been successful. Here's hoping this time around the scan works."



The Alter-G uses NASA tech to reduce weight while running

of inactivity. "Fitness levels will decrease," warns Dipple, "and your body will become tighter when you return to running."

Work outside the box

If you're recovering from relatively minor strains, sprains, pulls or aches then look to use down time to work on aspects of training outside running – core work or lower legs or hips depending on the area you're struggling with. And keep hardening your body, maintaining your fitness and prevent muscles from wasting with non-impact, cross-training sessions. "Whatever you're doing, aim to keep your form correct," says Dipple. "It's important as your body will want to overcompensate as it doesn't



Seek out activities that stimulate your body in a different way to running

like being injured. It's really very simple: if something is painful, stop."

Water running

This is the closest thing to running. (It's also the cheapest thing, too, when compared to the Alter-G.) Aqua jogging has been shown



JOSH ELLIS, 28, LONDON.

Amateur athlete with long-term knee stability issue.

A keen rugby player at school, Josh sustained a knee injury in a game in his later teens and was referred to Balance Physiotherapy in south London. "I underwent a rehab programme to stabilise the knee and, over the course of a few years, I moved away from rugby into distance running. I'm part of the Track Mafia that runs out of Paddington Rec in London and I'm regularly in training for events. I'm working on keeping my knee strong, and building up again to the demands of road running. The club's movement and rehab

trainer, Jonathan Lewis, has devised a programme for me using the Alter-G anti-gravity treadmill.

The Alter-G is a specialised treadmill in which a runner is zipped into a pair of specialist neoprene shorts and a waist-high airtight bag which encloses the running platform. The space around your legs is filled with air that lifts you up as you run – reducing the impact and pressure on your joints and enabling you to train at a fraction of your body weight. "Training in almost zero gravity can strengthen the muscle around the knee," says Jonathan Lewis. "It can help tissue to heal more naturally and delay the need for surgery in some cases."

For Josh it's been invaluable. "To date I've run 12 marathons and over 10 half marathons, each of which have been meticulously planned and prepared for at Balance." Along with using the techno-treadmill Josh takes advice from the group dietician and attends a Pilates class regularly. "They're all incredibly important elements of my preparation, planning and recovery."



to work wonders for stress fractures and shin splints. Take note, research from the University of Nevada shows that running in water can be deceptive – you need to run harder in the pool to activate muscles to the same degree as you would on a treadmill.

Stepper aerobics

Elliptical trainers and steppers have both

been shown to replicate the fitness gains you get from running without any significant impact on the joints. Another US study (Texas A&M University this time) has shown steppers to be as good as cycling for rehab in the case of knee injuries and ACL tears.

Pedal power

Plenty of runners use bikes for multi-discipline events and there's no doubt cycling helps boost fitness levels. When it comes to recovering from injury, cycling in spin classes, or at comfortable cadences without doing demanding hill climbs, can restore fitness and muscle strength – with limited injury risk.

Walk in the park

In order to get the same physiological benefits from walking as running, you'll need to cover much greater distance. To help the extra miles go by, check out the Marathon Talk podcast (but be careful not to break into a trot as you go).

"If it is impossible to do any form of exercise I would then look at diet; eating well and staying hydrated will help keep the muscles in good shape, making returning to exercise easier, but for me movement is key," insists Dipple. **MR**



PATRICK LOGAN, 56, EPSOM.

Veteran UK athlete and coach suffering regular muscle issues.

"I reckon I spend about a quarter of my time injured with some soft tissue strain or another. It's just become a matter of training around them," says Pat Logan, a multiple British, European and World Gold medalist for GB Masters at 60m, 100m, 200m and relay.

"I'm on the verge of being fixed this time but I need to train hard without damaging the tissue. I've just finished my second session using the Aquatone system with coach Tony Mitchell.

"As a coach I also appreciate the benefit of being able to carry out specific movement patterns that replicate my sprinting techniques."

Logan is put through his paces in a small pool, wearing a buoyancy jacket with a band attached which enables him to lean into the run for a more natural position.

"I do similar warm-ups to those on the track, then 100m and 200m sprint work. On a track I can usually do the hundred in around 11 seconds. In the pool it takes longer because of the resistance – but the recovery time is much shorter. On land I'd need 10 minutes to recover from the impact before sprinting again – in the pool I need just a minute. It means I can train intensely, for a short time, without risking further injury.

"Tony's feedback also helps in correcting my technique – aside from the benefits of AquaTone training he is a very good coach in his own right and I'm starting to appreciate the various accessories that he uses – such as the large mirror to provide visual feedback – the timer and the resistance band that allows you to get the right incline in the water."

Yoga is a great complement to both fit and injured runners' regimes



© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM / ALTER.COM



MEN'S Running

★ 2017 AWARDS ★

All photography by Natalie Kennedy (nataliekennedystudios.co.uk)

After a month of rigorous testing, the results are in! Read on to discover which products came out on top, with our comprehensive run-down of the best running gear of the year.

Whether you're after race-ready shoes or top-of-the-range tech, choosing the right kit can seem a daunting process. With so many products and brands on offer, your options are limitless.

Which is where we come in... Each summer, we put a huge array of running-related products through their paces, giving you our honest and unbiased verdict, so you can make an informed decision before parting with your cash.

This year's awards are our biggest yet. Our 48-strong team of testers, based in London and Warrington, have trialled a total of 1,000 products – the largest range of products we've ever tested.

THE JUDGING PROCESS

Each of the 1,000 products had multiple testers (three for clothing and five for nutrition), and each runner had a month to put their products to the test. Runners rated their products out of 10, based on practicality, value for money, quality and ease of use/fit for purpose (nutrition products were also rated on taste). Winners were then decided based on which got the highest average score.

MEET THE TESTERS

Our testing panel included runners of all ages, ability and experience. While we didn't have room to profile all 48, here are six chaps for you to say hi to...



ANDY MCMANUS, 42

"I started running six years ago. After the sudden loss of my mother to cancer I was determined to do something positive and raise money for charity, so I decided to run a 10K – having never run before.

"I trained on my own and eventually realised how much I love running. I now run several times a week with a club and the great friends I've made through running.

"I completed my first marathon earlier this year (despite injury) and my next goal is to run one now I'm fully fit!"



BILL BRADLEY, 58

"I have been running for around 14 years. I started when one of my daughters asked how long I was going to be around given my weight and lack of activity.

"I'm most proud of the work I've done as 'Running with Bill', working with other runners, taking them from couch to 5K, 10K, half & full marathons, and beyond."

**You
Tube**



Want to hear more about what our testers had to say? Check out our "Awards 2017" playlist at [youtube.com/mensrunning](https://www.youtube.com/mensrunning)



KEV OUTTEN, 44

"I started running again four and a half years ago after previously running as a teenager. At first I started doing my local parkrun on a Saturday morning, which was where I was introduced to someone from a local running club: St. Helens Striders. With the help and the advice given by runner's I've met through the club, I've since gone onto run five marathons, an ultra and numerous halves and 10Ks.

"The highlight of my running career was when I gained a GFA (Good For Age) time in my very first marathon."



PAUL BARRETT, 44

"I started running at the beginning of 2012, when I had this crazy idea of completing a half marathon before I was 40 (November).

"I run to clear my head, to have some space from life and to help me eat rubbish! My proudest moments have been my first half, my first marathon and the first time I completed the Tour of Merseyside.

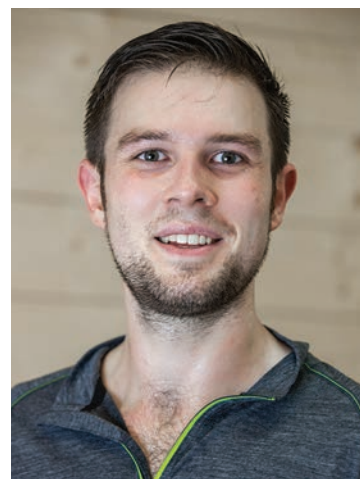
"Each of these events took me way beyond my comfort zone and changed how I have evolved as a runner."



ROB TUDOR, 52

"I ran at a decent level until the age of 20 then I stopped completely until, at 42, having put on weight I decided to do something about it and started running again – I'm now back to being completely hooked.

"Since my return I am most proud of winning the BMAF V45 5k Road Championships and helping my club win numerous national medals. I have struggled with injury since October 2016 but I am back running again and plan to target a sub-16:30 5K in 2018."



MATTHEW CREHAN, 25

"I started running at 15, inspired by my mother, who competed in the 1988 Olympic Marathon, and father who was a top county athlete & Olympic coach. In my junior years, I competed at the English Schools and competed for St. Helens Sutton.

"In September 2016, I returned to running after six years injured, having kept myself involved in the sport by writing my graphic novel, *The Art of Running*. I've since taken my 5K time to 15:01 and run around 100 miles a week."



TIM LEWIS, 52

"I started running about six years ago at Pennington Flash parkrun for something different. I never looked back and have now done a total 256 parkruns.

"My running CV consists of 5Ks, 10Ks, five-milers, two 24-hour relays, half marathons and a marathon.

"My greatest achievement was completing the marathon, closely followed by meeting lots of wonderful people through running. Next up will probably more triathlons and parkruns."

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
SUPPORT SHOE

WHO'S IN NEED OF SUPPORT?

A stability shoe is the perfect option for you if you're prone to overpronation (the excessive rolling inwards of your feet after every foot strike). As the arch of your foot collapses to absorb the impact of running, it can pull the rest of your body out of alignment, which may eventually lead to ankle, shin, hip or lower back pain. Stability shoes help to protect against this, offering extra cushioning and support exactly where it's needed.



BEST IN CATEGORY
SAUCONY GUIDE 10
 £115, WWW.SAUCONY.COM/UK

"A GREAT SHOE. VERY COMFORTABLE AND CUSHIONED. HELPED ME ROUND TWO HALF MARATHONS AND SOME SHORTER DISTANCES"

- PETE MEDLICOTT



BEST VALUE
SKECHERS GORUN FORZA 6
 £109, WWW.SKECHERS.COM/EN-GB

"MUCH BETTER THAN EXPECTED FROM LOOKING AT THEM – THE BULKY MIDSOLE WORKED VERY WELL FOR ME AS A MIDFOOT STRIKER: ENCOURAGING A MIDFOOT LANDING AND MAKING IT HARDER TO LAND ON THE HEEL. VERY IMPRESSIVE" - SAM LANGDON



EDITOR'S CHOICE
ASICS GEL-KAYANO 24
 £150, WWW.ASICS.COM/GB

"AN EXCELLENT ADDITION TO THE MUCH-LOVED GEL-KAYANO LINE, WITH AN IMPRESSIVELY LIGHT AND BREATHABLE UPPER NOT FOUND IN MOST STABILITY SHOES" - ISAAC



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
NEUTRAL SHOE

PUT IT IN NEUTRAL

A neutral shoe is generally suited to you if your level of pronation (the amount your feet roll inwards with every foot strike) falls within the normal range. Neutral shoes tend to offer a decent level of cushioning to absorb impact for heel-strikers.



BEST IN CATEGORY
ASICS GEL-NIMBUS 19
 £150, WWW.ASICS.COM/GB

"STYLISH AND ROBUST, THESE ARE THE BEST SHOES I'VE EVER HAD" - STEVE AUGER



BEST VALUE
HOKA CLAYTON 2
 £150, WWW.HOKAONEONE.EU

"I'VE NEVER WORN HOKA BEFORE, BUT WOULD DEFINITELY RECOMMEND THESE TO ANYONE WHO PREFERS A GOOD AMOUNT OF CUSHIONING" - DAN THOMAS



EDITOR'S CHOICE
ON CLOUDFLOW
 £120, WWW.ON-RUNNING.COM

"ON HAS BEEN MY GO-TO SHOE BRAND FOR A YEAR OR SO; THE 'CLOUD' CUSHIONING SYSTEM PROVIDES THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF CUSHIONING AND RESPONSIVENESS" - ISAAC

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
BEST UPDATE / BEST NEWCOMER

WHAT'S IN AN UPDATE?

Shoe brands are constantly innovating their products. Our award for the Best Update recognises the product that has seamlessly woven in some top new features to create a great



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE

ASICS DS TRAINER 22
 £120, WWW.ASICS.COM/GB

"A QUALITY SHOE FOR ROAD OR TRACK RUNNING"

- JASON DENTON

HOW DO NEW SHOES MAKE THEIR MARK?

In a market that is already teeming with options, it can be hard to stand out. However, these debut shoes have done just that, winning over our testing panel with their looks and innovation.



BEST IN CATEGORY

MIZUNO WAVE SKY
 £144.99, WWW.MIZUNO.EU/EN

"COMFORTABLE, DYNAMIC AND BREATHABLE – I'D RECOMMEND TO ANYONE"

- NIGEL HERBERT



BEST VALUE

ADIDAS PUREBOOST DPR
 £109.95, WWW.ADIDAS.CO.UK

"THE SOLE IS NICE AND BOUNCY. RUNNING'S A WHOLE LOT EASIER IN THESE!"

- JAIME MENDOZA



EDITOR'S CHOICE

HOKA CLIFTON 4
 £130, WWW.HOKAONEONE.EU

"HOKA'S TRADEMARK CUSHIONING COMES INTO ITS OWN OVER LONG DISTANCES AND THE CLIFTON 4 COMBINES THAT PROTECTION WITH A FOOT-HUGGING UPPER"

- ISAAC



EDITOR'S CHOICE

RUN-NRG 361° SENSATION 2
 £109, WWW.NEWRUNNINGGEAR.COM

"A RESPONSIVE, WELL-MADE WORKHORSE OF A SHOE THAT STANDS UP TO HIGH MILEAGE"

- ISAAC

Wave Sky

CUSHIONING & COMFORT LIKE NEVER BEFORE



Mizuno's most luxurious running shoe yet. Engineered to enhance your run with optimised midsole cushioning and adaptive DynamotionFit for unparalleled comfort, no matter how far or fast you go. This ultra-flexible running shoe refuses to compromise on or style or performance.

mizuno.com



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
MINIMALIST SHOE

WHY GO MINIMAL?

A minimalist shoe is the 'barely there' option of running footwear. Ultra lightweight and with minimal cushioning, minimalist shoes usually have a zero (or very low) heel-toe drop (the difference in millimetres between the height of the heel and the forefoot). This type of shoe is best suited to runners who land on their mid or forefoot, and for those who want a 'barefoot' experience.



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE

SKECHERS GORUN 5
 £97, WWW.SKECHERS.COM/EN-GB

*"SUPER LIGHTWEIGHT, COMFORTABLE AND SUPPORTIVE,
 AND THE QUICK-HEEL PULL MADE IT EASY TO PUT ON"*

- JAIME MENDOZA



EDITOR'S CHOICE
ON CLOUDFLASH
 £160, WWW.ON-RUNNING.COM

*"AN INCREDIBLY
 LIGHT RACER
 WITH JUST THE
 RIGHT AMOUNT OF
 CUSHIONING"*

- ISAAC

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
ENTRY-LEVEL SHOE

BEST FOR BEGINNERS

Our criteria for a good entry-level shoe was that it had to be a great starting point for beginners, who might not be too fussed with all the technology and features, but who will notice and appreciate the difference a good shoe makes to their comfort and enjoyment of running. These great offerings for novice runners had it all...



BEST IN CATEGORY
ON CLOUDFLOW
 £120, WWW.ON-RUNNING.COM

*"WOULD ABSOLUTELY
 RECOMMEND AND
 BUY AGAIN. A GREAT
 SHOE FOR A VARIETY
 OF DISTANCES AND
 TERRAINS"*

- ROB GRIFFITHS



BEST VALUE
KARRIMOR VELOX
 £39.99, WWW.KARRIMOR.COM

*"HUGELY IMPRESSIVE, GIVEN THE
 LOW PRICE. GREAT FOR MY 10K
 RUN-COMMUTE"*

- SIMON ROSS



EDITOR'S CHOICE
SKECHERS GORUN RIDE 6
 £87, WWW.SKECHERS.COM

*"A PLEASANTLY LIGHTWEIGHT,
 NEUTRAL SHOE THAT DOESN'T
 BREAK THE BANK"*

- ISAAC



Wave Daichi

GO ANYWHERE



Mizuno's Wave Daichi really does let you run anywhere. From straight out of your door to the roughest paths and the muddiest tracks. The Michelin outsole provides great traction on all surfaces with rotating lugs that de-clog themselves every step. Mizuno's Xta Ride technology works in the same way as your foot, adapting to the surface and making your run as smooth and effortless as possible.

mizuno.com



挑戦は続く
NEVER STOP PUSHING



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
TRAIL SHOE

TAKE TO THE TRAIL

Because of the uneven nature of trails, off-road shoes require specific features. Trail shoes tend to offer more grip than road shoes. They are often also waterproof, have less cushioning (so you can feel the terrain beneath your feet more easily), and the toe box may offer greater protection.



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE

MIZUNO WAVE DAICHI 2

£99.99, WWW.MIZUNO.EU/EN



*"AN EXCELLENT ALL-TERRAIN SHOE. I FELT COMFORTABLE
RUNNING UP AND DOWNHILL, EVEN IN REALLY BAD WEATHER"*

- ANDY MCGLYNN



EDITOR'S CHOICE
SALOMON SENSE RIDE

£110, WWW.SALOMON.COM/UK

*"EVERYTHING YOU EXPECT
FROM A SALOMON SHOE:
COMFORTABLE, DURABLE
AND GRIPPY AS ANYTHING"*

- ISAAC

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
TECHNICAL TOP

WHY WEAR TECHNICAL KIT?

Performance sportswear is made from breathable, sweat-wicking fabrics, designed to move moisture away from your skin as you run, keeping you cool and dry, and reducing any risk of chafing.

BEST IN CATEGORY

NEW BALANCE M4M SEAMLESS RUN SS TOP

£40, WWW.NEWBALANCE.CO.UK

*"A NICE, TECHNICAL RUNNING TOP
 THAT KEPT ME COOL ON LONG RUNS"*

- IAN WRIGHT



BEST VALUE

DHB SHORT SLEEVE STRIPE RUN TOP

£19.99, WWW.WIGGLE.CO.UK

*"I LOVE THIS TOP – IT FITS REALLY
 WELL AND I'D DEFINITELY BUY IT"*

- STUART COOK



EDITOR'S CHOICE

INOV-8 ALL TERRAIN PRO VEST

£130, WWW.INOV-8.COM

*"SIZED AND FITTED LIKE A TOP, THIS BIT OF KIT HAS
 EVERYTHING YOU'D WANT FROM A BACKPACK – WITH
 THE SECOND-SKIN FEEL OF A TECHNICAL TEE"* - ISAAC



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NEW SENSATION

361°
ONE DEGREE BEYOND™

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
SHORTS & TIGHTS



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE
KARRIMOR X 2 IN 1 RUNNING SHORTS
 £16.99, WWW.KARRIMOR.COM

"VERY COMFY AND WELL PRICED"

- CHRIS BURTON



EDITOR'S CHOICE
ON RUNNING SHORTS
 £70, WWW.ON-RUNNING.COM

"A HIGH-QUALITY, FEATHER-LIGHT PAIR OF SHORTS THAT COME WITH DETACHABLE UNDER-SHORTS FOR ADDED WARMTH"

- ISAAC



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE
MEGMEISTER
DRYNAMO ULTRA
LIGHT TIGHT

£45.99, WWW.MEGMEISTER.COM

"THE QUALITY OF THE MATERIAL IS THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO ATTENTION: IT FEELS LIKE SOMETHING YOU JUST WANT TO WEAR"

- IAN BEDWELL



EDITOR'S CHOICE
TRIBE SPORTS
RUNNING TIGHT
 £69.00, WWW.TRIBESPORTS.COM

"PREMIUM-QUALITY RUNNING TIGHTS THAT KEEP YOU WARM WITHOUT BEING AT ALL STUFFY OR RESTRICTIVE"

- ISAAC

BEET IT[®] SPORT



Beet It SPORT bar – Superfood – **Best in Category**
Beet It SPORT shot – Health Drink – **Editor's Choice**



Beet your personal best

Beet It Sport shots and bars contain a consistent dose of dietary nitrate from concentrated beetroot juice – the gold standard natural nitrate product for professional sports teams and Olympic athletes worldwide

Go harder, last longer

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
BACKPACKS

PACK IT IN

Running backpacks can serve a number of purposes, but whether you want a barely-there bit of kit for long-distance runs, or a pack with a large capacity for your run-commute, a running backpack should offer bounce-free comfort and easy adjustability.



BEST IN CATEGORY & EDITOR'S CHOICE

OSPREY TALON 11

£75, WWW.OSPREYEUROPE.COM

"VERY FUNCTIONAL AND DURABLE, WITH ZIPS AND POCKETS ALL IN THE RIGHT PLACES!"

- CHARLIE SHARPE



BEST VALUE

KARRIMOR XLITE 8L RUNNING BACKPACK

£17.99, WWW.KARRIMOR.COM

"I WEAR THIS ON MY RUN TO WORK – AT 8L, IT'S PLENTY BIG ENOUGH FOR A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, AND BOUNCE IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM"

- ISAAC



BIO-SYNERGY.UK

The multi-award winning range provides you with the nutrition you need to train long and hard, whilst aiding recovery to ensure you can deliver your best mile after mile.

The running collection naturally includes carbohydrates and electrolytes for energy and hydration. However, for endurance and energy, amino acids and beetroot supplements are the perfect addition to your training regime, whilst high quality whey proteins are on hand to promote lean muscle.

SAVE 25% WITH CODE RUN25



GET SOCIAL @BIOSYNERGY

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★ WATERPROOF JACKET & HIGH-VIS

THE IMPORTANCE OF WINTER RUNNING KIT

Once you're a seasoned runner, some waterproof and high-vis gear is a vital addition to your kit bag, to keep you both comfortable and safe in the autumn and winter months. Look for items that offer breathability as well as waterproofing, and the best high-viz options should offer 360-degree reflectivity.



BEST IN CATEGORY

MONTANE SPINE

PULL-ON

£250, WWW.MONTANE.CO.UK

*"WOW! WOW AND WOW!
THE BEST MOUNTAIN
JACKET I HAVE EVER USED.
PERFECT FOR HARSH
CONDITIONS"*

- MARTIN DAVIS



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE

KARRIMOR XLITE CONVERTABLE JACKET

£14.99, WWW.KARRIMOR.COM

*"LOVE IT. FOR THE PRICE, I CAN'T BELIEVE THE
QUALITY AND HOW NICE IT IS TO RUN IN"*

- NICK COMMONS



BEST VALUE

KARRIMOR XLITE LIGHTWEIGHT RUNNING JACKET

£19, WWW.KARRIMOR.COM

*"A GREAT LOOKING BIT OF
KIT THAT FITS A DREAM"*

- STEVE AUGER



EDITOR'S CHOICE

ASICS ACCELERATE JACKET

£100, WWW.ASICS.COM/GB

*"A WATERPROOF
JACKET WITH
A FEATHER-
LIGHT WEIGHT
THAT DEFIES
ITS DURABILITY
IN HARSH
CONDITIONS"*

- ISAAC



EDITOR'S CHOICE

RONHILL SIRIUS JACKET

£70, WWW.RONHILL.COM

*"A GENUINELY WIND-
RESISTANT JACKET
THAT'S WORTH ITS
WEIGHT IN GOLD
WHEN RUNNING ON
EXPOSED PEAKS"*

- ISAAC



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★ GPS WATCH

WHY USE A GPS WATCH?

Running and technology go hand in hand these days. GPS watches come with a range of functionalities, but in their most basic form they store your previous runs and routes, making it easy for you to check your progress. They're also a great way to keep you motivated, allowing you to track everything from miles run and calories burned to heart rate and recovery time.



BEST IN CATEGORY
SUUNTO SPARTAN WRIST
HR GPS WATCH
£399, WWW.SUUNTO.COM/EN-GB

*"I'VE USED IT FOR
SWIMMING, CYCLING,
RUNNING AND WALKING,
AND THE MORE I USED IT,
THE MORE I APPRECIATED
JUST HOW GOOD IT IS"*

- TIM LEWIS



BEST VALUE
TOMTOM RUNNER 3 CARDIO + MUSIC
£219, WWW.TOMTOM.COM/EN_GB

*"LOOKS THE PART AND COVERS ALL
BASES WITH THE DATA IT CAN DELIVER"*

- BILL BRADLEY



EDITOR'S CHOICE
TOMTOM ADVENTURER
£269.99, WWW.TOMTOM.COM/EN_GB

*"HAS ALL THE FUNCTIONALITY YOU
COULD EVER WANT, CONTAINED WITH
A GREAT-LOOKING BIT OF WRIST TECH"*

- ISAAC



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
FITNESS TRACKER

WHY USE A FITNESS TRACKER?

A fitness tracker can be a great way of keeping you on target to reach your fitness or weight-loss goals. Tracking everything from daily activity to sleeping patterns (to ensure you're getting adequate rest and recovery), they're a good motivational tool, helping you form healthy habits – and then stick to them!



**BEST IN CATEGORY
& BEST VALUE**

FITBIT CHARGE 2
£139.99, FITBIT.COM

*"VERY MOTIVATING
TO GET YOU OUT THE
DOOR AND MOVING. IT
ALSO LOOKS SLICK
AND STYLISH"*

- KEN WILLIAMS



EDITOR'S CHOICE
TOMTOM TOUCH
£100, WWW.TOMTOM.COM

*"THE BODY FAT SCANNER
IS A REALLY USEFUL
FEATURE, PARTICULARLY
FOR RUNNERS LOOKING
TO GET LEAN, BUT NOT
NECESSARILY LOSE ANY
WEIGHT"*

- ISAAC





THE AWARD-WINNING BUDDY POUCH

'A pouch with belt-free technology'

Available in various colour and size combinations



Magnetically attaches to **any** waistband
Holds essential items whilst on-the-go
No belt, band or bounce!

"I can't recommend this enough!"

"Not just for running, but also secure & bulk-free essential for cycling, holidays, dog-walking, festivals & general out-and-about activities."



HOW IT WORKS



PLACE ITEMS IN **POUCH**



SEPARATE THE **MAGNETS**



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★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★ HEADPHONES

TUNE IN AND ZONE OUT

Headphones: essential if you want to run while listening to your favourite tunes, but often the bane of many a runner's life. From tangled wires to earbuds falling out of your ears, read on to discover our tester's top picks, so you can avoid all future headphone dramas...



BEST IN CATEGORY

MONSTER ISPORT INTENSITY BT
\$79.95, WWW.MONSTERPRODUCTS.COM

*"GREAT SOUND QUALITY, EASY TO PAIR WITH MOBILE DEVICE ON BLUETOOTH
AND THE CABLES STAY NICELY OUT THE WAY"*

- IAN YATES



BEST VALUE AFTERSHOKZ TREKZ AIR

£149.95,
WWW.AFTERSHOKZ.CO.UK

*"GREAT FOR
RUNNING IN
THE CITY WHEN
YOU NEED TO BE
AWARE OF YOUR
SURROUNDINGS"*

- LIAM SEARS



EDITOR'S CHOICE SNUGS ACTIVE

£199.95, WWW.SNUGSEARPHONES.CO.UK

*"THEY DON'T COME CHEAP, BUT THESE ARE BY
FAR THE BEST-FITTING HEADPHONES I'VE EVER
WORN. UNBEATABLE IN-EAR COMFORT"*

- ISAAC

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★ SOCKS & ACCESSORIES

ALL THE SMALL THINGS

As runners, we're often talking about the importance of our shoes and baselayers, but less glamorous items like socks and additional accessories can get overlooked. These added extras, however, are equally important to your running comfort. These categories pay homage to those little pieces of kit that don't always get the attention they deserve.



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE

BALEGA SILVER
\$15, WWW.BALEGA.COM

"GREAT SOCKS: REALLY COMFORTABLE AND CUSHIONED"

- ROGER ALSOP



EDITOR'S CHOICE

X-BIONIC MARATHON SOCKS
£15.99, WWW.WIGGLE.CO.UK

"EXCELLENT FOR LONG RUNS – THE SOCKS PROVIDE A NICE AMOUNT OF STABILITY AND NOT A BLISTER IN SIGHT"

- ISAAC



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE

ODLO FAST & LIGHT VISOR CAP

£16, WWW.ODLO.COM/UK

"A GREAT CAP THAT'S COMFORTABLE TO WEAR EVEN AFTER A COUPLE OF HOURS OF RUNNING"

- CHRIS MILLINGTON



EDITOR'S CHOICE

LEDKO LEDLENSER MH10

£90, WWW.LEDLENSER.COM/UK

"EASILY ADJUSTABLE AND BOUNCE-FREE WHEN RUNNING. THE BEAM'S GOT AN IMPRESSIVE REACH AND THE HEADTORCH FEELS WELL PUT TOGETHER IN GENERAL"

- ISAAC

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
BASELAYER & RUNNING UNDERWEAR

WHY WEAR A BASELAYER?

Baselayers are made from a breathable and sweat-wicking material, they help to keep you dry and regulate your body temperature, keeping you running strong in all conditions.



BEST IN CATEGORY
MEGMEISTER LONG SLEEVED BASE LAYER
 £55, WWW.MEGMEISTER.COM

*"IT WICKED AWAY SWEAT
 VERY WELL INDEED
 AND FELT LIKE A
 SECOND SKIN"*

- IAN BEDWELL



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE
SUB SPORTS AIR MENS SEAMLESS BOXER SHORTS
 £20, WWW.SUBSPORTS.CO.UK

"A BRILLIANT LOOK AND FEEL"

- ROB WILSON



BEST VALUE
HELLY HANSEN DRY STRIPE CREW
 £30,

WWW.HELLYHANSEN.COM/EN_GB

*"AN EXCELLENT COLD-
 WEATHER OPTION WITH
 A FIT THAT'S NOT TOO
 RESTRICTIVE"*

- GEORGE NOBLE



EDITOR'S CHOICE
RONHILL INFINITY MERINO L/S ½ ZIP TEE

£58, WWW.RONHILL.COM

*"EVERYTHING YOU
 COULD WANT FROM
 A BASELAYER, WITH
 A HIGH COLLAR TO
 KEEP THE CHILL
 OUT AND EXTRA-
 SOFT MERINO WOOL
 CONSTRUCTION"*

- ISAAC



EDITOR'S CHOICE
TRIBE SPORTS RUNNING BOXER
 £12, WWW.TRIBESPORTS.COM

*"CUSHIONS EVERYTHING THAT NEEDS TO BE CUSHIONED
 AND BECOME INSTANTLY FORGETTABLE – IN THE BEST
 POSSIBLE WAY – AS SOON AS THEY'RE ON"*

- ISAAC



megmeister

Our Baselayers and Tights Offer Runners the Best Fit, Function and Comfort.

Featuring Dynamo Technology:

1. LIGHTNESS: 34% lighter than polyester. 32% lighter than wool. Superior lightness and thermal insulation mean less items of clothing and more freedom of movement.

2. THERMAL: Wicks perspiration outwards through fabric's natural structure, keeping skin and fabric dry. In cold climates heat is retained. In warm climates it keeps body cool.

3. COMFORT: Fast, effective perspiration management properties also enable the body to maintain the skin's ideal microclimate once sweating has stopped.

Highly breathable

Hypo-allergenic, anti odour

Super hygienic, anti bacteria

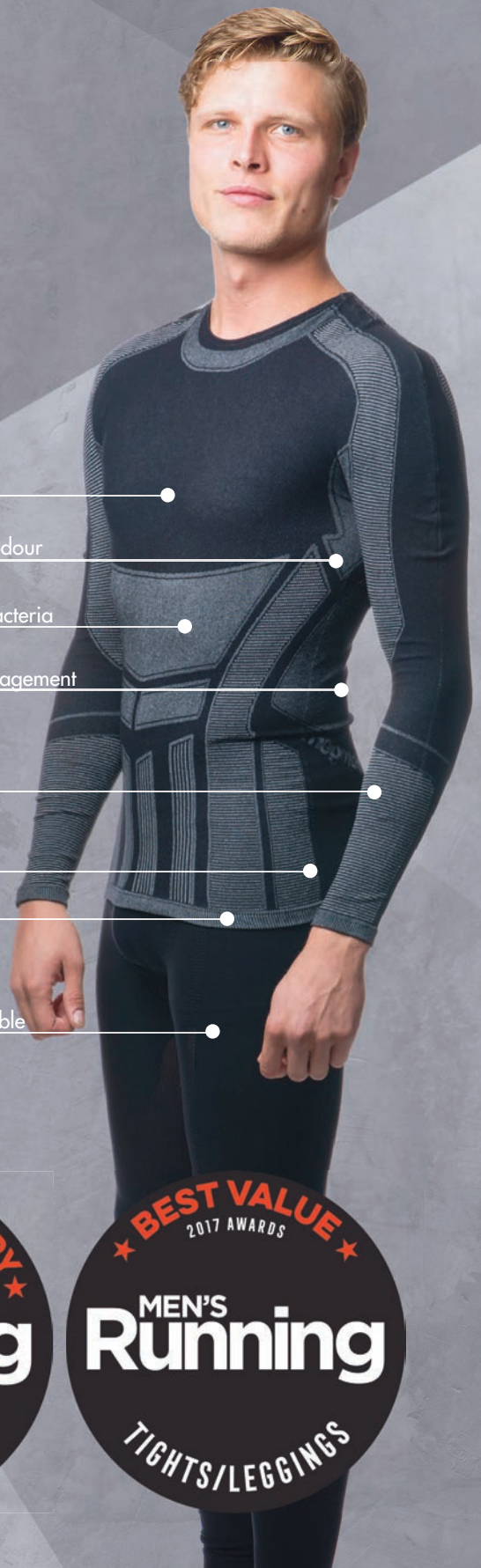
Excellent moisture management

Enhanced freedom of movement

Seamless design

Incredible lightness

Exceptionally comfortable



You Agree.

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★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
PRE- & POST-RACE NUTRITION

FUEL IN THE TANK

Race-day nutrition can make or break your run, and could be the all-important factor in you bagging that new PB. When it comes to pre-race fuel, always try it out in training first, to ensure you don't end up with unexpected rumblings out on the course. And for optimum performance, look out for products with caffeine added, as it's proven to up your speed. For post-race nutrition, opt for a snack that provides carbohydrates and protein in a 4:1 ratio, to replenish your muscle glycogen stores and fuel muscle repair and recovery.



EDITOR'S CHOICE
HIGH5 ZERO X'TREME
 £7, WWW.HIGHFIVE.CO.UK

*"TASTY, EASY TO USE
 AND KEPT ME FEELING
 HYDRATED AND FRESH"*

- ANDY MCMANUS



BEST VALUE & BEST IN CATEGORY
COCONUT FUDGE CAKE BOOST BALL
 £17.99 (PACK OF 12), WWW.BOOSTBALL.COM

*"THESE ARE EASY TO CARRY IN A RACE BAG AND
 PROVIDE A NOTICEABLE BOOST (APPROPRIATELY
 ENOUGH) PRE-RUN"*

- ISAAC



BEST IN CATEGORY
OPTIMUM NUTRITION
GOLD STANDARD 100% WHEY
 £39.99, WWW.ONACADEMY.CO.UK

*"I'D NEVER CONSIDERED
 TAKING PROTEIN
 BEFORE, BUT THIS TASTES
 EXCELLENT AND IS REALLY
 EASY TO MIX - DEFINITELY
 GOING TO CONTINUE
 USING IT"*

- CHRIS MILLINGTON



BEST VALUE
**BIO-SYNERGY WHEY
 HEY WATERMELON
 PROTEIN POWDER**
 £49.99, WWW.BIO-SYNERGY.UK
*"VERY EASY TO DIGEST
 AND I WAS PLEASANTLY
 SURPRISED AT HOW
 NICE THE WATERMELON
 TASTE WAS"*

- ROB WILSON



EDITOR'S CHOICE
HIGH5 PROTEIN RECOVERY
 £41.99, WWW.HIGHFIVE.CO.UK

*"UNLIKE A LOT OF PROTEIN
 POWDERS, THIS IS REALLY
 EASY TO MIX AND GOES DOWN
 SMOOTH, WITH 18G OF PROTEIN
 AIDING POST-RACE RECOVERY"*

- ISAAC

GOOD. *Full stop*

WE DON'T USUALLY DO THINGS BY HALVES...BUT HERE'S AN EXTRA SPECIAL **50% OFF OFFER!** TO CELEBRATE OUR MULTIPLE AWARDS AT THE MENS & WOMENS RUNNING AWARDS 2017, WE'RE OFFERING **50% OFF** ALL WEBSITE PURCHASES. SIMPLY ENTER THE CODE **AWARDWINNING** AT THE CHECKOUT!



50% OFF

NOW THAT IS...

GOOD. *Full stop*

FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF JUST HOW **GOOD** THEY ARE BY VISITING **GOODFULLSTOP.COM** ENTER CODE **AWARDWINNING** TO GET THE EXCLUSIVE **50% DISCOUNT!** THAT'S A BOX OF 20 BARS FOR **ONLY 30P PER BAR!**



Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers. **Western Brands Ltd** South View Estate, Willand, Cullompton, Devon EX15 2QW. Tel 01884 822 133. Join the fun at goodfullstop.com #fuelyourfun

★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
MID-RACE NUTRITION

WHY DO YOU NEED EXTRA FUEL WHILE YOU RUN?

Even if you've taken on board some pre-race food, your body can only store enough energy (in the form of glycogen, stored in the muscles and liver) to run for 90 minutes to two hours. To avoid 'hitting the wall' you should aim to take on regular fuel during longer races or training runs. For maximum performance benefit, aim to take on around 60-90g of carbohydrate per hour. For races, choose readily available carbs such as energy gels and isotonic sports drink and, in training – when you'll be running at an easier pace – take on snacks

BEST IN CATEGORY

GOOD FULL STOP FRUIT & NUT SNACK BARS

£0.72, WWW.GOODFULLSTOP.COM

*"VERY PALATABLE TASTE
 PACKED INTO A BAR THAT'S
 EASY TO CARRY"*

- ROB TUDOR



BEST VALUE

HIGH5 ENERGY GEL
 £1, WWW.HIGHFIVE.CO.UK

*"INITIALLY I FOUND THE
 TASTE A LITTLE SWEET,
 BUT IT'S EASY TO DIGEST
 AND DOES PROVIDE A
 NOTICEABLE MID-RACE
 KICK"*

- JAMES MCGLYNN

EDITOR'S CHOICE

SCIENCE IN SPORT ISOTONIC ENERGY GEL

£28 (PACK OF 20),
WWW.SCIENCEINSPORT.COM/UK

*"THESE PROVIDE AN
 INSTANT, NOTICEABLE
 BOOST, TASTE
 CONSIDERABLY
 BETTER THAN OTHER,
 TOO-SICKLY GELS,
 AND, PERHAPS MOST
 IMPORTANTLY, ARE VERY
 EASY TO TEAR OPEN ON
 THE RUN"*

- ISAAC



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
PROTEIN & HEALTH DRINK

WHY IS PROTEIN IMPORTANT FOR RUNNERS?

Protein is an essential macronutrient in our diet, vital for muscle growth and repair, alongside lesser-known functions such as hormone and antibody production. As runners, our protein requirements are slightly higher than the general public, as it forms an important part of recovery after exercise. Consuming a protein snack as soon as possible after a run will stimulate the rebuilding of damaged tissue.



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE
BIO-SYNERGY SKINNY PROTEIN SHAKE
 £31.99, WWW.BIO-SYNERGY.UK

"I'M OFTEN WARY OF PRODUCTS WITH 'SKINNY' IN THE TITLE, BUT THIS TASTES AS GOOD AS ANY PROTEIN I'VE TRIED, WITH FEWER ARTIFICIAL NASTIES"

- TIM REES



EDITOR'S CHOICE
MAXIMUSCLE PROMAX BARS
 £22.99 (PACK OF 12), WWW.MAXINUTRITION.COM

"NOT AS DENSE AS A LOT OF PROTEIN BARS, WITH A RICH, CHOCOLATEY FLAVOUR THAT MAKES FOR THE PERFECT POST-RUN SNACK"

- ISAAC



BEST IN CATEGORY & BEST VALUE
ERDINGER ALKOHOLFREI
 £1.20,
INT.ERDINGER.DE/BEER/ALKOHOLFREI.HTML

"LOOKS AND TASTES LIKE A BOTTLE OF BEER – IT'S A YES FROM ME!"

- IAN WRIGHT



EDITOR'S CHOICE
BEET IT SPORT SHOT
 £25 (PACK OF 15), WWW.BEET-IT.COM
"HAD ONE OF THESE BEFORE A RUN-COMMUTE HOME AND RAN QUICKER THAN I HAVE IN AGES. DEFINITELY HELPED TO WAKE UP TIRED LEGS"

- ISAAC



★ MEN'S RUNNING AWARDS 2017 ★
SNACK & SUPERFOOD



**BEST IN CATEGORY
& BEST VALUE**

**GOOD FULL STOP
FRUIT & NUT BAR**

£0.72, WWW.GOODFULLSTOP.COM

*"REALLY LIKED THESE;
EASY TO DIGEST AND
TASTED GREAT. COULD
EAT DURING A RUN AS
WELL AS BEFORE OR
AFTER"*

- CHRIS MILLINGTON



BEST IN CATEGORY

BEET IT SPORT BAR

£28 (PACK OF 25), WWW.BEET-IT.COM

*"I'M A BIG ADVOCATE OF THE
POWER OF BEETROOT AND THESE
BARS TASTE GOOD
- I'D RECOMMEND"*

- XAN DONNAGHER



**EDITOR'S CHOICE
MERIDIAN PEANUT
& COCONUT BAR**

£1.25,

WWW.MERIDIANFOODS.CO.UK

*"ANYTHING WITH
PEANUT GETS A YES
FROM ME, BUT THESE
ARE ESPECIALLY
GOOD - LEAVE YOU
SATISFIED BUT NOT
OVERLY STUFFED"*

- ISAAC



BEST VALUE

**THE RAW CHOCOLATE CO
CACAO POWDER**

£4.19 (180G),

WWW.THERAWCHOCOLATECOMPANY.COM

*"I LIKE THE FAIRTRADE ETHOS
AND IT TASTES GREAT"*

- STEVE AUGER



**EDITOR'S CHOICE
WHITWORTHS FULL OF
SUPER CAYENNE CHILLI
FLAXSEED CRISPS**

£1.50, WWW.SAINSBURYS.CO.UK

*"GOOD TO HAVE
STOWED AWAY ON
A LONG RUN FOR
WHEN GELS AND BARS
BECOME TOO SICKLY"*

- ISAAC





MEN'S RUNNING READER AWARDS

Whether you're planning your first marathon, or are after a new pair of racers, the best person to ask for a recommendation is undoubtedly a fellow runner – in such instances, a seasoned marathoner, or the owner of those shoes you've got your eye on, should be your first port of call. That's why this year we've asked our readers to cast their votes on everything from their favourite races to their favourite running accessory, giving you access to the opinions of an even bigger community of runners than you might ordinarily have chatted to.

In fact, 24,000 runners voted in our inaugural Reader Awards, hosted across our online platforms. The nominees with the most votes have been awarded the product/brand/race/influencer/club 'of the year', the runners up awarded 'highly commended' and those placed third 'commended'.

Ready to find out the best-rated running brands of 2017? Read on.



INFLUENCER OF THE YEAR JASON FITZGERALD

WWW.STRENGTHRUNNING.COM

Jason is a 2:39 marathoner, USATF-certified coach, and author of the number-one selling running book on Amazon, *Running for Health & Happiness*. He writes for over 200,000 runners a month and has helped tens of thousands of runners accomplish their goals with results-oriented coaching programmes



HIGHLY COMMENDED JOSHUA HOLMES

WWW.RUNITFAST.COM

Joshua is the founder of RunItFast.com, 'a compilation of some of the most elite and experienced runners in the world'. He has run over 194 marathons/ultras, including 40 100-milers and three 500K races



COMMENDED TEAM RUN MND

WWW.MNDASSOCIATION.ORG

RUN MND was set up by dedicated MND Association runners to share support and encouragement for those with motor neurone disease



BRAND OF THE YEAR
SCIMITAR SPORTS

WWW.SCIMITARSPORTS.COM

"My running club used Scimitar Sports to get our vests made. They're brilliant quality and look the part"

- Paul Barnard



TECH BRAND OF THE YEAR GARMIN

WWW.GARMIN.COM

"I'm a bit of a techie and work in the IT industry. I've been into the smartwatch arena for years, but the Garmin Forerunner 935 that I now have is just an amazing watch. It ticks all the boxes for both a smartwatch and running watch *and* has amazing battery life"

- Mark Williams



HIGHLY COMMENDED SUUNTO

WWW.SUUNTO.COM

"Suunto is my brand of the year because for every ultra event, hill race and training session I have ever done, it's never let me down. Having the versatility to use other cross-training sport modes when you are not running is a great feature, and accurately tracks gym sessions and swimming"

- James Cooper



COMMENDED TOMTOM

WWW.TOMTOM.COM

"I've used TomTom for years and found it to be very accurate and reliable. The customer service is fantastic as well"

- John McSherry



ACCESSORY BRAND OF THE YEAR RUNDERWEAR

WWW.RUNDERWEAR.CO.UK

"It's not often that a product so cleverly marketed actually lives up to the hype, but Runderwear certainly does. Keeps you dry, breathable fabric, amazingly comfortable and having the seams on the outside is utterly genius I definitely need more!"

- Alex Phennah



HIGHLY COMMENDED ROCKTAPE

WWW.ROCKTAPE.NET

"I've tried a number of different K tape products and this is without a doubt top of the list. Once applied it stays on for at least five days and offers real support"

- David Castle



COMMENDED CEP

WWW.CEPSPORTS.CO.UK

"Great quality fabric and the baselayers are nice enough to be worn on their own"

- Kerry Peters



NUTRITION BRAND OF THE YEAR BIO-SYNERGY

WWW.BIO-SYNERGY.UK

"A great-tasting product that mixes well. The chocolate flavour tastes like a milkshake - worth running quicker to get home for!"

- Chris Millington



HIGHLY COMMENDED SIS

WWW.SCIENCEINSPORT.COM

"Through all my training and racing I've always used Science in Sport. SiS products are researched and developed by sport scientists in conjunction with international athletes and taste phenomenal"

- Lewis Black



COMMENDED VITA COCO

WWW.VITACOCO.COM

"Coconut products that taste great, with proven health benefits. I particularly like the Coconut Water after a tough run - nice and refreshing"

- Marcus Williams



SHOE / APPAREL BRAND OF THE YEAR SCIMITAR SPORTS

WWW.SCIMITARSPORTS.COM

An independent British sportswear brand that makes colourful, classy and quality running gear that looks great and feels even better



HIGHLY COMMENDED KALENJI

WWW.KALENJI.CO.UK

"Excellent price and great quality. If you're new to running, the kit is perfect"

- Jaime Mendoza



COMMENDED ASICS

WWW.ASICS.COM/GB

"Good value for money and great quality"

- Chris Burton



 Swiss Engineering

SHORTCUT TO RUNNER'S HIGH.

Introducing the all-new **Cloudflow**. Ready, set, flow: equipped with the latest generation CloudTec® sole, the all-new Cloudflow does not waste any time. From the very first step, a record-breaking 18 Clouds have one goal: to take you to your runner's high.



Run on clouds.



© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



RETAILER OF THE YEAR DECATHLON

WWW.DECATHLON.CO.UK

Free delivery for purchases over £30, a 365-day return policy and good kit at great prizes. It's no great surprise that Decathlon is so popular



HIGHLY COMMENDED MandM DIRECT

WWW.MANDMDIRECT.COM

"MandM's products are great value. Its customer service is also by far the best customer I've ever had to deal with"

- Phil Bird

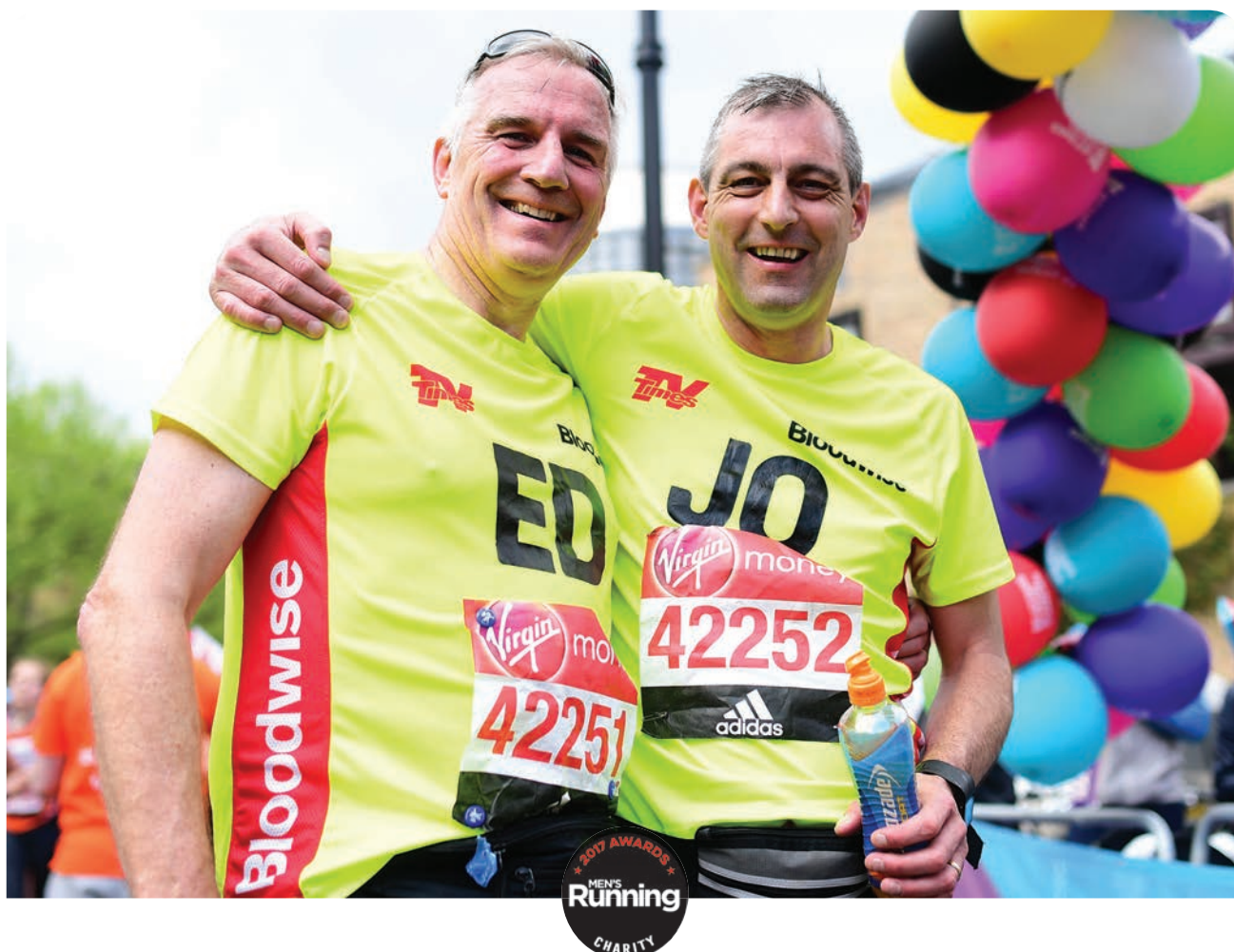


COMMENDED ABSOLUTE RUNNING

WWW.ABSOLUTE-RUNNING.COM

"An excellent local running specialist with staff that go the extra mile"

- Luke Potts



CHARITY OF THE YEAR BLOODWISE

WWW.BLOODWISE.ORG.UK

Bloodwise aim to stop people dying from blood cancer, make patients' lives better and look for ways to stop blood cancer happening in the first place



HIGHLY COMMENDED BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

WWW.BHF.ORG.UK

Of particular importance to runners, BHF is the biggest funder of cardiovascular research in the UK



COMMENDED VICTA

WWW.VICTA.ORG.UK

"I'm a licensed guide runner for the visually impaired and the three children/young adults I guide for have all benefitted from the services VICTA have provided"

- Jules Bardwell



SHOW OF THE YEAR RUN FIT EXPO

WWW.RUNFITEXPO.CO.UK

The Rock 'n' Roll Liverpool Marathon expo is a superb opportunity to try, buy and test running products, take part in demos and seminars, talk to experts about diet and nutrition, and meet like-minded folk. All with that trademark atmosphere only Liverpool can provide



HIGHLY COMMENDED BODY POWER UK

WWW.BODYPOWER.COM

The place to be if you're a fitness fan – with a gathering of the world's biggest fitness stars and their brands



COMMENDED BE FIT

WWW.BEFITLONDON.COM

"I went with my wife last year and was really impressed with the range of products and events on offer"

– Carl Brownlow



Give full effort at the Big Half

Squeezing the best bits of the London Marathon into half the distance, **The Big Half** will see 20,000 runners cross Tower Bridge, race through Canary Wharf and sprint past the Cutty Sark – followed by the best food, drink and live music the capital has to offer at **The Big Festival**.

Places at this brand new event have already sold out – but for just £5 you can nab a spot running to beat blood cancer with Team Bloodwise – so don't miss out!

Join our team at:



bloodwise.org/BigHalf



4 March 2018

Can't make the Big Half? Why not set your sights on:

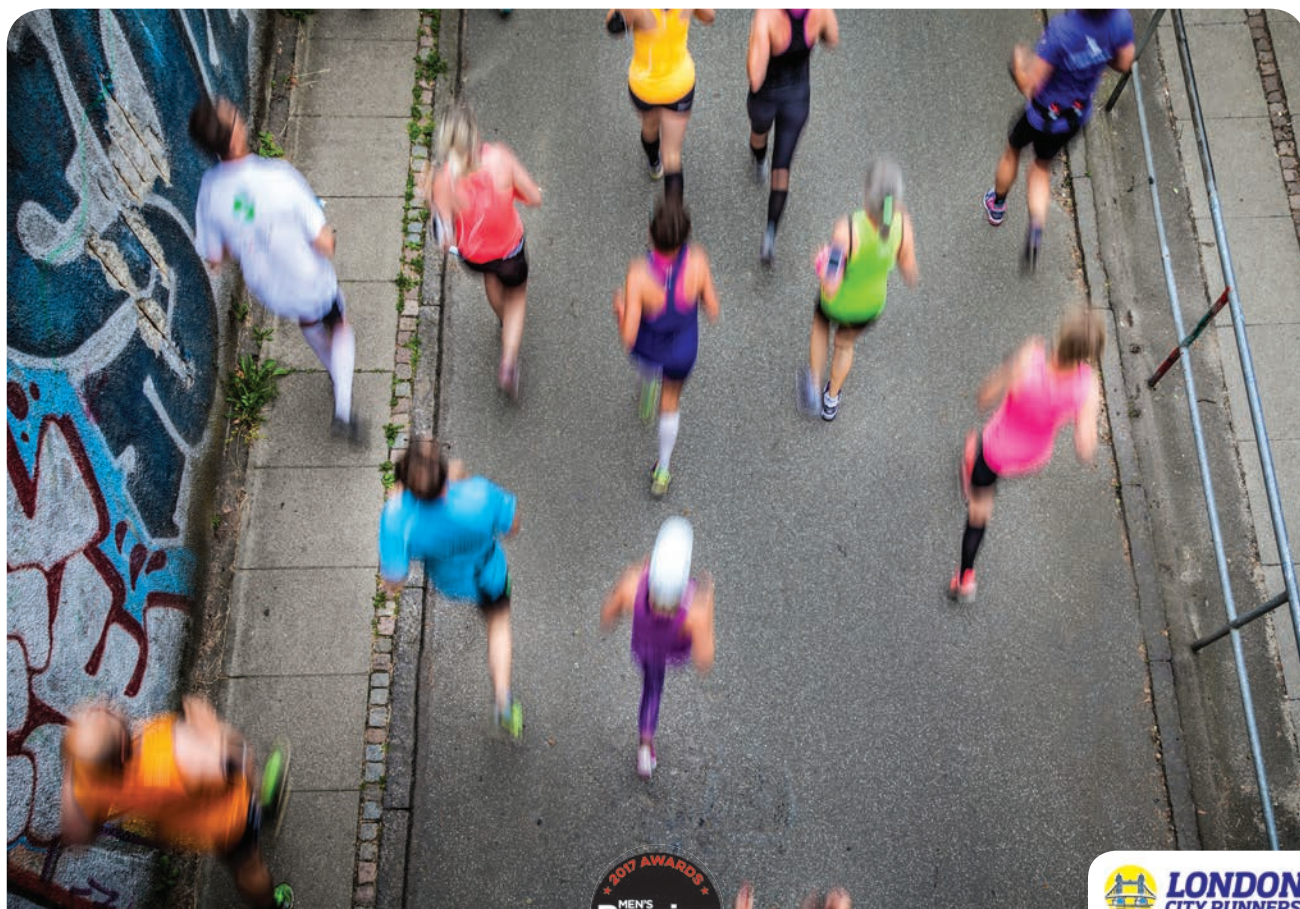
Brighton Marathon, April 2018 – £25

Great Manchester Run, May 2018 – £1

Great North Run, September 2018 – £20

Bloodwise
The blood cancer research charity

© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



RUNNING CLUB OF THE YEAR LONDON CITY RUNNERS

WWW.LONDONCITYRUNNERS.COM

London's biggest running club is completely free and open to all, with three sessions a week – and socials to match



HIGHLY COMMENDED STUBBINGTON GREEN

WWW.STUBBINGTONGREENRUNNERS.NET

"I voted for Stubbington Green Runners because they make newcomers feel very welcome, and they have a good mix of running activities and social events"

– Simon Bacon



COMMENDED BOURNVILLE HARRIERS

WWW.BOURNVILLEHARRIERS.ORG.UK

Regarded as 'Birmingham's friendly running club', Bournville Harriers offer a friendly atmosphere for beginners, but also top-end coaching for runners looking to compete on the club scene



asics

Feel
Fast



RoadHawk FF™
With FlyteFoam™

Made of speed,
capable of anything.



5K OF THE YEAR RUN FOR CHOCOLATE 5K

WWW.RUNFORCHOCOLATE.CO.UK

"The marshalls and organisers did a great job and the medal at the finish line was magnificent"

- Otto Kis



HIGHLY COMMENDED THE BIG FUN RUN

WWW.BIGFUNRUN.COM

A series of untimed runs staged within 18 stunning locations across the UK



COMMENDED VITALITY MOVE - JESSICA ENNIS-HILL'S RUNNING FESTIVAL 5K

WWW.VITALITYMOVE.CO.UK

"The Vitality Move event received my vote as it was very well organised and set in a stunning location. Best of all, it was great for families, which meant no bored kids waiting for Dad to finish!"

- Kevin Melling



10K OF THE YEAR VITALITY LONDON 10,000

WWW.VITALITYLONDON10000.CO.UK

"I may be bias because I got a PB, but I loved this race - and its lovely route through the City"

- Tom Lewis



HIGHLY COMMENDED BRIGHTON MARATHON 10K

WWW.BRIGHTONMARATHONWEEKEND.CO.UK

"A lovely day out on the south coast, with the buzz of the marathon and less of the pain!"

- Scott Wadsley



COMMENDED GREAT BIRMINGHAM 10K

WWW.GREATRUN.ORG

An fast-paced city centre race with PB potential and a fun, lively atmosphere



5K | 10K | HALF MARATHON | MILE
14-16TH SEPTEMBER 2018 - WARRINGTON, UK



FINISHER TECH TEE
MULTIPLE MEDALS
FREE FINISHER BEER
FAST COURSE
FINISH FESTIVAL



2018 REGISTRATION
OPENS SUNDAY 5TH
NOVEMBER AT 6PM

WWW.RUN-EHM.COM



HALF OF THE YEAR HASTINGS HALF MARATHON

WWW.HASTINGS-HALF.CO.UK

The not-for-profit, 33-year-old, race attracts 4,000 runners and no wonder. From the seafront, the course follows the route of William the Conqueror towards Battle, through the 'Old Town', the fishing Village of Hastings, then three miles along the seafront again. Bands, choirs and cheerleaders add to the fantastic atmosphere



HIGHLY COMMENDED JCP SWANSEA HALF MARATHON

WWW.SWANSEAHALFMARATHON.CO.UK

A much-loved event with a flat, fast course that heads from Swansea city centre to the picture-perfect coastal town of Mumbles, and back



COMMENDED ENGLISH HALF MARATHON

WWW.EHM.CONTEST-SPORTS.COM

"An event that always delivers and exceeds expectations. It is a well organised event with great support from the community. Local running clubs are there in the masses and support all those running. I cannot speak highly enough of the race"

- Ben Bailey

Sunday 18th March, 2018

Start 10.30am

34th Hastings



Half Marathon

plus



Mini Run for ages 9-16

- Open to all abilities, and you can raise monies for your own needy causes.
- Fantastic crowd support, six bands, two discos, two choirs on route.
- Unique 'Hastings Brass' to all finishers, plus a hot drink.
- Free quality programme, free parking.
- Good train service to nearby station.



Permit No:
2018-29969

Organised by
**The Lions Club
of Hastings**

Registered Charity No. 293745



Enter now by visiting: **www.hastings-half.co.uk**



MARATHON OF THE YEAR ROCK 'N' ROLL LIVERPOOL MARATHON

WWW.RUNROCKNROLL.COM

Liverpool's famous music heritage is celebrated on a flat but scenic course, taking in the city centre, waterfront and other landmarks. Live bands, cheer teams and 'high-energy volunteers' line the streets to power you home, concluding with a headliner concert



HIGHLY COMMENDED VIRGIN MONEY LONDON MARATHON

WWW.VIRGINMONEYLONDONMARATHON.COM

"What an event! Incredibly well organised and from start to finish people are lining the streets cheering you on. Unbelievable atmosphere. No run like it"

- David Lawley



COMMENDED LOCH NESS MARATHON

WWW.LOCHNESSMARATHON.COM

"The combination of breathtaking scenery and flat road running makes this a unique race - and one that I would highly recommend"

- Mark Smith



OBSTACLE RACE OF THE YEAR X RUNNER WILD MUD RUN

WWW.XRUNNER.CO.UK

Claiming to be 'the muddiest race in the world - with more obstacles, more mud, less running', X Runner has left no obstacle unturned in providing the ultimate mud-race experience



HIGHLY COMMENDED SPARTAN RACE UK

WWW.SPARTANRACE.CO.UK

"The right combo of hard work and good fun, I was an OCR sceptic before running Spartan, but now I'm a convert!"

- Rick Cann



COMMENDED TOUGH MUDDER

WWW.TOUGHMUDDER.CO.UK

"My first and favourite OCR, Tough Mudder's reputation is well deserved, with the best obstacles and most rewarding sense of achievement"

- Alex Wingfield



INTERNATIONAL RACE OF THE YEAR REGGAE MARATHON

WWW.REGGAEMARATHON.COM

Given a pre-dawn send off by a crescendo of drums and flaming torches, Jamaica's Reggae Marathon is one of the world's most idiosyncratic races. The atmosphere is infectious and the finish alongside Negril's famed seven-mile white-sand beach is definitely one you won't forget



HIGHLY COMMENDED BOSTON MARATHON

WWW.BAA.ORG

One of the world's premier running events, the Boston Marathon covers 26.2 miles of relatively flat terrain between Hopkinton, Massachusetts and Copley Square in Boston



COMMENDED DUBLIN MARATHON

SSEAIRTRICITYDUBLINMARATHON.IE

"Dublin really is the friendly marathon. The crowds get bigger and louder each year. If you need a pick-me-up, this is the marathon to get it in"

- James Higgins



RACE OF THE YEAR X RUNNER WILDMUDRUN

WWW.XRUNNER.CO.UK

MR readers, it seems, are big fans of mud. And obstacles. And both combined. The X Runner Wild Mud Run got your vote, because of its perfect combination of top-of-the-range obstacles and brilliant organisation



RACEBOOK

10K | HALF MARATHON | MARATHON | 24-HOUR

"WE DEFINITELY SHOULD HAVE TURNED ROUND. BUT HE HAS A MAP. AND HE'S GERMAN. AND I'M QUITE STUBBORN AND DON'T WANT TO RETRACE MY STEPS"

REEBOK RAGNAR WHITE CLIFFS
- P90 -



© WHITE CLIFFS EVENT PHOTOS / TIM WINTERBURN / RAGNAR



RICHMOND RUN FEST

Back-page columnist Jim Old goes for a 10K and half marathon PB double at Richmond's festival of running

- p94 -



LOCH NESS MARATHON

Mark Smith is in the Scottish Highlands for 26.2 miles of glorious surroundings and fast, flat running

- p97 -

FROM DUSK TILL SCORN

DAMIAN HALL REPORTS FROM THE REEBOK RAGNAR WHITE CLIFFS RELAY
- WHERE A WRONG TURN LEADS TO SOME LIGHTEARTED MOCKERY FROM
THE JOINT MEN'S RUNNING AND WOMEN'S RUNNING TEAM



W

hat makes a good team? Encouragement and positivity? A selfless work ethic and self-sacrificing attitude? Or is it endless taking the piss out of a person who stuffs up? I'll let you be the judge...

I was delighted to part of the joint Men's Running (MR) and Women's Running (WR) team for the UK's inaugural Ragnar Relay White Cliffs. Our task was to run from Maidstone, Kent, out to the coast and along it to Brighton, some 170 miles. Sections vary in length, from 2.6-10 miles, with runners averaging 12-25 miles in total (if they, er, stick to the route), with three sections each. As well as the running challenge, we would have to drive in two people-carriers between the legs. Two cars, 170 miles to drive and run, and very little sleep. What could possibly go wrong?

Rapid team bonding was aided by the serious task of decorating the vans. As someone had named us the Ragnar Virgins, we ended up with the word virgins emblazoned across the back windows in pink. Classy.

My first run passed without major incident and I handed over the baton to Steve, jumped into the van and Toan drove us to the next 'exchange'. Signage was more spacious than your average race, but clearly visible at major junctions. There are nearly 90 teams taking part – including over 20 who'd come across the pond especially for it, with plenty of friendly Scandinavians, too.

Steve hands the baton to Joe,

Damian proves that real runners wear face paint



Prep talk for the night shift



who sets off as if he's just seen a Nordic longship come across the bay. Next up is Toan, as I assume driving duties. Lee gets the last leg of the men's five-leg stint, and from charming Whitstable the girls take over. As runners were set off in waves it's impossible to know yet how well we're really doing – it's time trial-style running – but optimism abounds.

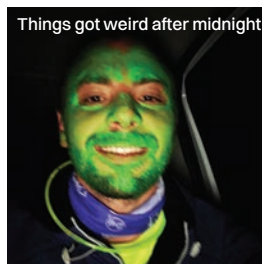
We had planned to head on along the route and support the ladies, but we accidentally walked into a pizza restaurant. Before we know it, it's the boys turn to take over again. Encroaching dusk naturally means luminous face panting.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TURN BACK

It's just getting dark as Karen Gill slaps the baton into my hand and I dash out of the exchange buzzing with the thrill of twilight running. It's soon dark, but I see big blue course markers regularly and pass other runners, so I know I'm on route. Then, in trails between fields, I reach a junction that's marker free. Hmmm. As I pause to ponder, a German runner catches me up. "All we need to do is get to the coast," he says confidently. He's carrying a map (of sorts), so I figure he knows stuff (mistake #1).

The next sign-free junction is when we definitely should have turned around (mistake #2). But he has a map. And he's German. And I'm quite stubborn and don't want to retrace my steps. Soon we've gone too far to turn around. And

Things got weird after midnight



Jumping for joy at the finish



Trying anything to stay awake

there's no path. Instead there are fields, bogs, streams to wade across, bramble thickets, it's dark and we can barely see lights of civilisation. If I'd bothered to carry my phone (mistake #3), I could have sorted this in seconds.

Eventually we find a beach. To cut a long story short, I run an extra four – due to the terrain, often very slow – miles. And put us at least an hour behind our schedule. Everyone's kind and sympathetic about my huge faux pas. At first.

Sometime after midnight it's time to hand over to the girls again in Folkestone, where the exchange resembles a rave with multi-coloured searchlights, music and food stalls. We drive on and finally have a chance of some kip. I lie there for 90 minutes, too whacked up on sugar and caffeine to sleep.

At sometime after 3am Karen screeches into the



Lack of sleep does strange things to a man

The MR team





Red sky at night,
runner's delight

BY THE NUMBERS

191M

HIGHEST ALTITUDE
REACHED

170

MILES IN TOTAL

22:45:35.5

THE WINNING TIME
OF TEAM TEAL TIGERS

88

RUNNERS IN TOTAL

24:40:15.1

THE TIME OF THE
MIXED MR AND
WR TEAM, WHO
FINISHED 7TH

exchange and thrusts me the baton, cheekily shouting "don't get lost" after me. I had a good ribbing from the girls as I waited. The boys had been so much kinder.

I want to redeem myself. Luckily it's a flat and fast stage, albeit 10 miles. I'm determined to only do the requisite distance this time and follow markers religiously. I reach the next exchange without incident. Passing other runners, there's good camaraderie and mutual encouragement. An educated guess suggests many people here aren't seasoned runners and seeing their efforts is inspiring stuff.

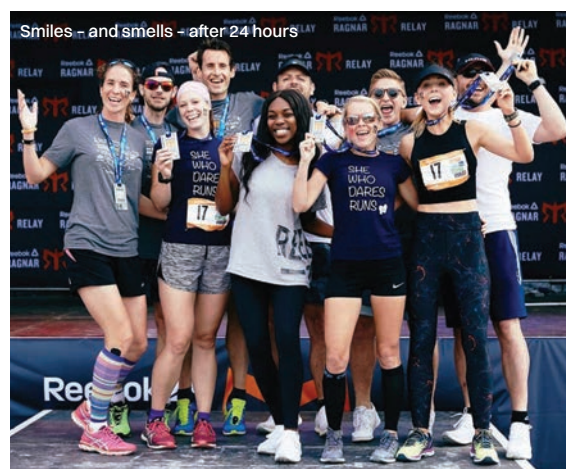
Body language (and odours) in our – and other vans – is very different now. Figures are slumped in seats, huddled in padded jackets. However, watching the deep orange sun rise triumphantly from the sea at Hastings perks us all up. As does the idea of a stop for coffee as Joe runs the penultimate men's leg.

TIME IN LOO

We're relaxed. Too relaxed. We take ages sorting kit, picking breakfast pies and the coffee queue gets long. We get a call from Joe. He's finished his leg and wonders where we are! The problem is, the teammate who needs to run next desperately needs to lighten the load. He's




All worth it
at the end



waiting in a toilet queue. There's little we can do but wait – and form a pact that the women's team don't need to know about this.

It's beautiful sunny September morning when we meet the girls again. They mercilessly bombard me with bantz again. They don't know the half of it.

It's a glorious drive along the top of the South Downs to Brighton where we're welcomed to a huge sea-front finisher area hosting music, pizzas, beer and, best of all, massages. We join the girls to run the last few metres, crossing the line together. We've placed seventh overall (though it could have been fourth if some huge idiot hadn't got lost that time).

It was a lot of driving. A lot of time without sleep. A lot of CLIF bars. And some good running. But best of all, is the amount of times my phone pings with messages from our WhatsApp group, attesting to good times spent with like-minded folk. And that's what it's all about. That, and, it seems, taking the piss out of me. (Rightly so I guess.) 

READY TO RAGNAR?

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RIGHT ON, KEW

BOLDLY GOING WHERE FEW MEN HAVE GONE BEFORE, **JIM OLD** ATTEMPTS TO GET TWO PBS IN AS MANY DAYS AT THE RICHMOND RUNFEST

You have an idea. In your heart you know it's not a good idea. When you mention it to friends they look at you seriously and tell you it's a bad idea. But you do it anyway. I was going to run two races in two days and shoot for a personal best in both. Yes. Yes, I know. Bad idea.

This year the guys at the Richmond Running Festival decided to expand their popular event across a whole weekend. They moved the Kew Gardens 10K to the Saturday along with the kids' races, while the Richmond Marathon, Half Marathon and Family Fun Run were held on Sunday. The 10K holds a special place in my heart, so I signed up for that one as soon as registration opened. The idea of also running the half entered my head a little later when the organisers dangled a particular piece of

bling before my eyes. The "Laureus" medal would be awarded to anyone racing on both days of the festival. It bothers me that I'm such a sucker for that kind of thing.

SATURDAY 08:25, KEW GARDENS

Standing a few rows back from the start line, I'm fidgeting uncomfortably on the horns of a dilemma. To get a 10K PB this morning, I'm going to have to work pretty hard. But won't that hurt my chances of a PB tomorrow? I've been focusing on my half marathon fitness, so surely that should take priority? But I've set a new 10K PB in this race twice before and I want another bash at it today. Oh bloody hell, we're starting...

The venerable Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew doesn't usually allow running. This is a pity because frankly the place could be a runner's paradise. It's a 300-acre green

Jim proudly sports his Laureus medal





oasis, almost completely flat, with a maze of smooth, well maintained tarmac footpaths. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it's full of incredible, irreplaceable stuff and so normally any movement faster than a sedate amble is frowned upon. Not today, though. The front runners charge off towards the famous Palm House and I settle into a pace that I hope will get me that PB, while not completely draining the tank.

The weather is perfect: sunny, but cool and windless, and there's a joyful, colourful atmosphere to the race. The gardens aren't officially open yet but runners and their supporters were given free entry this morning. I plug in to the cheerful vibe. My own fan base is still in bed.

For the first time this race is being held entirely within the gardens. They've had to squeeze the course in and as a result it's a bit twisty. But it's my pace that becomes

the problem, not the sharp turns. Three miles in and I'm starting to struggle. I make my first and only sensible decision of the weekend and slow up to save my legs for tomorrow. A double PB is just too ambitious. A dozen runners overtake me. I distract myself by admiring a collection of fir trees. But it's no good – I can't bear it. I tear up the sensible decision and start to race again. I don't look at my watch. I know the PB is lost...

Except it isn't. As I get close to the finish arch I notice a clock. I'm still inside my PB time. Just. There follows one very uncool flailing sprint to the line and a four-second PB. I'll take that, thank Kew very much.

SUNDAY 08:50, KEW GARDENS (AGAIN)

I'm in the Wave 1 starting pen for the Richmond Half Marathon and the ghost of yesterday's 10K is with me. I have a tight calf and a worrying new twinge in the base of my pelvis. The recovery adviser on my Garmin is telling me I shouldn't be running for another 40 hours. You're not getting any younger, it says. But aches and pains and over-anxious technology aside, I'm looking forward to this. A countdown, a horn-blast and we're away, pattering once more through Kew Gardens. Today's more relaxed pace means I can look around and enjoy the venue. Kew really is an amazing place to run. Shame you can only do it once



Bee gone. Ha, bee gone! See what they did there? Because of the flowers. And the bees...



Kew's famous 'The Hive' is completely ignored by this lot, whose love for the work of Wolfgang Buttress is temporarily put on hold



The kids hare off at world-record pace

(well, twice technically) a year.

After three miles we leave the gardens and head towards Richmond along the Thames path. It's narrow in places and rougher underfoot but not enough to slow us down. The field has stretched out and I lock onto a youngster who's knocking out my desired pace with metronomic precision. We pass groups of noisy supporters on Richmond's beautiful river front and head towards

BY THE NUMBERS

11,500
TOTAL ENTRIES IN ALL RUNFEST EVENTS

242
LAUREUS MEDALS HANDED OUT

29:30
CHRIS THOMPSON'S WINNING TIME IN THE KEW GARDENS 10K

1:10:11
ALEX MILNE'S WINNING TIME IN THE RICHMOND HALF MARATHON

800
FREE KIDS' MILE ENTRIES FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

Teddington, still sticking to the river. Just past halfway, I suck down a gel and take stock. All things considered, I'm feeling surprisingly good. The course is flat but interesting, the weather's ideal and we're being expertly marshalled. My personal pacer is suffering though and slows down so suddenly I almost crash into him. I push on alone. Perhaps he got sick of me breathing down his neck.

The course leaves the river at Teddington Lock and loops back towards Richmond, bringing us past Ham House, an imposing National Trust property. Then we're back on the river, sharing the coned-off path with the runners in the later waves who are still heading out towards Teddington. I've been waiting to be presented with a bill for yesterday's racing but I seem to be getting away with it. With two miles to go I even ask my legs for a little more speed. Fourteen minutes later I cross the line in Old Deer Park – with my second PB of the weekend.

I'm handed my Laureus medal. It has some serious heft to it which adds to the smug feeling of mission accomplished. I've had a couple of great days' racing in a brilliantly organised festival of running and am now the owner of two new personal bests. I knew it was a good idea. **MR**

NESS IS MORE

MARK SMITH HEADS TO THE HIGHLANDS TO HUNT FOR THE MYTHICAL LOCH NESS PB



Rumours of a monster in the loch cause pandemonium at the start line

Race experience matters more to me than clock chasing, so when an opportunity to run the Loch Ness Marathon came up I jumped at it; in its 16th year but still small by marathon standards, it has a real reputation for a great atmosphere attracting runners from around the world. My flight north was full of repeat offenders, accompanied by sign-waving friends and family.

The night before, the local village hall turns into an orgy of pasta munching, shiny trainer oggling, race-tip divulging and grooving to the tunes of local bands. A huge, inflatable Nessie looking down on proceedings.

The marathon is point to point finishing in Inverness. Early on the Sunday morning a fleet of buses wait to take us all on the journey to the start. The bus grinds through the seismograph-shaped scenery. Looking across the Loch, the route we are about to run seems as lumpy as Nessie's backside!

The start is high and exposed, and it is raining and windy, but I can see nothing but stunning scottish

shuffle towards the start with my wife, Low and we agree our game plan: Run together, easy on the hills, and see how we are doing at half way. As the local pipe band starts up and marches through the runners, I can't help but grin at how silly this sport occasionally is, and just how much I love it.

The first five miles weave down through the moors and with the steely skies brightening, lighting the mottled orange grey of the hills, I relax into the pace. The rain has stopped, I've taken one of my buffs off and it already feels special. There's a couple of uphill blips, but we take them steady and I'm feeling fine.

At around seven miles I get my first close-up view of the Loch. For the next 10 miles the route follows a rollercoaster road through rust autumn trees, just above the water's edge. It's silent out here. The race is washed away for a while as I soak in the scenery.

I'm halfway along before I know it and the pace is good, really good. I do a double take of my watch – under two hours. There's no trace of my cold I had a week ago, so we decide to go for it and try and hit our first sub 4 hour time. The race is spreading out nicely - enough runners so you're never alone, but there is plenty of road space if you need it.

After 17 miles I leave the loch for the road to Inverness. It starts trying to rain again, but it's warm enough that I don't really notice. Then the big uphill of the race starts. Slowly we climb the long hill, picking runners off as we go. At the top there's a nicely placed feed station with a choice of Clif gels and energy sweets. I grab a couple of gels, suck them down and gulp down some water. It's all (mainly) down from here but my legs are

wilderness and the route slowly snaking toward the loch. I'm shivering over my free cup of tea. I've pulled on my clothes, and am sheltering behind the baggage trucks. The real fun is yet to begin.

There's a great buzz, and everyone seems well up for the race. Just before the start, as the bag trucks are about to leave, there are flurries of activity and I shuck off my layers and switch to the runners favourite, the timeless binbag. I

tightening from the climb.

I head toward Inverness for the last few miles, and my fuzzy mind is obsessed with the average pace I need to hit our goal. Twenty-three miles in and I manage to work out there's still margin so I start to relax. My legs might be tight, but I know I can keep this pace. Low is now locked in on the challenge. My ever-so-helpful scenic commentaries are met with grunts and furrowed brows. The last part is special, after about a mile or so weaving through the suburbs the route rejoins the river Ness and runs alongside the river, looping over a bridge and back on itself to the finish line at the race village. We cross the line together, both chuffed that we've finally broken the magical four with minutes to spare.

We grab our goody bags, shuffle off for some free post-race soup and bask in our achievements. It's a great race, there's a 10K option (and kids races too) and the organisation is top notch. When folk at the airport tell you they had a terrible run, but thoroughly enjoyed the race, you know it is a bit special. **MR**





Back-of-the-mag pacer
Jim Old speaks up for the
everyman runner

Cheat of the moment

JIM'S WOODLAND WRONG-TURN CREATES A MORAL DILEMMA

"There was a line of half a dozen runners, one after the other, spread out over a couple of hundred yards. I picked a spot between the lead two and broke cover, dashing out of the woods and belting across the grass to reach the rough path they were following. There, I swung right and took my place in the line. It was hardly subtle. I didn't really expect to get away with it and the woman I'd jumped in front of didn't intend to let me.

"You've cut the course! You're cheating!" There was a laugh in her voice but also a serious, steely edge. It might just be a bit of fun, a club cross-country competition on a wet Tuesday night, but a race is a race and cheating is cheating.

"Sorry," I called over my shoulder. "I got lost." She made a snorting noise which conveyed exactly what she thought of that explanation. I sped up to put some distance between my accuser and me.

It had all started so well. This was a handicap event with runners heading off at intervals, slowest first, fastest last, to run a five-mile circuit in Richmond Park. Some people had been on the course for twenty minutes before I was called to the start line. I had to overtake all of them and avoid being passed myself if I wanted to win. I was giving it my all; moving up a few places on the rooty single-track trails, gaining another position or two as we twisted

in and out of small wooded areas. The field thinned out but I could see a head bobbing above the bracken – my next overtaking opportunity. On catching him though, I found this "runner" I'd been chasing down was actually an elderly man out walking his dogs. In my enthusiasm I'd missed a flag and gone off course. I was completely lost. The dog man thought it was hilarious.

I'd left my sense of direction at home, and several minutes of running in circles followed before I caught sight of the race again, on the other side of some woods. It was clear there was a fair chunk of the course I hadn't run. The idea of cheating (even accidentally) in an event organised by my new club was mortifying. I resolved to come clean and disqualify myself as soon as I crossed the line. Ideas of glorious victory fell away and the race became a hard training run. I put the hammer down to catch a group of runners who were just cresting the hill ahead of me. Reaching them, I realised I was overtaking people I'd already passed in the early stages of the race. Apparently my headless-chicken detour had been longer than the official course.

So, in the end I kept schtum. My middle-of-the-field placing was carefully noted and will live in the club's records until the end of time. I feel a bit bad about that. **MR**





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