RACE WEEKEND GUIDE

HOW TO EAT, DRINK & TRAIN TO RUN YOUR BEST

RUNNER'S WORLD

New York City run crew Resident Runners

WHEN DID RUNNING GET SO RAD?

NEW WAYS TO DO PASTA
(When You're Tired of Pasta)

HOW TO DOMINATE ANY DISTANCE

PERFECT-FIT TRAIL SHOES

OCTOBER 2017
RUNNERSWORLD.COM

Rev Up Your Recovery

To power your run, don't overlook the importance of rest and recovery.

Rest, repeat.

Every runner, beginner to elite, knows the importance of rest days. Pushing your body without time to repair itself can leave you prone to injury. That's why it's no surprise marathon training includes reduced mileage days to keep runners at their peak. So as a good rule of thumb try to aim for three or four days a week of running with rest days in between.

Fight free radicals.

Take your antioxidants. Your body is constantly producing byproducts (called "free radicals") from its normal metabolic processes. Free radicals naturally occur in our bodies but may increase with exercise and can damage cell membranes. Antioxidants fight free radicals, which otherwise may lead to oxidative stress that can affect cells.* Curcumin (the main ingredient in Solgar® Full Spectrum Curcumin) has always been known for its antioxidant power and ability to support joint, brain, and immune health.*

Don't fear the "fartlek."

This Swedish word for "speed play" builds in rest and recovery every single time you run. To fartlek, just alternate bursts of moderate to hard running with easy, slower runs—without keeping track of exact pace, time, or distance. This unstructured approach lets you tell yourself to "run fast to that tree" and then slow down until you pick the next milestone.

Love your joints and muscles.

After any kind of physical activity, your joints may occasionally become stiff and uncomfortable. For help, people may focus on a lifestyle change such as low impact sports. But, there are other long term options. One example is Solgar® N°. 7, a joint supplement that can show improvement in joint comfort within seven days.[1]* Here's another way to help keep your joints healthy: on workout-rest days, do a low-intensity activity such as walking, biking, or gently circling your arms and knees.

Keep up with immune health.

Keep your overall immune system healthy all year round! Products such as Ester-C® and Curcumin support your immune health so you can stay in tip-top shape.*

Savor a smoothie.

Pump up your body's recovery power with a smoothie combining fruit and spices. In a blender, mix one cup of your favorite whole milk (regular, almond, coconut, or soy) and a scoop of Solgar® WHEY TO GO Protein Powder with ½ cup each of frozen mango and fresh or frozen banana, with a half-teaspoon of turmeric, cinnamon, and ginger and a dash of sea salt.

* Solgar® N°. 7 is formulated with 5-LOXIN Advanced® (*Boswellia Serrata Extract*, UC-II® Undenatured Type II Collagen, Ester C®, Tumeric Root 4:1 Extract, White Willow Bark 5:1 Extract, Ginger Root 4:1 Extract, and Pepper Spice Complex (Cayenne Powder, Bioperine®).

1. Based on two human studies with 5-LOXIN Advanced® where subjects rated their joint health over time, subjects' joint health improved within 7 days and continued to improve throughout the duration of the studies.

* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Looks like somebody's been taking their Solgar® N°. 7

They increased their flexibility, mobility, and range of motion.*
Even better, their joint comfort showed real improvement... in just 7 days.1*

Finally, the next generation in joint comfort, mobility, flexibility, and range of motion.* Solgar® N°. 7 brings together bio-active nutrients that work to create a fast-acting approach for occasional "tweaks" and joint stresses brought on by exercise, sports, or physical activity.1* Start to get back on track fast — when stiff joints occasionally say no... **Solgar® N°. 7 says YES!***

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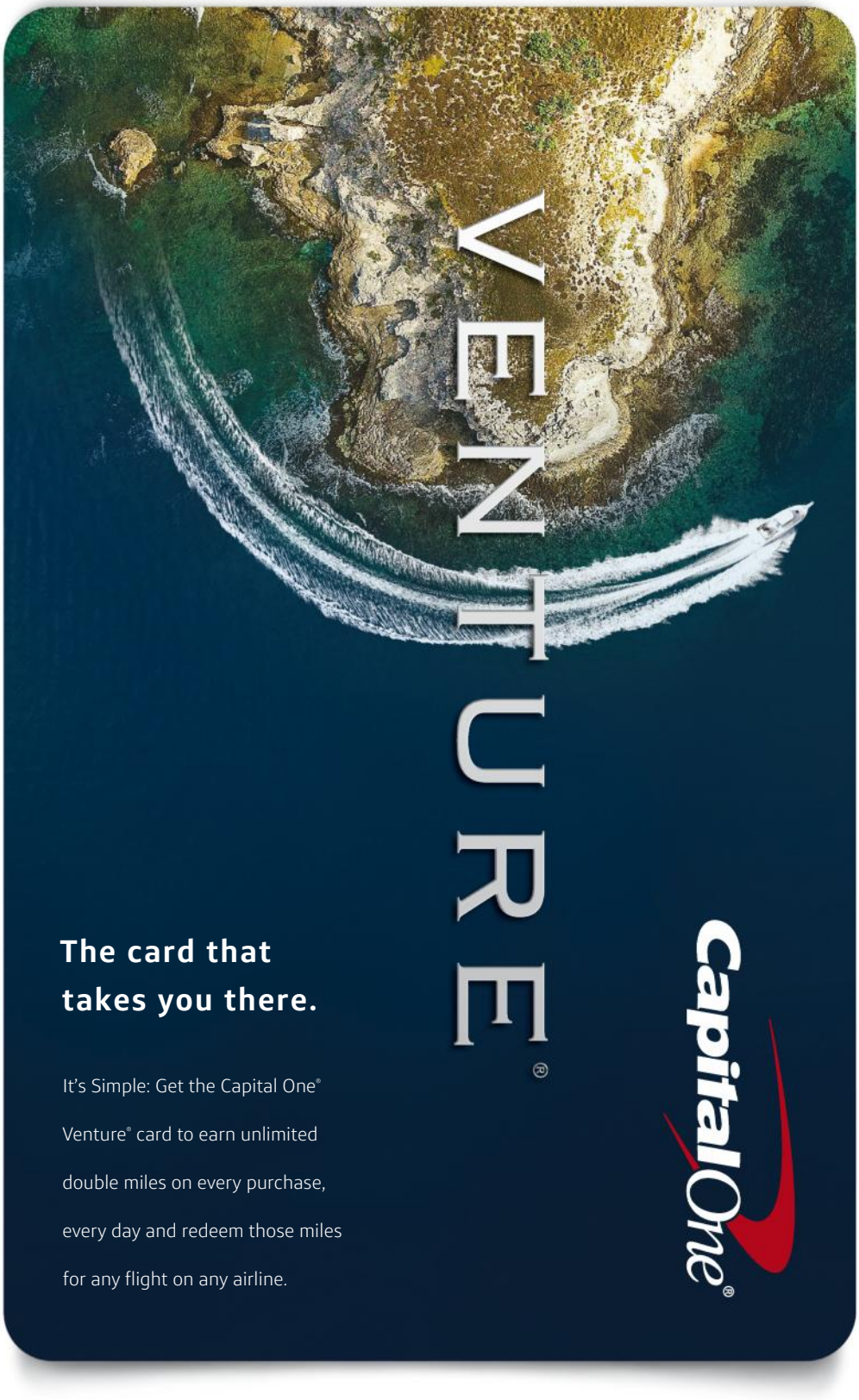

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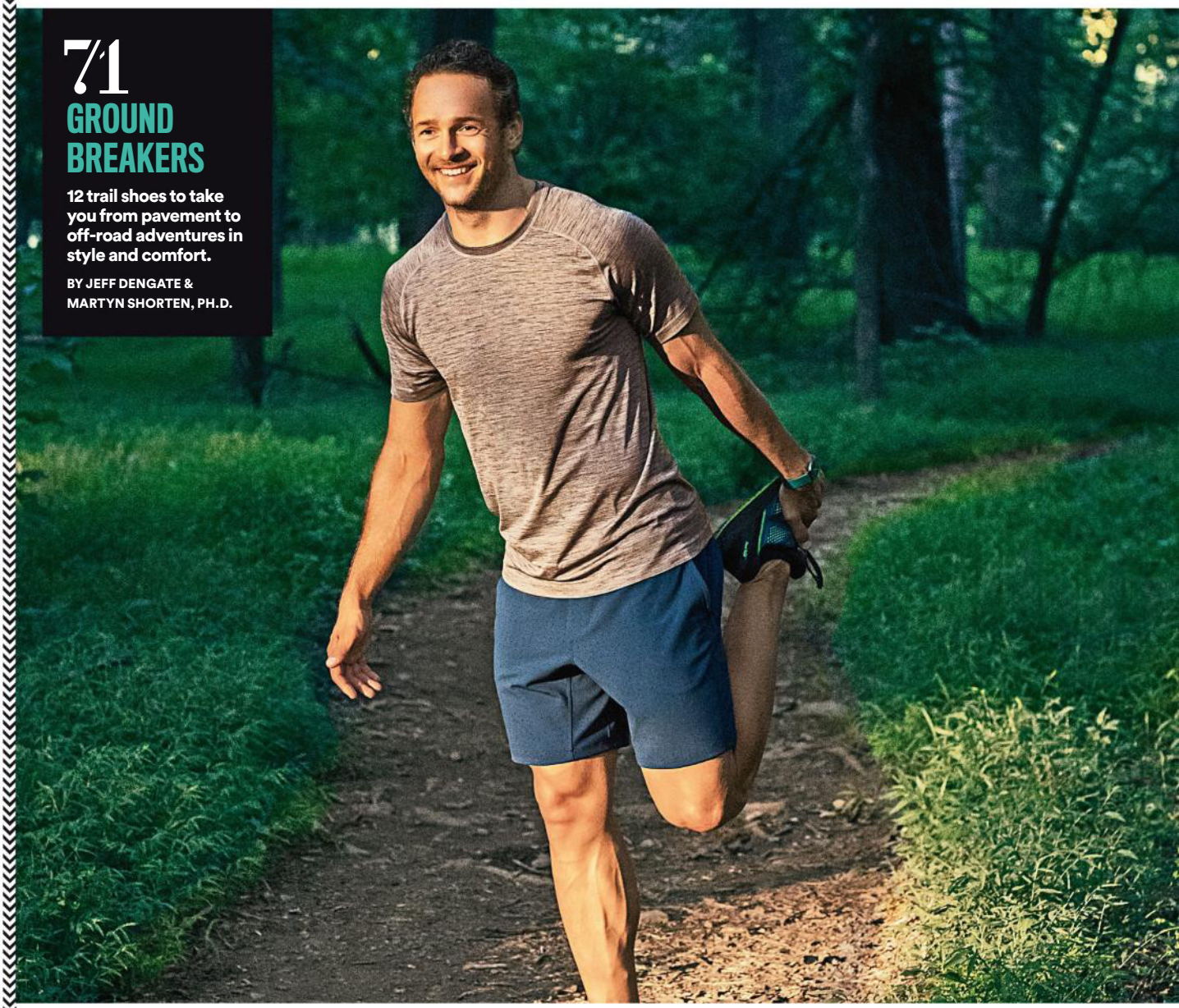

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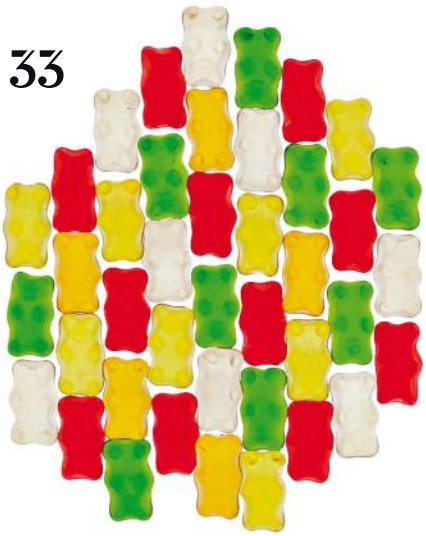
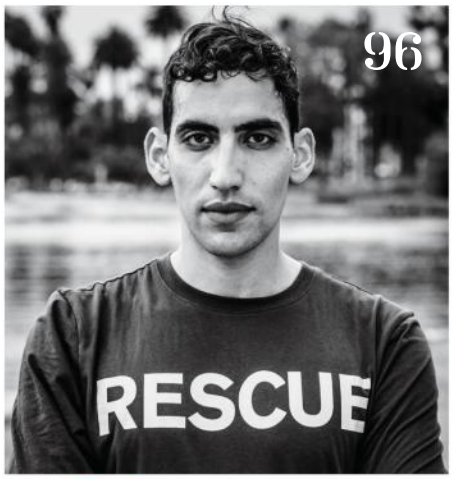
The Comrades Marathon helped unite apartheid-era South Africa. Today it still keeps hope alive in the hearts of runners—even those from impoverished settlements.

BY RYAN LENORA BROWN

PHOTOGRAPH BY **JONATHAN PUSHNIK**





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"One day, while I was sitting on the toilet, I took a picture of my chin to show that I had a bunch missing from when I used to be fat," says the group's founder, Josh LaJaunie, on how he thought of the name Missing Chins Run Club.

"I warm up like I'm at a track meet: little sprints, skips, high knees, karaoke," says Talton, the man behind the MLB's swiftest mascot, The Freeze.

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LIFE CHANGED

Each week we feature a new inspiring person online in "How Running Changed Me." Read the stories and submit your own at **runnersworld.com/hrcm.**

Take a moment today to appreciate all the toenails that have stuck around.

ON THAT #GRAM

Our social media editor was just given the green light to create meme videos. So watch out: The *Runner's World* Instagram is about to be 🔥. Follow along **@runnersworldmag.**

CLOSE UP

Go behind the scenes of our photo shoot with this month's I'm a Runner, Amin El Gamal, complete with a cameo by a gaggle of geese. Watch at **runnersworld.com/iar.**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCH MANDEL (GUMMY BEARS); JIM WRIGHT (EL GAMAL); DAYMON GARDNER (LAJAUNIE); DANIEL SHIREY/GETTY IMAGES (THE FREEZE)

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To be part of my #runsquad, you have to _____.

- "Leave the headphones at home."
- "Eat brunch after our long run."
- "Be willing to keep up a conversation on long runs. It's how I know I'm running at 'conversation pace.'"
- "Enjoy lots of cheat meals with me."
- "Push me to go the extra mile. Or, preferably, just push me the extra mile—in a shopping cart."
- "Be uncool—willing to let others see you strive and sweat."
- "Not take yourself too seriously—running can be fun!"

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SAFETY HARBOR, FLORIDA

Runner
Ashley Taylor

The Experience
Curving along the coastline—across the bay from downtown Tampa—the mile-and-a-half road through Safety Harbor's Philippe Park is protected by looming citrus fruit branches. "The way the trees intertwine is just beautiful," Taylor says. "It reminds me why I love running in Florida."

Historic Setting
Take a midrun detour in the park to hike up the ceremonial Safety Harbor Site Indian mound—used by the Tocobaga tribe when Spanish settlers arrived to the region in the 16th century—for sweeping views of the bay.

Local Fare
The Green Market Café, 4.9 miles north of the park, offers plenty of organic fueling options. After a few coastline miles, Taylor is partial to their turkey melt on organic multigrain bread.

Race Nearby
St. Pete Run Fest Half Marathon
November 19, 2017

Photographer
Erik Isakson

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LET'S RUN TOGETHER

Running is more often than not a solitary pursuit, especially during predawn hours when you must peel yourself out of bed without disturbing your slumbering nonrunner spouse, slip on your Spandex and sneakers in the dark, and head outside for several solo miles. That's been my midweek routine lately as I prep for the Chicago Marathon, my sixth 26.2 but first in the Windy City. But even during these long runs by myself, I rarely feel lonely. That's because I know that, as a runner, I'm part of a large collective. Even as we each chase our own individual goals and push past personal limits, we share universal connections—something I'm reminded of each time I whiz past another runner in my neighborhood and we exchange the slightest nod or wave that says so much. (Typically it's: "Props for being the other crazy person out here at 6 a.m.!")

The fact that running is also a social experience—from the instant bond I feel with strangers lined up beside me in a start corral to the friendships I've made with runners of all paces and races—is one of the many reasons why I love this life-affirming exercise. This connection is also why I am so thrilled to join *Runner's World* as Editor-in-Chief. As a longtime fan, I intend to carry on the legacy of reporting and beautifully written storytelling set by my predecessor, David Willey. We'll also be bringing new columns and more diversity and inclusivity to our magazine. Just like the run crews we profile on page 62, the RW tribe welcomes all levels and abilities. It's where you'll feel at home within our pages, gain runspiration through our digital and social posts, and stoke your energy and motivation at our events. (Hope to meet many of you in person at the Runner's World Half & Festival in Bethlehem, PA, October 20–22!)

Whether you choose to lace up and hit the roads in order to conquer a PR, lose weight, clear your mind, or get strong, we'll not only be delivering monthly know-how right here, but we'll be out there on the roads with you in spirit. Especially at 6 a.m. on a Tuesday.

Betty Wong Ortiz, Editor-in-Chief

The miles fly by so much faster when you run with a crew of friends. Check out the cool urban street movement—and postrun fun—happening in a city near you. Page 62.

PHOTO OF WONG ORTIZ: HAIR & MAKEUP BY STACY SKINNER FOR CELESTINE AGENCY; STYLING BY ARGY KOUTSOTHANASIS; NOLI SPORTS BRA & LEGGINGS; BANDIER TOP; SAUCONY SHOES. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: RUN CREW PHOTOS BY CHRIS CARDOZA; RYAN YOUNG; CHRIS LANGER; CHRIS CARDOZA

PHOTOGRAPH BY **NATHAN PERKEL**

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Muskegon, Michigan
@FHE_TF_XC

THE STAT

The 52 members of the Missing Chins Run Club (page 45) have lost more than 4,000 pounds between them. To put it in perspective, that's at least:

2
Smart cars

32
Meb Keflezighis

16
NordicTrack C990 treadmills

9,709
Chick-fil-A sandwiches

THE QUESTION

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST COSTUME YOU'VE EVER SEEN IN A RACE?

A gentleman ran in a full knight outfit, while holding a shield that said "sir sweats-a-lot."
Sydney @SYDNEYR013

Jesus! Running in loin cloth & bare feet and carrying a huge cross on his back in this year's London Marathon. I only passed him at mile 23!
Paul Eaton @PAULEATON1976

Country Music Marathon, guy running in straw hat, palm-frond hula skirt, coconut bra, and flip-flops.
Steve Smiley @SRSMILEY

The full-on naked costume. **@Baytobreakers**
Mikey T @MINDIGLO

THE SHAMELESS PLUG

Chicago has its "Magnificent Mile"—a strip of upscale shops and famous eateries on Michigan Avenue. But in a marathon, every mile is magnificent. Sure, some may suck, but each one gets you closer to the hard-earned finish line. So we designed a sweatshirt, inspired by the 40th anniversary of the Chicago Marathon (see page 50), and in honor of each mile in your next race—all 26.2 magnificent ones. Buy it at shoprunnersworld.com.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY D. HURST/ALAMY (SMART CAR); VICTOR SAILER/PHOTORUN (KEFLEZIGHI); MATT RAINEY (TREADMILL); ZUMA PRESS INC/ALAMY (SANDWICH); SHUTSWIS/GETTY IMAGES (SWEATSHIRT)

PHOTOGRAPH BY GLEN DELMAN

THE CUTE

Meet the 1-year-old age-group winner of the Pearl Street Kid's Half Mile in Boulder, Colorado—Raven Jurek. Credit the performance to excellent genetics and world-class pacers: her mom, Jenny, and her dad, ultramarathon champion Scott Jurek.

THE SNARK

We provide running advice every day on Twitter—@runnersworld. Sometimes readers share their own advice in response.

Why your body really doesn't want you to sleep in this weekend

It's not my body. It's my damn cats.
chris cappa @CAPPASNAPPA

8 ways to become a morning runner

Number 1: Wake up
Mercury's Rainbow @RUNNER_SELFIES

Have you discovered the life-changing magic of snack dinner?

Have you discovered my every night dinner?
Cassandra White @CASSWHITE2013

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HALF MARATHON
THE DARK SIDE

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page 22

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BLANN/GETTY IMAGES

THIS MONTH ▷ *Your Ultimate Race Weekend*

EAT, DRINK, AND BE SPEEDY

BY AMANDA MACMILLAN

It's no secret that fueling can make or break a race. But it's not just what you eat during a run that matters. Forty-one percent of runners have had stomach problems ruin a long run or race, according to a recent poll of *Runner's World* Twitter followers. But, experts say, most issues are preventable—if you follow these guidelines.

DO

THE DAY BEFORE

Do carb-load throughout the day. Eat a higher-than-normal proportion of bread, pasta, rice, or other carbs (and less protein, fat, and vegetables) at every meal—not just dinner. "You might not be as hungry as usual during the taper," says 11-time marathoner Kelly Hogan, M.S., R.D., of Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. "Eating smaller meals every couple of hours can help you get enough carbs without stuffing yourself." (In his book *Meb for Mortals*, Meb Keflezighi said he keeps two or three sandwiches on his nightstand to eat throughout the night.)

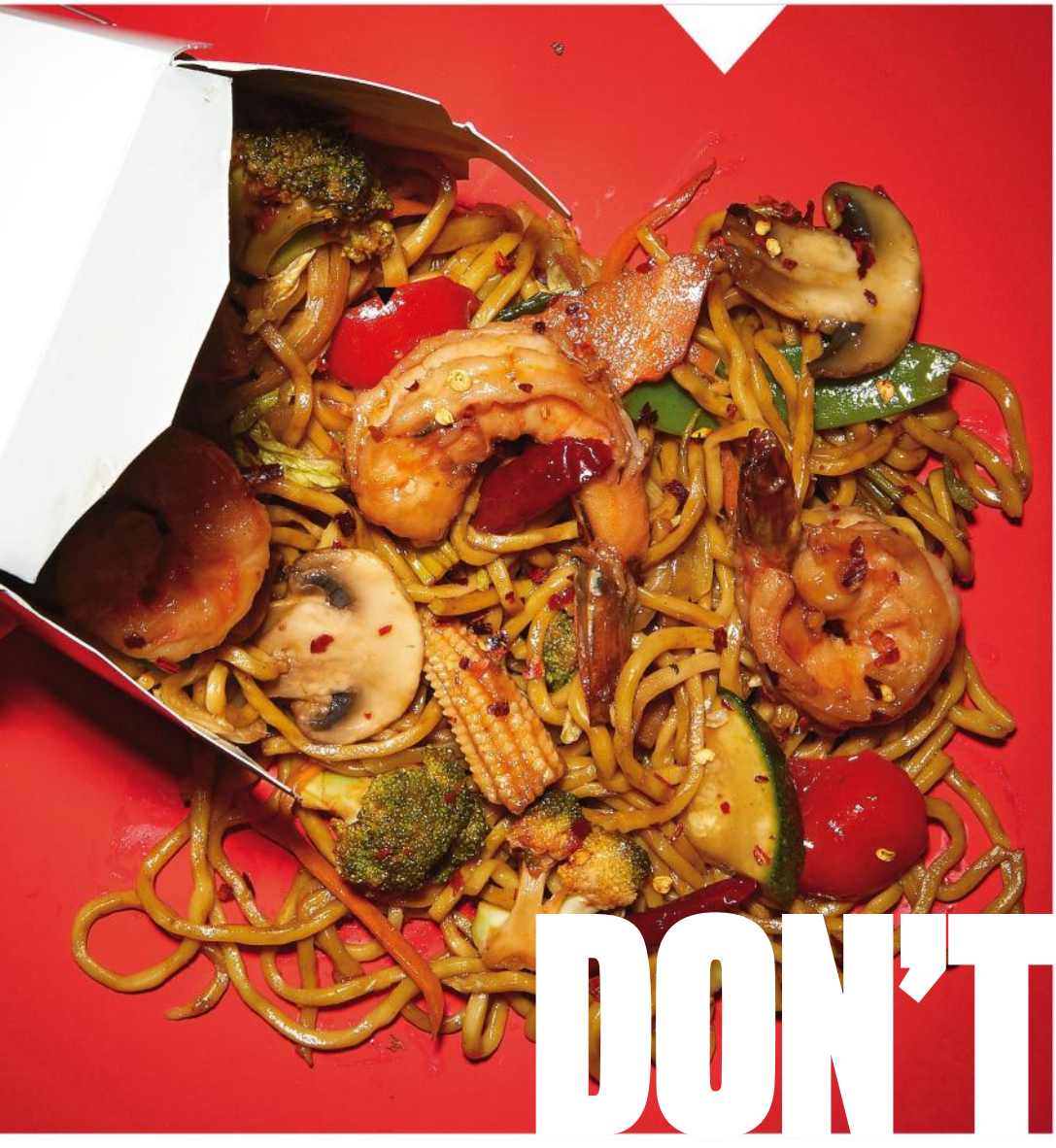
Do add salt. You're going to sweat a lot during your run. When it's warm and you're out for more than an hour, you'll lose a lot of sodium. To boost levels beforehand, sprinkle salt on prerace meals, says Hogan, and opt for salty snacks and sides like pickles or sauerkraut.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT RAINEY

Don't forget to drink.
It's essential to start your run properly hydrated. "If you're already running on empty, you can't make that up during the race," says personal trainer Kelli Shallal, M.P.H., R.D. Divide your body weight in half and drink at least that many ounces per day in the week leading up to your race. Set timers during the day to stay on track.

Don't order a beer (sorry!).
Yes, alcohol is a carb. "But it doesn't work the same way food carbs do to fuel the glycogen stores for long-lasting energy," says Shallal. Even one drink can tax the GI system and disrupt REM sleep (the most restorative type of sleep), she adds. "Your body may still feel the effects the next morning, even if your brain doesn't."

Don't eat anything greasy or creamy.
Fatty foods can upset your stomach, keep you awake at night, and cause GI problems on race morning, says personal trainer Melissa Majumdar, M.S., R.D. "Make a reservation where you know you can get a safe, standard meal," she says. "By now you should know what works best the night before a long run, and you want to replicate that as closely as possible."



DON'T

NO-STRESS DO'S

A STAY-SANE, STAY-LOOSE PLAN FOR THE DAY BEFORE, THE MORNING OF, AND THE HOURS AFTER A RACE

Run—if you feel like it.
Some runners feel they race better after a short, gentle shakeout run. It can help burn off some nerves and loosen up the legs, which is especially important if you've traveled a long distance. Others take the day off. It's all about personal preference. At minimum, a 20- to 30-minute walk (even just around the expo) is a good idea.

Pick up your bib—if you can.
If your event offers day-before bib pickup—and you're near enough—do it. Who needs the stress on race morning? Plus, if you happen to notice an error in your registration, like incorrect age or sex, you have time to correct it.

Get ready—then chill out.
Lay out everything you'll need the evening before race day (clothing, shoes, bib and pins, etc.). For long races, pack your gear-check bag with anything you'll want after you finish (dry clothes, comfy shoes), plus essentials like extra toilet paper, antichafing balm, and postrace snacks. Check your times and directions. Then stop thinking about the race. Read, listen to music, and avoid bright lights and screens.

–JEFF GALLOWAY

DO

THE MORNING OF

Do eat a real meal.
Have both protein and carbs, like an egg or peanut butter with toast, three to four hours before go-time. "It will help keep your blood sugar steady throughout the morning and keep you from feeling hungry or sluggish right before the race," says Majumdar.

Do have your normal dose of caffeine.
Research finds that athletes who consume prerace caffeine perform better than those who don't, but having more than usual on race morning can cause jitters and/or GI distress.

Do choose carbs wisely.
Slow-releasing carbs will sustain your energy levels longer than simple sugars, but most (like whole grains) are high in fiber—a definite race-morning don't. One exception? Quick-cooking oatmeal, which is faster digesting. Just try it in training first, says Shallal. She also likes the sports drink Generation UCAN, which is made with a slow-releasing starch. She suggests drinking a serving 30 minutes before a big run.

Don't overdo it on liquid calories.
It's fine to sip a sports drink before your run, but factor those carbs into your fueling plan. "If you eat a real breakfast, you don't need 20 ounces of Gatorade, especially if you're running less than a marathon," says Majumdar. "It's easy to consume way more calories than you need before the race even starts."

DON'T

Don't start with a sloshy stomach.
Drink 17 to 20 ounces of water three to four hours before the start, says Majumdar. Hit the porta-potty so you don't start with a full bladder. Half an hour before the gun, have five to 10 ounces of water or sports drink.

Don't try anything new.
Just because you're away from home or you scored free gel samples at the expo, don't try anything you haven't used for other long runs. "This rule holds true for everyone," says Hogan.

NO-STRESS DO'S

Rise and shine.
▶ Get up at least three hours before the start so you have time to eat, drink, and use the bathroom. Aim to be at the starting area at least an hour in advance—earlier if it's a large race—to get your bearings and use the bathroom again.

Get in line.
▶ Once at the race, line up for a porta-potty, even if you don't need to go. Nature may call by the time you get to the front. Head into the corrals 15 minutes before go-time—you may be required to line up sooner at a large event. -J.G.

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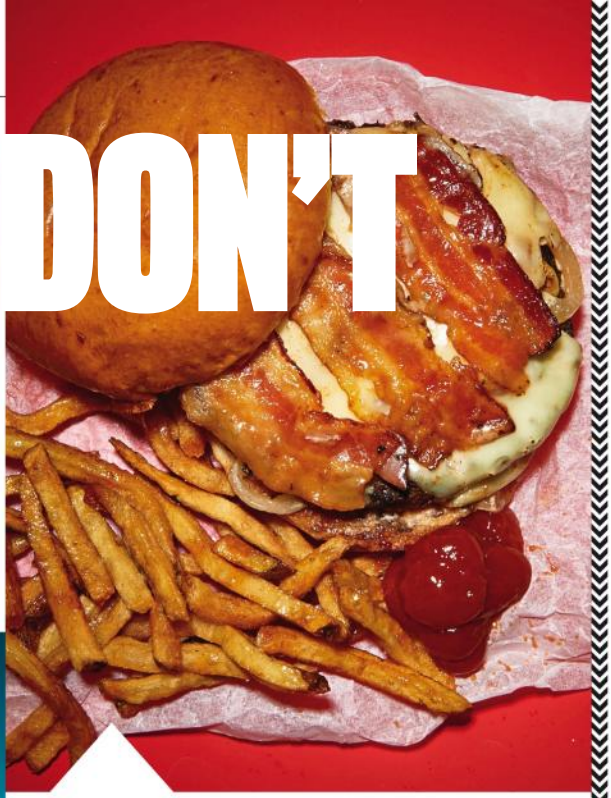
AFTER THE RACE

Do prioritize carbs.
Grab fruit or other simple carbs immediately after finishing to restock glycogen stores, suggests Majumdar. Then have a protein-rich snack within two hours for muscle repair.

Do rehydrate.
Running long can strain the kidneys, but rehydrating afterward can reduce injury risk. "Your urine should be lemonade-colored the rest of the day," says Majumdar. Milk can help. A 2014 study in *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism* found that both cow's and soy milk helped rehydrate athletes better than plain H_2O.



Don't indulge right away.
High-fat foods—like a long-awaited victory burger—will slow down digestion of postrace carbs, impeding your body's recovery process. That doesn't mean you can't (or shouldn't!) treat yourself, "but wait a few hours before having something really indulgent," says Majumdar. "Right after the race, you want to aim for 4:1 carbs-to-protein. There's no fat in that ratio."

Don't put off your postrace snack.
You might not feel like eating much right after your race, or you might get distracted in the finish-line hustle and bustle, but waiting too long to refuel can make you feel worse the rest of the day, says Hogan. Recent studies have shown that strenuous exercise can temporarily weaken the immune system and affect bone health, but refueling with carbs immediately can reduce those effects.

NO-STRESS DO'S

Keep walking.
▶ As much as you might want to sit or lie down postrace, you'll be less stiff and sore—race day and in the days to come—if you stay mobile. Walk through the finishing chute to collect your medal, snacks, and gear-check bag, then keep moving as you take in snacks and fluids.

Continue your recovery.
▶ Once at home, soaking in a cool tub for about 15 minutes may reduce your soreness. Submerge just your legs, and wear a warm layer on top for added comfort. The more you move around, the better you'll feel long-term, so try to get out for another short walk or two before hitting the sack. –J.G.

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FAST LANE

A TACTICAL TAPER

Whether you love it or loathe it, reducing your training prerace pays off—if you do it right.

BY ALEX HUTCHINSON

The big race, when it finally arrives, is a test you cannot cram for. We all know this in theory—but in those nerve-wracking final weeks, it's hard to resist the urge to squeeze in extra miles or faster reps. The problem? If you give in to temptation, you'll be missing out on some crucial physiological changes that happen only when you balance the stress of regular training with the relative ease of your taper.

One example: When you taper properly, your leg muscles actually get measurably bigger and more powerful. A study of Taylor University cross-country runners found that the postworkout response of a gene associated with muscle size quadrupled during the taper period. Other benefits include a boost in oxygen-carrying red blood cells and a reduction in stress hormones, resulting in a 2 to 4 percent improvement in race times.

To strike the right balance between resting up and maintaining fitness, you have to consider how long you'll spend tapering and how much you'll cut your mileage, how often you'll run, and how hard you'll work out during that time. Nailing the ideal mix will let you arrive at the starting line ready to take full advantage of all your hard work.

Running Frequency

Reducing your mileage doesn't mean spending every other day on the sofa. Aim to maintain roughly the same frequency of runs and hard workouts, but make each of them shorter. For example, if you usually run 10 × 400 at the track, adjust to 8 × 400 two weeks before race day and 6 × 400 in the final week.

Workout Intensity

This is trickier than it sounds, but you should keep the pace of your taper runs—particularly your hard workouts—roughly the same as your training runs. Continuing with intervals, even though you're doing fewer of them, is crucial to avoid losing fitness during the taper.

Duration

Runners generally taper for one to three weeks. The "right" length depends on how much you trained: the more fatigue you've accumulated, the longer you need to recover. Experiment with different taper durations; when you find yourself bouncing up staircases with a spring in your step a few days before your race, you've found the right one.

Volume

A meta-analysis of 27 different tapering studies concluded that the best results come from cutting mileage to 40 to 60 percent of your normal load. The higher your mileage, the more you'll need to cut. In a multiweek taper, cut your mileage progressively. For example, run 80 percent of your normal mileage in the first week, then 60 percent in the final week.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIK ISAKSON/GETTY IMAGES

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Balega was founded on the principle of Ubuntu—a respect for humanity built on love and goodwill. That's why Balega created a non-profit foundation to give back and inspire kindness. The story behind one of Balega's core non-profit initiatives, the Grit and Grace sock collection, is one of particular greatness.

In 2012, long-time runner Kim Stemple founded "We Finish Together," a group collective that donates finisher medals with handwritten notes of support and inspiration to those who need lifting. The spark that ignited Kim to found this initiative was the diagnosis of five fatal medical conditions. But, terminal illness didn't stop her from doing good, and it certainly didn't stop her from running. In 2015, Kim ran the Marine Corps Marathon in honor of her husband, a former Marine, carrying with her the weight of her diseases and imminent shortness of life. She finished the race with a two-minute PR.

Kim lives by three mantras: **Kindness Matters, Rewrite the Rules, and Be the Spark**. Balega is proud to honor Kim and her vision of a more hopeful world by embroidering those mantras on a limited edition of the 2017 Grit and Grace sock collection. Kim is the living embodiment of grit and grace, and her words now make each step an inspiration.

In a world where socks can make a difference, we invite you to support Balega's Grit and Grace initiative, in turn supporting women like Kim Stemple to stand up and make a difference. That's why $1 from every pair of Grit and Grace socks sold is donated to Breast Cancer Prevention Partners.

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READY, SET, SNOOZE

A good night's sleep does wonders for race day, but what if it just doesn't happen?

BY CLAIRE ZULKEY

If you're tossing and turning the night before your race, you may know not to fret: It's the sleep two nights prior to race day that really matters, right? Believe that, and you'll truly freak if something keeps you up (or wakes you up) during that supposedly critical time. Instead of sleep-stressing, throw everything you think you know about prerace Z's out the window and replace it with this: "While sleep is incredibly important, *tonight's* slumber is largely irrelevant," says W. Chris Winter, M.D., a Virginia-based neurologist and author of *The Sleep Solution*. Winter encourages athletes to remember all the consistent, proper sleep that carried them through their training rather than angsting over an isolated bad night near the end. "All is not lost if an athlete has a tough night right before the competition," he says. Here's how to snooze better, and, failing that, how to respond to maximize your performance potential.

SLEEP BETTER...

Rehearse your rest. Winter suggests practicing sleeping in difficult situations in the weeks prior to race day. Try napping on a plane or in a parked car, dozing off while your partner still has a reading light on, or incorporating a subtle but irritating background noise (a dripping faucet, a snoring dog) as you go to sleep. The better you adapt to these challenging conditions in training, the better chance you'll have of overcoming nerves to rest well prerace.

Don't overcompensate. Treat the night before the race like any other night, Winter says—that is, don't turn in crazy early. "I often hear, 'I want to PR tomorrow, so I'll go to bed at 9.' Well, are you sleepy at 9?" he says. You're more likely to nod off easily if you adhere to your usual routine instead of trying to force a few extra hours.

...OR MAKE THE BEST OF SUBPAR REST

Frame it right. An inability to sleep may mean that you are well-rested and you have energy to spare. Remind yourself of this, and use your awake time to prep for the race. Winter recommends the following script: "I've been sleeping well for weeks, and tonight I still have four hours to sleep, which is plenty. I'm going to spend the next 10 minutes visualizing how I'm going to approach the back half of the race when it gets hilly." And take solace in the fact that even if you're still conscious, spending time lying in bed itself can be helpful. "Resting holds a tremendous amount of restoration," says Winter. According to the National Sleep Foundation, while it's not as valuable as sleep, "quiet wakefulness" is still good in terms of calming your mind and letting your muscles and organs relax.

Don't reach for drugs. Avoid popping a Benadryl or Ambien in order to nail your sleep goal, says Winter. "There has never been a [sleeping] pill that has been shown to improve performance in any way," he says. What does help is all the sleep you've banked throughout your months of training—focus on that, and you'll find peace of mind that may help you drift off.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MITCH MANDEL

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WALK THIS WAY

Don't "race" your walk breaks to minimize lost time—the point is to reduce your heart rate and ease muscle strain, McGee says. Instead, stride crisply and briskly, aiming to take around 100 to 130 steps per minute.

STRIDE WITH PRIDE

Taking walk breaks during your next race could give you a faster finish—for real.

BY CINDY KUZMA

Rebekah Mayer completed her first marathon in a speedy three hours and 14 minutes. Still, she hesitated to claim she "ran" the entire race, because she walked a bit after mile 22.

Like many runners, Mayer once considered breaking stride during a distance race as an admission of defeat. "There's this culture of 'If you're going to run a marathon, by God, you *run* the marathon,'" says Bobby McGee, a coach in Boulder, Colorado. "Walking is seen as a sign of weakness."

But McGee and Mayer (who's now national training manager for Life Time Run)—along with *Runner's World* columnist Jeff Galloway—are among a growing number of coaches who advise even experienced runners to consider the run-walk approach, especially for half and full marathons.

Brief respites from race pace can keep your heart rate controlled, help fuel go down smoothly, and make racing more fun, they say. In fact, a German study found that four-hour marathoners who took walk breaks sustained less muscle damage and finished in about the same time as those who didn't—and McGee believes most runners with marathon times of more than three hours would finish *faster*. Here's when to consider the run-walk, and how to make it work.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JANNE IIVONEN**

▶ Your training was subpar.

When Olympic triathlete Barb Lindquist (who placed ninth in Athens in 2004) lined up for Ironman Hawaii in 2000, her training was largely focused on Olympic-distance events with 10K runs. So she walked the aid stations en route to a 3:40:39 marathon-leg split and a 19th-place elite finish. Now a coach in Alta, Wyoming, Lindquist recommends the approach to other triathletes stepping up in distance. Walk breaks can also help you cover a half or full marathon more comfortably if life events or an injury caused you to miss some of your planned training, says Jeff Gaudette, owner and head coach of RunnersConnect in Boston. **MAKE IT WORK:** Walk the aid stations or set a predetermined run-walk interval. McGee typically starts athletes with nine minutes of running and one of walking and suggests tinkering to see what works best for you. Just keep walk breaks brief: Most of the benefits accrue within 30 seconds to one minute, Mayer says.

▶ Your course ascends.

Super-steep hills are an obvious spot to change your gait; a study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* found it more efficient to walk inclines of 16 degrees or greater than to run them. But in a long race, even slighter slopes might be worth hiking, McGee says. Otherwise, your rising heart rate can push you above your lactate threshold, the point at which the by-products of running that cause you to slow accumulate in your blood faster than your body can clear and metabolize them. "You're paying an amount of interest you're never going to get back again," McGee says. **MAKE IT WORK:** Study the elevation map and determine where you can align walk breaks with uphills, McGee says. Or throw in a 30-second walk break every time your breathing becomes labored and choppy on an incline. Don't push harder than your usual race effort on the downhill, Gaudette says: The advantages come later in the race, when your muscles aren't as fatigued from climbing.

▶ You struggle with midrun eating and drinking.

Simple carbs energize your muscles during races that last an hour or longer, but ingesting sports drinks, gels, or chews at running speed comes easier to some runners than to others. The stress of stomach sloshing can cause digestive disturbances; meanwhile, your heart rate may spike as you fumble with cups and packets. "That's going to affect your performance in that next mile," Mayer says. **MAKE IT WORK:** Grab a cup and proceed to the end of the aid station. Then shift to the side of the course and slow to a walk. Take a few moments to ingest your fuel, then ease back into your run rhythm.

▶ You can't hold back.

Call it the first law of long-distance physiology: Go out too fast in a half or full, and you'll pay for it later in the race when your muscles fatigue from the effort. Even if you've run smack into this wall before, cheering crowds and race-day adrenaline can make a slower start difficult. The solution: early, regular walk periods. "The walking acts as a braking mechanism and as a reminder to keep it slow and under control," Gaudette says. **MAKE IT WORK:** Use a predetermined run-walk plan for the first half of the race. Once you hit the halfway point, evaluate. If you feel good, move to a continuous run; if you're fatigued or just comfortable in the run-walk rhythm, stick with it.

▶ It's sweltering.

When race day dawns warm, the challenge of a long race increases exponentially, along with your core temp, McGee says. Heat can also trigger gastrointestinal distress, as bloodflow heads away from your digestive system and toward the surface of your skin to help cool you. This makes it hard to replace what you're sweating out. Walking can stave off exhaustion by offering opportunities to fuel and cool. **MAKE IT WORK:** Stick with a preplanned run-walk interval, with flexibility. For instance, if you hit a shady spot, walk to take advantage of it, Mayer says. If possible, take in some cool fluid and wipe yourself down with a wet sponge as you stride.

BODY SHOP

SAVE THE DAY

The next time cramping or tightness hampers your run or race, use these moves to find relief—fast.

BY LAUREN BEDOSKY

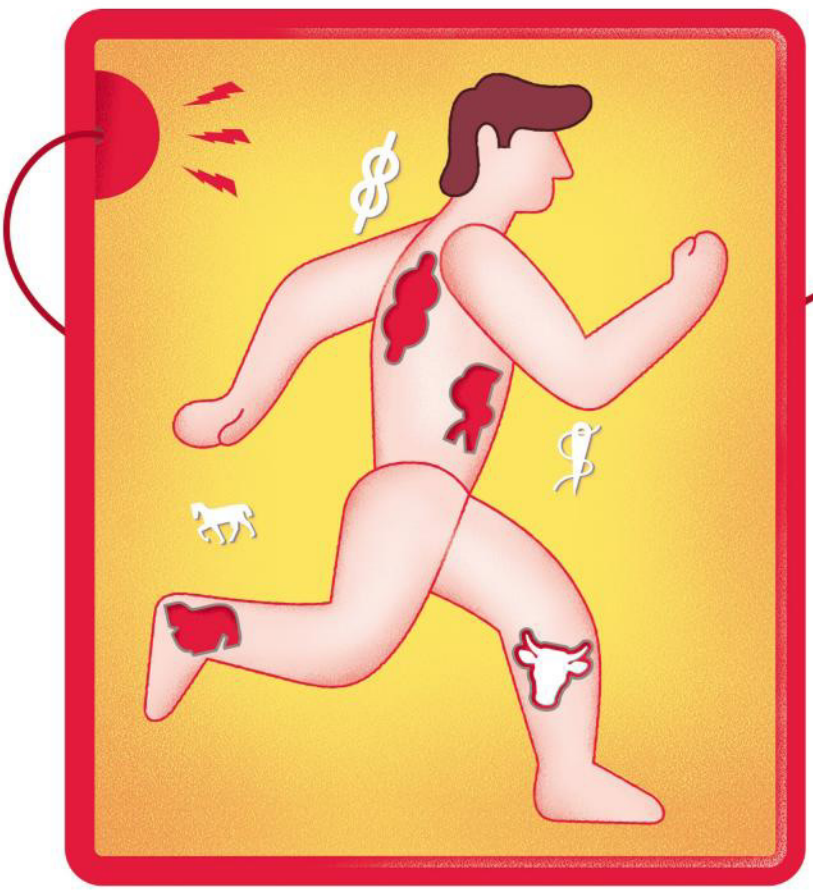
Nothing puts the kibosh on a runner's high more than a midrun cramp, stitch, or other sudden ache. Though this can happen on any outing, it tends to be more common on race day, especially if you cling stubbornly to your race plan regardless of your training, the weather, the terrain, or your body's current state, says Mary-Katherine Fleming, a Denver-based running coach. If one of those pains strikes, pull off to the side of the course and try one of these easy fixes. (Attempting to push on through a problem could lead to injury—so don't do it!) If the issue persists or worsens, stop running and head to a medical tent.

Upper-Back Tightness

Tightness between the shoulder blades

This kind of pain is linked to hip misalignment and mainly affects postpartum women: Many have not fully rehabbed, causing them to run with an anterior pelvic tilt, which puts pressure on the back and shoulders. Other people may run with shoulders shrugged and head forward, putting strain on upper back muscles.

Try big backward shoulder rolls while running. If the pain doesn't subside, get off the course and lace your fingers together with your palms facing each other behind your back. Straighten up as tall as possible, then bend backward gently at the hips until you feel a stretch in your upper back.



Foot Cramp

Sharp pain in the arch of the foot—may feel like the arch is drawing upward

Cramping in the foot could be caused by an imbalance in electrolytes—chemicals in the body that regulate functions like muscle contractions. When you lose too many of these nutrients through sweat, the electrical impulses in your body can go haywire, leading to muscle cramps and spasms in the foot. Foot cramps can also signal muscular fatigue, as repeatedly flexing and extending the foot over the course of a longer race can cause muscles to work overtime, says Somerset.

Stand tall and still. Keeping your shoes on, shift your weight onto the cramped foot and press into it as much as possible. If it helps, focus on spreading your toes apart. Lift your opposite foot off the ground to stand on one leg if needed. Apply full body-weight pressure onto the affected foot for up to one minute.

Side Stitch

Intense, stabbing pain under the rib cage, usually on only one side

According to Dean Somerset, C.S.C.S., an exercise physiologist in Edmonton, Alberta, "Typically, if someone is cramping, they're using muscles on that side preferentially over others that would contribute to breathing."

While standing, take a few deep belly breaths, then press two fingers directly into the affected area. As you apply pressure, continue taking deep breaths and lean toward your opposite side from your hips. Hold for several seconds or until you feel the pain subside.

Calf Cramp

Mild to severe pain or tightness in the calf

There are two potential culprits, Fleming says: an electrolyte imbalance and shoes you are still transitioning into—particularly those with a lower "drop" (difference between heel height and forefoot height).

If you feel the cramp in your left calf, step your right foot forward and sink into a lunge with your front thigh parallel to the ground and front heel pressing down. Hold, then step your rear foot forward, walk four or five steps, and then repeat a few more times on the same side. RW

ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREA MANZATI

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3

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ASK RW

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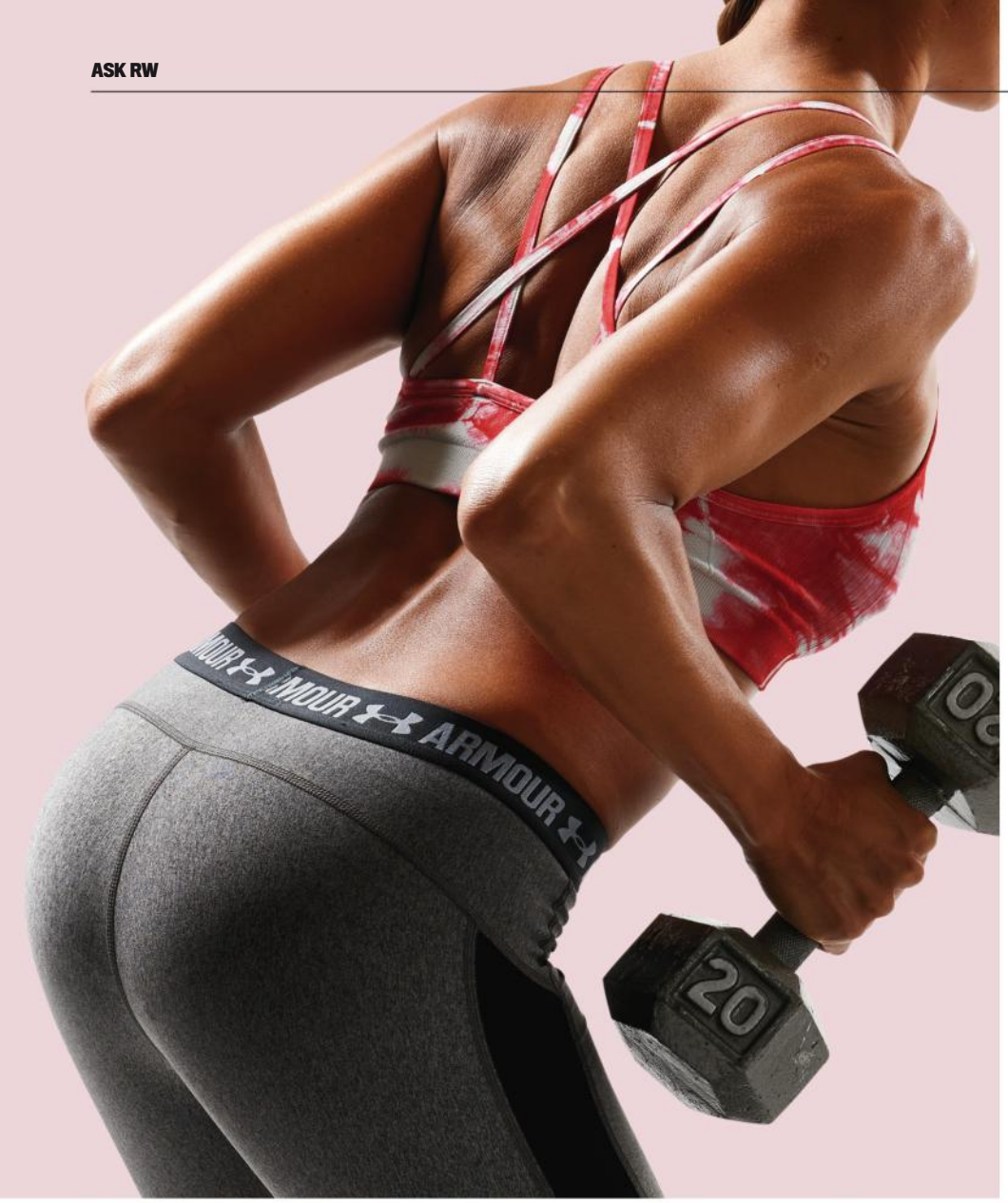
GEAR

Do I need to break in new shoes before racing in them?

If you have been donning the same shoe brand and style for years, you probably won't have any problem running a race in a pair that's fresh out of the box. You know what works for you. On race day, you want a shoe where there won't be any "surprises," meaning no blisters, no rubbing, no pain. However, it's always wise to run a few workouts in a new pair. For longer races, like a half or full marathon, always do a few long runs in a new pair, just to make sure you won't encounter any problems on the course.

NIKKI REITER, biomechanist and coach with the Run SMART Project

PHOTOGRAPH BY **MITCH MANDEL**



TRAINING

Why should I bother working my upper body?

Upper-body strength makes you a more efficient runner by improving posture. Exercises that work the muscles around your shoulder blades prevent slumping and make breathing easier when running. Do bent-over rows (3 x 8 reps on each side using fairly heavy weights) and pushups with your hands on a stability ball (30 reps total). When running, try to swing your elbows back, like you are jabbing a runner behind you. **JAY DICHARRY, M.P.T., a board-certified sports clinical specialist and USATF-certified coach**

TRAINING

Will wearing high heels all day help my strength and balance?

Heels are more likely to harm, actually. They can lead to bunions, hammer toes, ingrown toenails, and calluses, and can cause Achilles tendon problems or plantar fasciitis. CAROL FREY, M.D., orthopedic surgeon, foot and ankle specialist, and codirector of West Coast Sports Medicine Foundation

TRAINING

I'm slowing as I age (like everyone does). Is that because my stride is getting shorter or my turnover's getting slower?

Your stride is likely shortening as your muscles lose strength and power—but that's not the only factor behind the slowdown. Cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, and range of motion also naturally decline with age. (Sorry!) To cut your losses, consider focusing more on intensity than mileage: Workouts that alternate between short, hard-effort bursts and recovery periods help build power in the calves, which seem to lose function sooner with age than other muscles and are crucial to maintaining speed. Try twice-weekly short-interval or hill sessions at higher speeds—if you're able to do them without aggravating any injuries. **PAUL DEVITA, PH.D., kinesiology professor at East Carolina University and recent past president of the American Society of Biomechanics**

GEAR

My earbuds won't stay in when I'm running. Any suggestions?

It's all about customization. Just as you choose a certain running shoe to fit your foot, your ears also require the right pair of earpieces. First, look for brands that use soft, pliable materials for the inner ear piece, which help it stay in place. Also, experiment with different sizes in each of your ears since, like your feet, each ear may be sized differently. Brands like Jaybird are launching customizable products made specifically for runners that home in on this need for different fits. Though products like these don't always come cheap, investing money in brands that offer a variety of sizes and materials will help you find the best option for you. **RENE OEHLERKING, chief marketing officer at Jaybird**

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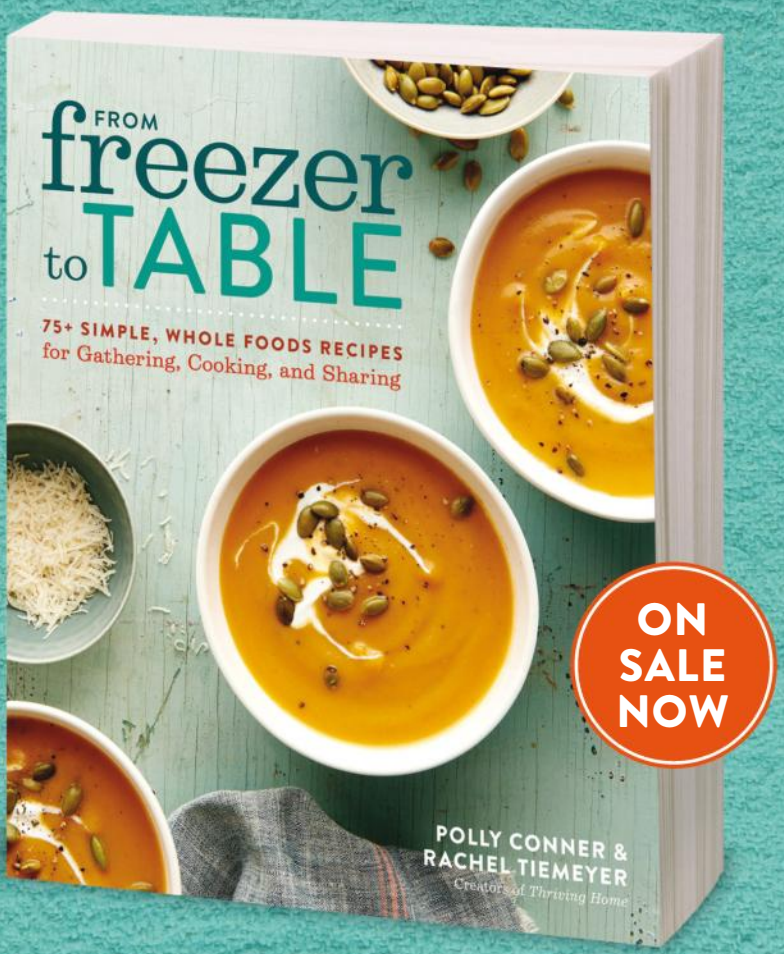

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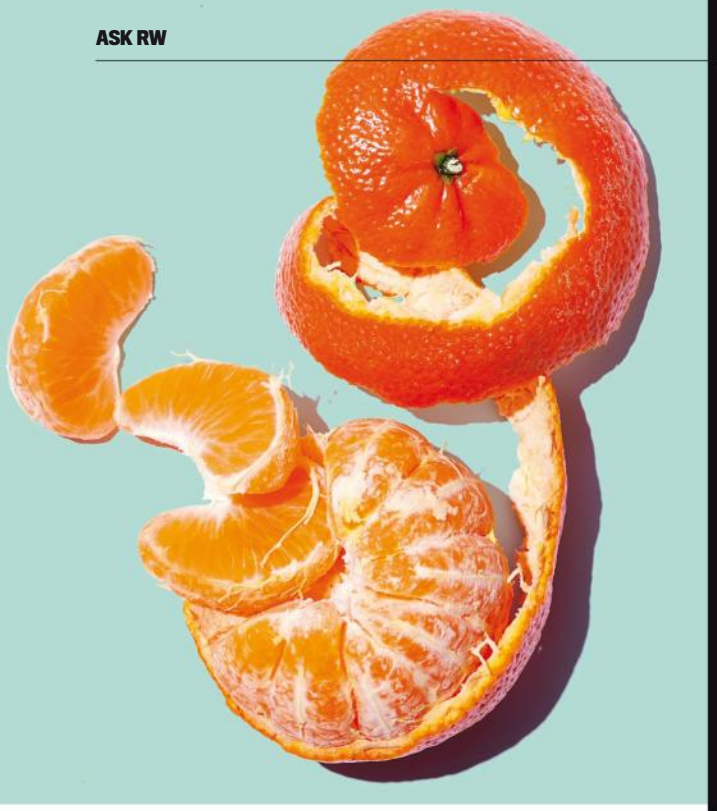


FUEL

What fall produce should I eat?

Pumpkin
High in fiber for sustained energy and potassium for muscle function. Mix pumpkin puree into your taco meat or red sauce.

Clementines
Loaded with vitamin C to boost the immune system, these pocket-sized fruits are juicy, making them a tasty way to hydrate. They also help you produce collagen, which aids joint and tissue recovery postrun.

Apples
This portable snack slows digestion, which leads to sustained energy. Pair with string cheese or a handful of almonds or dip into nut butter for a hit of protein.

Beets
The nitrates in beets may boost athletic performance. Roast them and toss into salads or top with goat cheese for an antioxidant-packed side.
JOY BAUER, M.S., R.D.

TRAINING

I run in the morning before heading to my desk job, and I'm so tight whenever I stand up. What can I do?

▶ Preventing Tin-Man status starts during your workout: Leave time to cool down postrun, easing into a jog and then into a walk before rushing off to get ready. Then, keep moving throughout your workday: Take standing and/or walking breaks every 30 minutes or so. Consider stretching lightly during bathroom visits as well.
HAYLEY MUNN, M.S., RunnersConnect coach and community manager

GEAR

I'm addicted to my running watch. Could it be hurting my performance?

If you're using your watch to analyze data during training, then go right ahead. But when it comes to racing, leave it at home. For one, despite how accurate GPS watches are today, it still won't match up with the mile markers during your race, because of the way USATF-certified courses are measured, which will mess with you mentally. Second, runners often focus on the pace their watch is projecting instead of running at a speed where their body feels comfortable, which can prove for a fatal finish if they push themselves too hard, too fast. But watches are still great for training, and the data they store is useful if analyzed with the help of a professional or coach. However, if you're constantly checking your wrist, it's time to ditch the watch.
JASON FITZGERALD, founder of Strength Running and USATF-certified coach

FUEL

How do my fueling needs change as I get older?

You can't cram for good nutrition when you hit your 50s. So build a good foundation with healthy fats, lean protein, low-fat dairy (or other calcium source), and colorful fruits and veggies in your younger years. As you age, be sure to get enough protein for muscle repair. Try "protein pacing," or spreading out your meals and snacks so you consume 15 to 20 grams about every four hours. Your feeling of thirst also declines, making it even more important to pay attention to your hydration status.
NANCY CLARK, M.S., R.D.

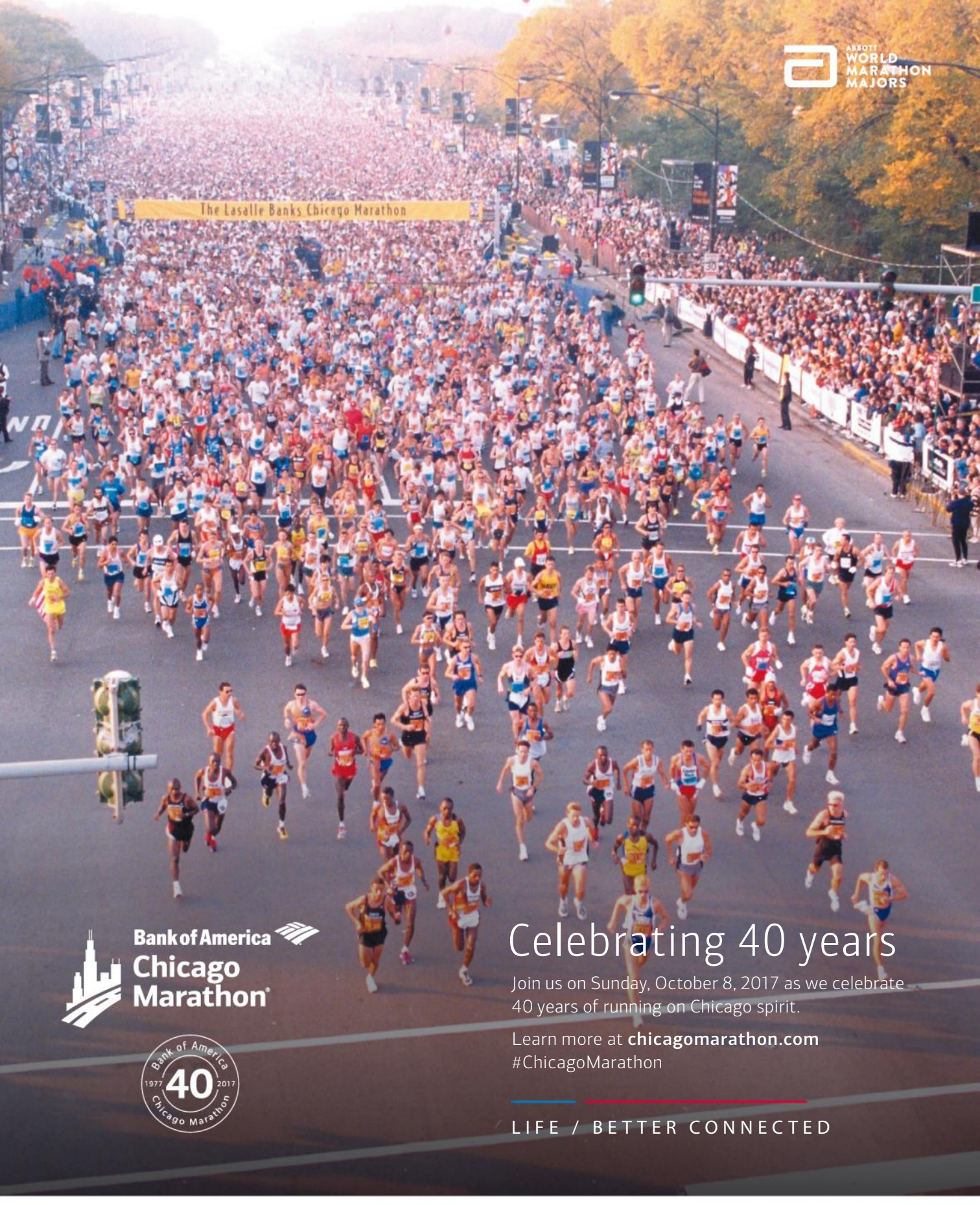
Got a question? Email it to **AskRW@rodale.com** or tweet us **@runnersworld** using **#AskRW**.

FUEL

I have an out-of-control sweet tooth. What's the best candy for me as a runner?

▶ When you reach for a treat, opt for dark chocolate or candies with nuts in them (processed peanut butter is not a nut!). Chocolate that's 70 percent cacao is high in antioxidants, is lower in fat, and even has a little protein in it for muscle recovery. Candy with nuts (even the highly processed Snickers) has some healthy fat and plant protein. If you're taking candy on the road, opt for simple sugars like gummy bears or jelly beans, which are similar to gels and chews (but without the electrolytes).
JAMIE SHEAHAN, M.S., R.D.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCH MANDEL (RUNNER, CLEMENTINE); WESTEND61/GETTY IMAGES (CHOCOLATE); FOOD STYLING BY BARRETT WASHBURNE (CLEMENTINE); ILLUSTRATION BY GARY TAXALI



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FUEL

NOT YOUR AVERAGE NOODLE

Power your run—and your recovery—with these delicious pasta alternatives.

BY SARAH KLEIN
RECIPES BY THE RODALE TEST KITCHEN

1. Rice
Brown rice pasta is similar to wheat noodles, with four grams of protein and 40 grams of carbs per serving. It is gluten-free and free of FODMAPs, a class of fermentable carbs that may upset runners' stomachs.

2. Black Bean
These bean-based and bean-flavored pastas are a good source of protein, fiber, and immunity-boosting zinc. Just one serving also contains a third of the recommended daily dose of iron, which helps prevent muscle weakness and general fatigue.

3. Lentil
This course-textured pasta is a rich source of protein—14 to 20 grams per serving—and folate, a B vitamin that keeps red blood cells healthy and helps turn carbs into energy. But read the ingredients list: Some products are combined with corn flour, which adds empty calories.

4. Quinoa
This light pasta blends well with sauces and, unlike other varieties, delivers four to six grams of *complete* protein, meaning it contains all nine essential muscle-building amino acids. With 46 grams of carbs and four grams of fiber, one bowl with veggies makes a balanced meal.

FOOD STYLING BY BARRETT WASHBURNE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MITCH MANDEL**

1. Lentil Spaghetti with Creamy Porcini Sauce

Makes 6 servings

- ½ oz. dried porcini mushrooms
- 1 lb. lentil spaghetti
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 2 cups half-and-half
- ▶ Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped

Soak mushrooms in 1 cup hot water until softened. Remove, and squeeze out excess liquid. Reserve mushroom water and chop mushrooms. Cook pasta. Reserve ¼ cup cooking water and drain. Heat oil and butter in large skillet over medium until butter melts. Add shallots and cook, stirring, until translucent. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add mushrooms and thyme, and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Pour in reserved mushroom liquid and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced slightly. Add half-and-half and bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally, until half-and-half is reduced and thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Toss pasta in sauce to coat, adding cooking water to loosen, as necessary. Add half the cheese and the parsley, toss, and remove from heat. Divide pasta among six bowls, garnish with remaining cheese, and serve immediately.

2. Quinoa Penne with Butternut Squash

Makes 6 servings

- 3 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. fresh sage leaves, chopped
- ▶ Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1 lb. quinoa penne pasta
- ⅓ cup pecans, toasted and chopped
- ½ cup crumbled blue cheese

Heat oven to 350°F. Toss butternut squash with olive oil, sage, and pinch of salt and pepper, and spread on a baking sheet in a single layer. Roast until softened and edges are browned, about 25 minutes. Lightly mash squash, leaving some chunks. Cook pasta. Drain, reserving a few tablespoons of pasta water. Toss pasta with roasted squash, adding some of the pasta water, if needed, to coat the pasta evenly. Fold in pecans and blue cheese, and serve immediately.

3. Vietnamese Rice Noodle Salad with Steak

Makes 6 servings

- ▶ Juice of 2 large limes
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fish sauce
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. minced ginger
- 3 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Thai bird chili, seeded and minced
- 8 oz. dried rice noodles
- 1½ lb. flank steak
- ▶ Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 8 cups thinly sliced iceberg lettuce (about ½ large head)
- 1 large carrot, shaved into ribbons (use a vegetable peeler)
- 1 large English cucumber, cut into ½" chunks
- 5 medium radishes, thinly sliced
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves
- ½ cup salted peanuts, chopped

In a small bowl, combine lime juice, cilantro, fish sauce, sugar, ginger, garlic, and chili, and let sit for at least 10 minutes. Cook noodles. Drain and rinse with cold water until cool. Season steak with salt and pepper. Grill 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium-cooked. Thinly slice. In large bowl, combine noodles with lettuce, carrot, cucumber, radishes, and mint leaves. Toss salad with dressing and spread over serving platter. Top with steak and sprinkle with peanuts.

4. Baked Black Bean Rotini

Makes 6 servings

- 12 oz. black bean rotini
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta
- ⅔ cup freshly grated Parmesan
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
- 2 Tbsp. chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 cups chunky marinara sauce
- ⅔ cup freshly shredded mozzarella

Heat oven to 350°F. Lightly oil an 8" x 8" baking dish. Cook rotini until just shy of al dente. Drain and rinse with cool water. In a large bowl, combine ricotta, Parmesan, basil, parsley, oregano, and pepper. Add pasta, marinara sauce, and half the mozzarella, tossing to distribute. Pour into baking dish and top with remaining mozzarella. Bake, uncovered, until browned and bubbly, about 20 minutes. Let rest 5 minutes before serving.

A 150-pound female runner needs 87 to 137 grams of protein per day (less on easy days, more on harder ones). Unlike traditional wheat pastas, noodles made from beans and lentils provide 14 to 25 grams of protein, perfect for muscle repair.

Save bean pastas for recovery meals. With as much as 15 grams of fiber per serving, they may slow digestion—and your pace.

HEADS ABOVE

Two vegan chefs share five delicious twists on cauliflower.

BY YISHANE LEE

This innocuous veggie is having a moment. Trendy dishes like cauliflower "rice" and mashed "potatoes" have brought this superfood—known for its protective effects against inflammation and cancer—a new notoriety. "Its mild taste makes cauliflower a fantastic canvas for bold flavors," says chef Richard Landau. He and his wife, pastry chef Kate Jacoby, penned the cookbooks *Vedge* and *V Street,* named for their restaurants in Philadelphia, where they run daily along the Schuylkill River.

No, your eyes aren't fooling you. Cauliflower comes in many colors and varieties—like this Romanesco.

Thai Salad

Roast florets tossed with salt and sesame oil at 400°F for about 10 minutes. Whisk together 1 Tbsp. tamari, ¼ tsp. white pepper, and 1 tsp. each lime juice, sriracha or sambal, and sesame oil. Toss cooled cauliflower in dressing and arrange on lettuce leaves. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts, cilantro, and basil.

Spicy Curry

Whisk together ½ cup ketchup, 2 tsp. minced ginger, ¼ cup each sriracha, chopped cilantro, and vegan mayonnaise (like Just Mayo), 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. rice-wine vinegar, 2 tsp. each curry powder and cumin, ½ tsp. cayenne pepper, and 1 tsp. sea salt. Dress florets lightly with sunflower oil, salt, and pepper, and roast at 400°F for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Toss in curry sauce. Serve over rice or stuffed into sandwiches.

Mashed "Potatoes"

Boil florets in lightly salted water, and save some of the cooking water. Puree in food processor, slowly adding back equal parts cooking water and olive oil until smooth. Season with salt, pepper, and nutritional yeast for a cheesy and nutty umami flavor.

Cauliflower "Rice"

Pulse raw cauliflower in food processor until it resembles rice grains. Do not overprocess. Cook cauliflower in vegetable stock with salt and pepper for about 3 to 5 minutes or until tender. Drain and reserve stock (for soup) and drizzle the "rice" with olive oil.

Harissa

In a large pot of boiling salted water, blanch 1-inch-thick cauliflower steaks for 4 minutes. Remove and transfer to a sheet pan and brush all sides evenly with sunflower oil and harissa sauce, found in the international aisle of the grocery store. Grill until char marks appear, about 1 minute each side.

For the Perfect Steak

1. Remove outer leaves and trim stem.
2. Hold cauliflower with its base on cutting board.
3. Make one cut through the center of the cauliflower to divide it in half.
4. Move knife 1 inch from original cut, and cut through for a 1-inch-thick steak.

FOR BONUS RECIPES, INCLUDING LANDAU'S AND JACOBY'S HARISSA RECIPE, GO TO **RUNNERSWORLD.COM/CAULIFLOWER**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **MITCH MANDEL**

FOOD STYLING BY BARRETT WASHBURNE

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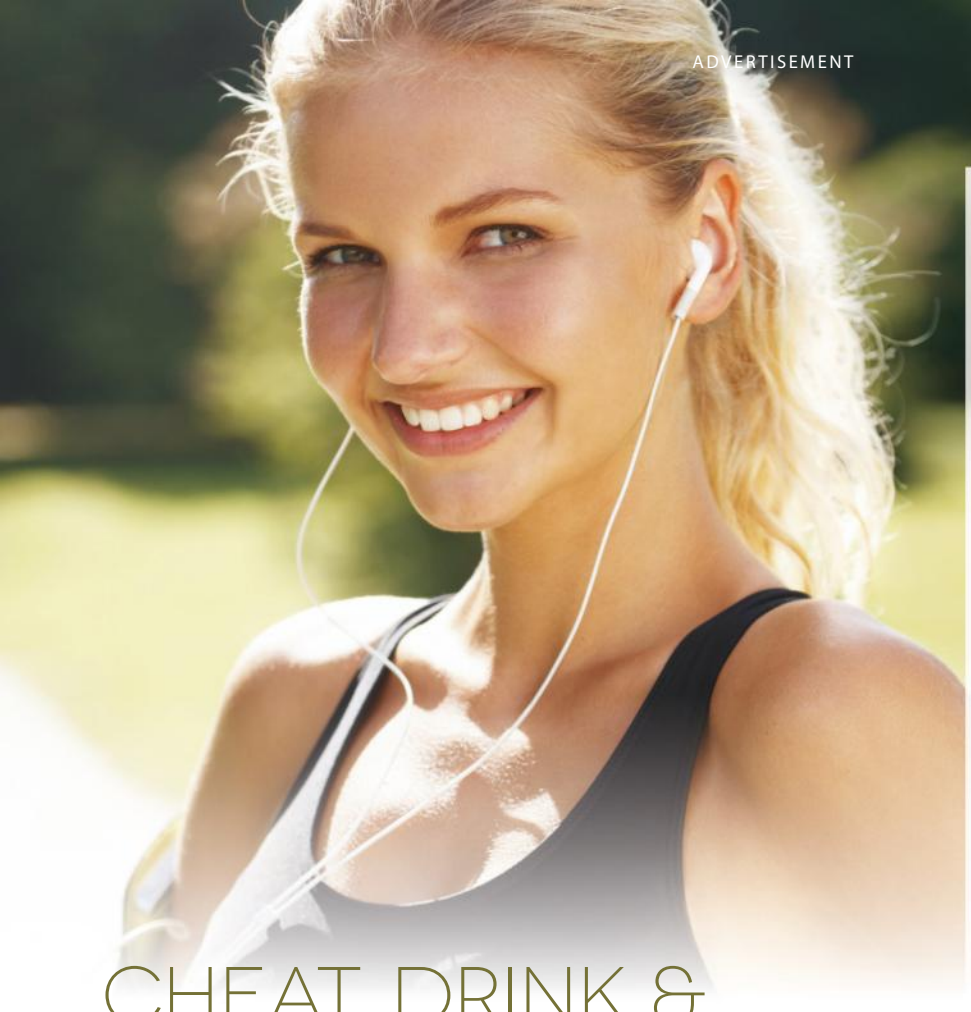

CHEAT, DRINK & STILL SHRINK

BREAK THROUGH YOUR WEIGHT LOSS PLATEAU

Being a health and nutrition correspondent means that companies frequently send me their products, and ask for my stamp of approval. Most of the time I dive into research, give the product a try, and send the company honest feedback about what they'll need to change before I'll recommend it. Plus my hectic job and my determination to stay fit means I'm always hunting for a quick and nutritious way to fill up on nutrients my body needs. So I can confidently say, "I've tried it all".

Last Tuesday work was especially hectic, but I'd booked with my $200 an hour personal trainer, Tony, a triathlon winning, organic-to-the-bone fitness guy with a ten mile long track record of whipping the "who's who" into shape in record time, so I had to go. He noticed that my set count was down and playfully asked, "Feeling a little tired today?", as he handed me a bottle from his gym bag. After one sip I figured that there was no way this could be healthy because the creamy chocolate flavor was just too delicious. *Still, he'd never risk his reputation.*

With more than a healthy dose of scepticism I decided to investigate this shake he'd called INVIGOR8.

Turns out, it's a full meal replacement shake, which stunned me because virtually every other shake I'd researched had tasted chalky, clumpy and packed with hidden "no-no's" like cheap protein, tons of artificial ingredients, not to mention harmful synthetic dyes, additives, sugars, preservatives, and hormones. And even though INVIGOR8's full meal replacement shake cost more than many of the shakes I've tried, it was about half the price of my favorite salad, and the nutrition profile looked second to none.

Wanting to know more, I reached out to a few of the people who were talking about it on trustworthy fitness forums. By the next morning three people got back to me saying, "As a trainer I love Invigor8. It's definitely helped me to have more all-day energy, plus build the kind of lean sculpted muscle that burns more fat."

"Yes, I'll recommend it, it tastes great, and I really like how it keeps me feeling full for hours."

"I'm a marathon runner and a friend recommended it to me. Drinking it has become a part of my regular training routine, because my time has improved, my energy is up, and I'm thinking more clearly than ever before."

I decided to take my investigation one step further by researching the development of INVIGOR8. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that the company went to great lengths to keep INVIGOR8 free of harmful ingredients.

The makers of INVIGOR8 were determined to make the first **100% natural, non-GMO** nutritional shake & green superfood. The result is a meal replacement shake that contains **100% grass-fed whey** that has a superior nutrient profile to the grain-fed whey found in most shakes, **metabolism boosting raw coconut oil, hormone free colostrum** to promote a **healthy immune system, Omega 3, 6, 9-rich chia and flaxseeds,** superfood greens like **kale, spinach, broccoli, alfalfa, and chlorella,** and clinically tested **cognitive enhancers for improved mood and brain function.** The company even went a step further by including a balance of **pre and probiotics** for optimal **digestive health, uptake, and regularity** and **digestive enzymes** so your body **absorbs the high-caliber nutrition** you get from INVIGOR8.

As a whole-foods nutritionist with a thriving practice I understand the importance of filling my body with the best Mother Nature has to offer. I have always been reluctant to try new products because I was never sure of the impact they would have on my energy, and weight. INVIGOR8 is different, not only because it's delicious, but because it helps me to maintain the energy I need to run my busy practice, while helping me to stay fit and toned. Considering all of the shakes I've tried, I can honestly say that the results I've experienced from INVIGOR8 are nothing short of amazing.

A company spokesperson confirmed an exclusive offer for Runners World's readers: if you order this month, you'll receive $10 off your first order by using promo code "**RW10**" at checkout. You can order INVIGOR8 today at www.DrinkInvigor8.com or by calling 1-800-958-3392.

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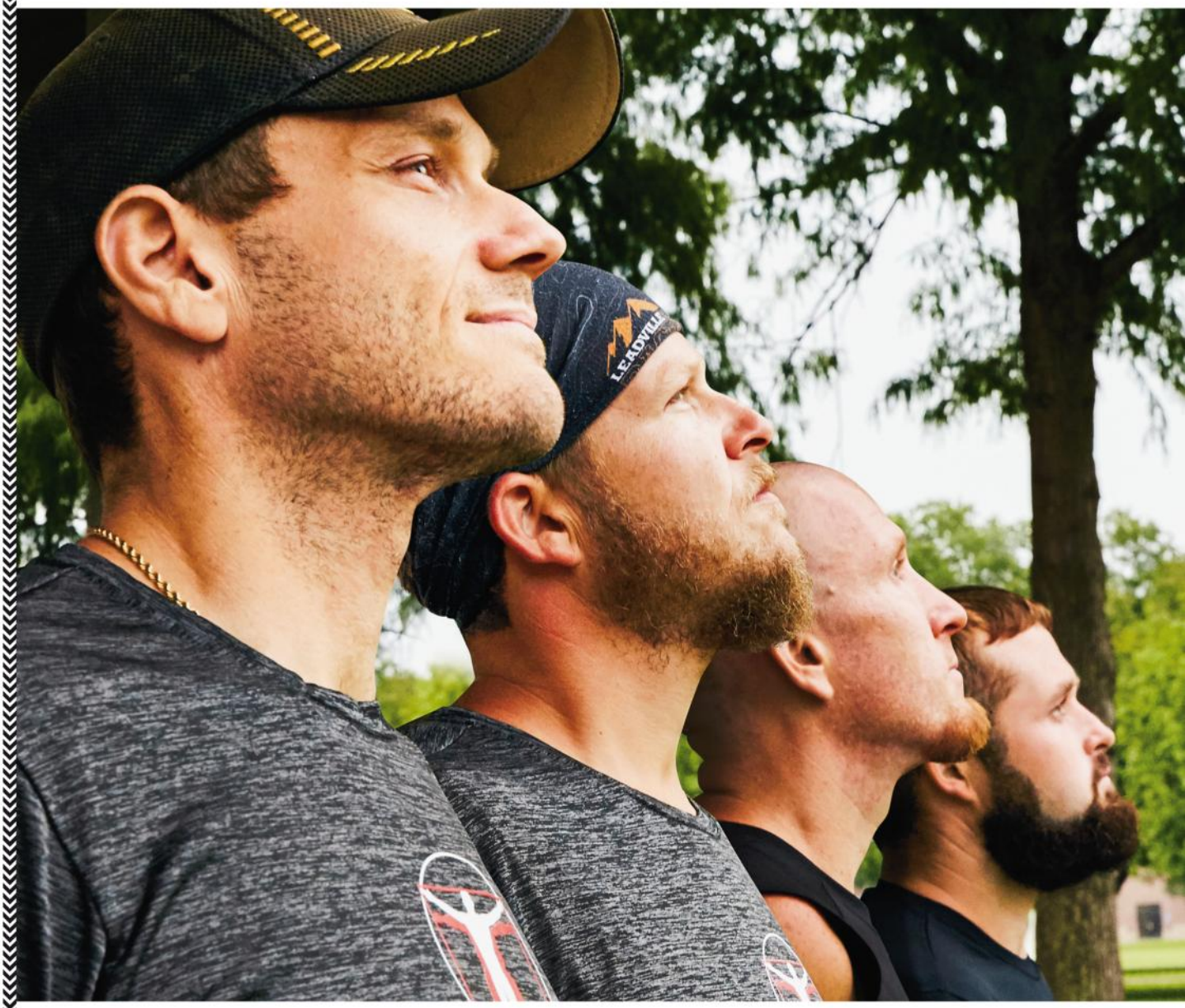
News, Trends, and Regular Runners Doing Amazing Things



Chin Losers

A secret Facebook group has helped dozens of men run off more than two tons of fat. BY NICK WELDON

After Josh LaJaunie dropped 230 pounds through running and a plant-based diet, completed his first ultramarathon, and appeared on the December 2016 cover of *Runner's World*, he met hordes of self-avowed country boys, like himself, who also wanted to escape morbid obesity. To unite the community, the 39-year-old from Thibodaux, Louisiana, cofounded a secret Facebook group dubbed the "Missing Chins Run Club." Its 52 members keep posts private to encourage candid, sometimes uncomfortable conversations. "This is the place to talk about why your stretch marks itch like hell," LaJaunie says. "It's a beautiful thing to be able to give these beer-drinking, back-slapping men an avenue to health and happiness." The blunt advice and support have spurred the group to lose, in total, more than 4,000 pounds. Meet four members—each down a few chins—who contributed to that astronomical number.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **DAYMON GARDNER**

BEFORE

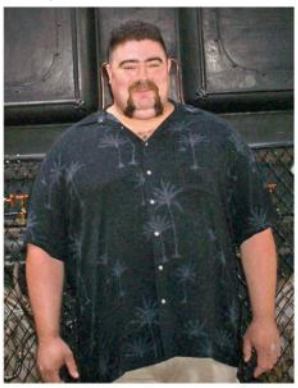
AFTER

JASON COHEN

33, Lafayette, Louisiana, has lost 125 pounds

"My entire life I always thought I would be big," Cohen says. That changed six years ago after a friend died young. At nearly 300 pounds, Cohen made a promise not to cross that threshold. He started cycling, forged a weight-loss competition with a friend, and adopted a plant-based diet. Lured into a local running shop for a coffee event—he's a java geek—he decided, on a whim, to buy shoes and start running. He's since finished a marathon. A photographer and videographer by day, Cohen is filming a documentary about LaJaunie and others who have lost major weight, called *Big Change The Film*, due out in 2018. "When I see other members post a seven-mile run in the Facebook group, I don't have any excuses," he says. "Time to lace up and get out there."

BEFORE



AFTER

TIM KAUFMAN

44, Alden, New York, has lost 200 pounds

Kaufman puts his turning point in stark terms: "I was dying." Born with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, which affects the body's connective tissues, he'd long dealt with joint-related injuries. He started taking painkillers in his 20s, and left a factory job for a more sedentary role as a teacher. His weight exceeded 400 pounds, and he developed debilitating addictions. Then his father and mother-in-law died of cancer, and he resolved that his wife and two kids wouldn't bury him, too. So he went vegan, eased off of the painkillers, and started running. The Missing Chins, he says, "is a tight-knit group, but it's so cool to see new guys come in—it takes you back and makes you appreciate the struggle."

BEFORE

AFTER

JUSTIN LACY

32, Dexter, Missouri, has lost 290 pounds

Lacy loves a challenge: He taught himself guitar, how to build a sustainable house, and even a little Spanish. Not until his mother had a stroke three years ago, however, did he consider his weight—then over 500 pounds—a worthwhile project. "I thought, wow, I'm extremely selfish," he says. "Soon my family's going to be crying around my hospital bed." He went on a "research frenzy," switching to a plant-based diet, riding a stationary bike, then running. He's finished two races to date, a 5K and a trail half marathon in Colorado, but is already eyeing an ultra. "I'm going to do a 50-miler and a 100-miler," he says. "When I say something is going to happen, it usually does."

BEFORE

AFTER

DUSTIN LaJAUNIE

37, Thibodaux, Louisiana, has lost 150 pounds

The LaJaunie family used to have a joke: "Don't be such a vegan," meaning, "don't be such a nitpicker." It took his brother (Josh) becoming one—and a runner—for the family to realize that getting healthy didn't mean changing who they were. Five years ago at 425 pounds, Dustin had an epiphany: "You have to outrun your mind and that natural tendency to seek out comfort—when you push past that, your body adapts." Now plant-based and a runner, he completed a half marathon in February and wants to run an ultra next. LaJaunie compares the Missing Chins group to the hunting trips he and his brother used to take, where they gorged on food and alcohol: "But instead of gathering to go take life," he says, "we're coming together to gain life."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAYMON GARDNER (COHEN & LAJAUNIE, AFTER); COURTESY OF JEN COHEN (COHEN, BEFORE); COURTESY OF TIM KAUFMAN (BEFORE & AFTER); COURTESY OF JUSTIN LACY (BEFORE & AFTER); COURTESY OF DUSTIN LAJAUNIE (BEFORE)

MIX IT UP

In the kitchen with BIOCHEM®

Mango Sunshine Smoothie Bowl

Ingredients

6 tbsp plain unsweetened almond milk
1½ cups frozen mango chunks
½ cup chilled cooked cauliflower
2 tbsp coconut butter
1 scoop **Biochem 100% Whey Sugar Free Protein Coconut**
1 pitted date
¼ tsp ground turmeric, optional

Directions

To a blender or food processor, add all ingredients; blend until smooth. Serve with toppings of your choice (like blueberries)!

Healthy Pumpkin Spice "Latte" Smoothie

Ingredients

2 scoops **Biochem 100% Whey Protein Vanilla**
6 oz unsweetened vanilla almond milk
2 heaping tsp organic canned pumpkin
1 1/2 - 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
3 ice cubes

Directions

Blend to combine.

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Mile Markers

These running tattoos from around the globe prove that some forms of motivation are permanent.

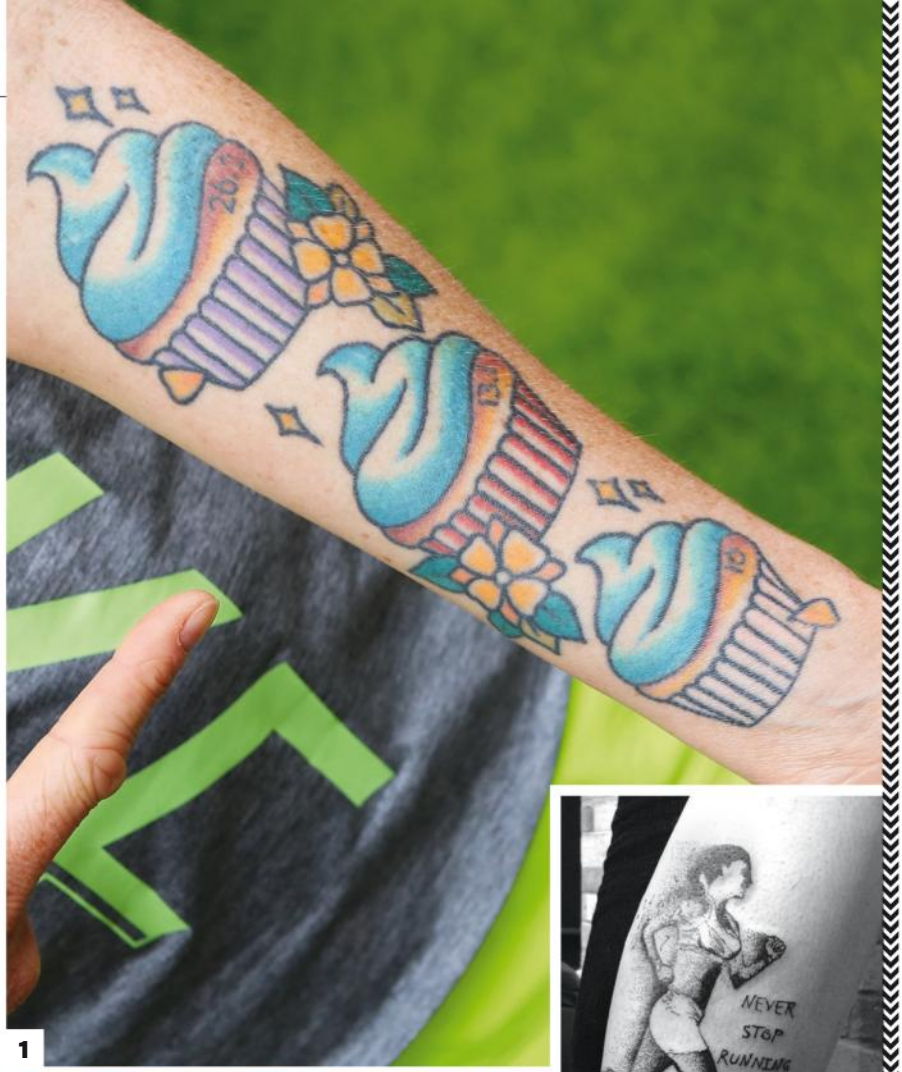
1. JUSTINE EDWARDS
44, Peterborough, England, U.K.
"I love running and baking—especially cupcakes—so I decided to combine them into one tattoo. I treated myself to the ink after turning 40 and completing a half marathon. The cupcakes get progressively larger, representing the distances I've conquered. The farther I run, the more cake I can have!"

2. RYAN JASKIEWICZ
33, La Grange Park, Illinois
"The idea just popped into my head as a way to memorialize the breaking of my marathon PRs. I got the first one [with two finish times] in 2009 after running a Boston qualifier and huge personal best. Each tattoo helps fuel me as I continue to grind for faster times."

3. ANGELA NOGUEIRA FEY
29, Curitiba, Parana State, Brazil
"I told the tattoo artist that I run listening to music and asked him to combine these two passions of mine in the design. Whenever I look at it, I remember the day I finished my first 10K—that feeling of accomplishment and how running really can change your life."

4. CHRISTOPHER McBRIDE
31, Courtice, Ontario, Canada
"Running gives me a feeling that I never experienced before I started in 2011. This tattoo represents the chemical compound of that feeling—the 'runner's high.' It's more than ink on my arm: It reminds me that no matter the obstacle, my body will succeed."

5. EDWARD NICOSIA
58, Amsterdam, New York
"The three runners over the watercolor background are styled after a Grecian urn. I got this because running has been a constant in my life. No matter what's going on, it's always there to center me."



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Chicago Style

Forty years after the Windy City's first marathon, meet the race icons who keep the party going.

On September 25, 1977, 4,200 runners tackled the first edition of the Chicago Marathon, traveling mostly along Lake Michigan, enduring gawks and taunts from unsuspecting passersby. Only about half the entrants crossed the finish, near Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park.

Four decades later, the Chicago Marathon will end near that exact location. But practically nothing else in this more-than-40,000-runner extravaganza will look the same. From world-class elites to 1.7 million spectators to a sprawling 29-neighborhood route, the race has transformed into one of the Windy City's largest parties (except when a World Series comes to town). On the race's 40th anniversary, here are some of the personalities that have helped spark the running revelry.

–CINDY KUZMA

THE STREAKER

Randy Burt

Burt was just shy of 30 when he heard about a new marathon starting in Chicago. "I thought, *I'd better try one of these before I'm over the hill,*" he recalls.

He finished, then signed up the following year only to hit the wall at mile 16. He walked the rest of the course, puked in a trash can, and swore, "Never again."

Now 69, Burt will return to the race for his 40th consecutive year—one of only six people to have completed all 39 previous Chicago Marathons. "I think my memory is short," he jokes about registering year after year. "I think I can at least do 50 of these," he says.

THE INNOVATOR

Carey Pinkowski

The first two years Pinkowski served as the Chicago Marathon race director—1990 and 1991—he'd tote extra bibs to the starting line. Tardy runners could snag one and mail the $20 fee later.

Nearly three decades later, Pinkowski has transformed the once ragtag event into an official Abbott World Marathon Major—an association of the six largest and most highly regarded 26.2-mile races in the world.

To appeal to the masses, Pinkowski converted the largely lakefront course into a scenic Chicago tour, expansive enough to display the city's ethnic and cultural diversity yet accessible enough to allow transit-savvy spectators multiple glimpses of their runners. He also scoured for new elite talent, aiming for a world-class race at the front of the pack. His next aim? Bringing another world record performance back to the shores of Lake Michigan (the race has seen two in the past four decades).

THE SPECTATORS

Lion Dancers

Blessings come in pairs, Chinese tradition holds. Which is why for the past 27 years two gigantic dancing lions—symbols of fortune and prosperity—greet runners at mile 21 in Chinatown. Each blinking-eyed beast requires two dancers, one to hold up the approximately 50-pound head, the other to maneuver the tail.

Keeping the lions moving for the seven hours it takes to welcome the entire marathon field to the neighborhood requires a team of about 15, says the crew's organizer, Gene Lee. When one dancer tires after 10 minutes, he (they're all men, per tradition) gives a nod and orchestrates a seamless switch.

THE SURVIVOR

Aubrey Ness

Staring at the Chicago skyline from a hospital window in June 2016, Ness vowed to run through those city streets again, the same way she did while finishing the 2015 marathon. But first, she needed to relearn how to walk.

The 31-year-old critical-care nurse from Crown Point, Indiana, had suffered a hemorrhagic stroke, forcing her to spend a week in a medically induced coma four months before she was supposed to run the 2016 race. During her recovery she googled "emergency marathon training plan." With her doctor's blessing, she completed the race in just over seven hours.

Now, with a full year of rehab and training under her belt, Ness will return to the Chicago starting line, hoping to do more than just finish. She plans to crush her 2016 time. "I'm so lucky; I just want to live up to my full potential," she says.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARATHONFOTO (BURT, NESS); ALESSANDRA SANTARELLI AND JOEFF DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES (CHICAGO SIGN); COURTESY OF CEM (CAREY PINKOWSKI); COURTESY OF ANITA LAU/CHICAGO CHINATOWN SPECIAL EVENTS (LION DANCERS)

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Tough or Stupid?

For runners taught to embrace pain, the line often blurs.

BY MARK REMY

Pop quiz: You've agreed to lead a Sunday-morning group run for a buddy, even though you've been sick for a week with "GI distress." You wake up feeling no better, sit on the toilet, and, after finishing, stand up to see blood. Hmm. ¶ Do you: (A) text your buddy, explain the situation, and apologize for having to bail; (B) drive to the group run, explain the situation, and apologize for not being able to join them; or (C) drink a glass of water, drive to the group run, and do six and a half miles? ¶ This really happened to me recently, and I chose (C). What was I thinking? (*Was* I thinking?) Did I decide to run because I was in denial? Or because I didn't want to let my friend down? And what was up with the glass of water? Looking back, I think my decision to run can be explained with a single word: *tough*. ¶ As in, I'm a runner. I'm tough. So tough, I'll go for a run moments after [REDACTED] blood. ¶ But was I really being tough? Or just...stupid? I've been chewing on this for weeks now, and I'm still no closer to an answer. Maybe there is no answer. ¶ "The problem is, I don't like feeling uncomfortable," my wife told me once, while we discussed her 5K time and why she can't improve it. When the going gets tough, in other words, my wife taps the brakes. At least where running is concerned. ¶ It was a frank admission, and I had to admire her self-awareness.

The author is a *Runner's World* writer at large and the mastermind of dumbrunner.com. For more, go to **runnersworld.com/remysworld**.

On the other hand, though... No! Racing *is* discomfort. We make ourselves hurt in training so that we can make ourselves hurt when we race. Running in general—and racing in particular—is about learning to manage pain and venturing beyond your comfort zone.

I explained this to my wife. She understood it perfectly, but wasn't interested in hurting, if you can imagine that.

The tricky part is that *tough* is a relative term. (As is *stupid*, come to think of it.) What I consider tough might be someone else's normal; what I consider normal might be someone else's tough. Or stupid.

Also, it can be awfully easy to mistake one for the other.

In the 1982 Boston Marathon, during their "duel in the sun," Alberto Salazar and Dick Beardsley famously duked it out on an unusually hot day. Their sprint to the finish remains one of sport's most epic moments.

Salazar won—by two seconds. Soon after, he was rushed to a medical tent for six liters of saline solution, delivered by IV. As he told John Brant in a 2004 *Runner's World* feature: "After [that] I was never quite the same. I had a few good races, but everything was difficult. Workouts that I used to fly through became an ordeal. And eventually, of course, I got so sick that I wondered if I'd ever get well."

Salazar did get well, eventually, but his racing career never fully recovered.

Alberto is an outlier, of course; this is the same guy who, at the 1978 Falmouth Road Race, collapsed at the finish and was administered last rites. But all runners have our own "tough vs. stupid" calculus. In the end it's up to each of us to weigh risks and benefits.

My own risk/benefit analysis told me on that Sunday morning that I was okay to run. And I was, by the way—it didn't feel great, but I went slow and got it done. ("Stupid," my wife later declared.)

As for my illness, a test ultimately identified the culprit as Campylobacteriosis—food poisoning most likely caused by eating undercooked poultry.

Stupid.

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Ask Miles

He's been around the block a few times—and he's got answers.

What's the best way to find new running buddies in a rural town?

MATT T., DISPATCH, KANSAS

Having grown up in a small community ourselves, we were curious about just how rural yours is. Population data for Dispatch isn't available, but we learned that it's in Smith County—which has a total population of 3,700. So yes, definitely rural. In a town as small as yours, you're likely dealing with folks who don't run much, if at all. They'll feel unsure and maybe even a bit intimidated by the very idea. Running with other beginners, though? That's a dif-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY REMENTER

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Magic Socks

You know you are getting it right when people tell you that you are creating "magic." C3fit customers do just that when they comment on the company's arch support socks. The socks are designed for compression applied from the bottom up, pressing up to the foot from the sole, so that runners are able to maintain better form longer into training runs and races, running with a more efficient gait. Perhaps it is that sensation, along with the softness of the plush materials, that is the source of the C3fit magic?

By wearing C3fit arch support high, quarter, short, ankle or "5 finger" toe socks, you'll be more likely to avoid the breakdown that leads to post-run soreness. C3fit arch support socks are akin to running with athletic tape that supports the lateral and medial arches through special, elastic yarns that are professionally manufactured into socks in Japan.

C3fit's high socks are so effective that they are certified as General Medical Devices in Japan, helping to support the lower leg and prevent swelling. The short style features a tab to prevent abrasion from the shoe collar and a better fit for the many runners with low-volume ankles. All of the sock styles use reinforced fibers in the ankle area to provide firm support. The arch support socks also include a cross taping structure, accomplished with two vertical arches and a horizontal arch, which functions to cradle the midfoot, using special yarn for enhanced support. The pile structure in the toes and heels offers cushioning with air-flow mesh in the instep while the toe areas feature extra-durable threads for long-lasting performance. All of the materials are moisture wicking and quick drying. Plus, the materials used for the toes and heels are anti-microbial for odor control.

It may be the foot hold and incredible feeling of support and structure; it could be the remarkable comfort; possibly it is the durability of the robust materials and high Japanese standards, advanced sewing standards and quality control, but the end result is what matters: magic socks!

www.c3fit.com/us

ferent story. If I were you, then, I'd try organizing a weekly get-together explicitly for those just starting out. Promise short distances, easy paces, and zero judgment. Cold beer afterward wouldn't hurt, either.

How should I deal with runners who grab armfuls of free postrace snacks like they are grocery shopping?

TROY A., ASHBURN, VIRGINIA

Carefully, Troy. That's how. These guys are clearly very hungry—i.e., probably not at their best, mood-wise—and as we've said many times before, no one enjoys being publicly shamed. If there's a volunteer nearby you could suggest (quietly) that he or she remind everyone (not quietly) that there's only so much food. If you must say something yourself, go one of two routes—the "gentle reminder" route, as in, "Hey, I'm hungry too, but this stuff has to feed a lot of people," or the "wiseass" route, as in, "Can I get you a basket or a cart?" I'll leave it to you to guess which approach I prefer.

Is the runner's high real, or just a mythical phenomenon that I will never experience?

SIMON C., ATLANTA, GEORGIA

The runner's high is indeed a real thing—I'm high right now!—and it really is blissful. There are two big caveats, though. The first is that it can go unrecognized. The runner's high has been hyped so heavily, I think, that some folks expect their first experience to send them on a magical mystery tour of blissed-out rapture. In reality, it's much more subtle. It doesn't scream, it whispers. The second caveat: The runner's high is famously elusive. You aren't going to experience it on every run, or even every 10th run. Be patient. In time, chances are good you'll find it. Better yet: Stop looking so hard, and maybe it will find you.

Have a question for Miles? Email **askmiles@runnersworld.com** and follow **@askmiles** on Twitter.

Miles Asks

Have you ever met a significant other through running?

Yep. Local running communities are basically like dating apps.
@avamrtnz

Yes, on the *Runner's World* message boards👍
@harrylee773

His cousin matched me with him because we both ran marathons and had tattoos :)
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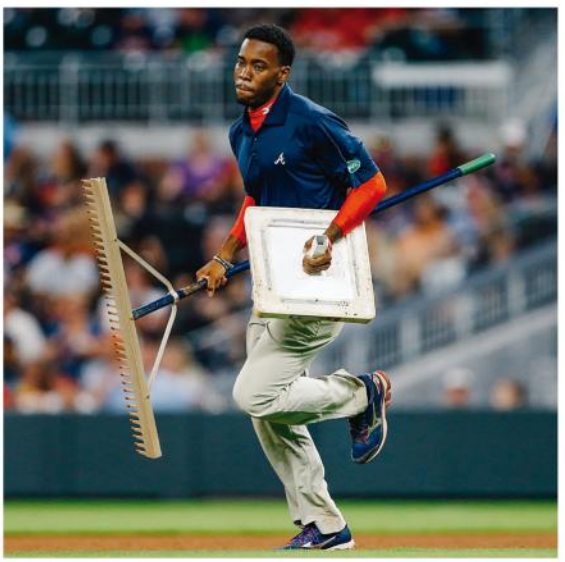
Fast on a Different Track

Nigel Talton hopes for fame around an oval. For now, he's found it on a diamond.

When the figure in a blue, skintight bodysuit and tinted ski goggles appears in left field between innings at Atlanta Braves home games, the crowd stands up and even opposing pitchers exit the bull pen to witness, perhaps, the greatest on-field action in the MLB this season (besides the baseball, of course). A fan waiting in the dirt next to the besuited figure sprints when signaled. The figure waits more than five seconds before bolting—closing the cavernous gap in a scene straight from a Road Runner cartoon. If the fan wins the roughly 175-meter race to the opposing foul pole, they earn a RaceTrac convenience store gift card. Despite the generous head start, they rarely do.

While inside the suit, the figure is called The Freeze—a marketing promo to sell a frozen drink turned viral sensation. Outside the suit, he's Nigel Talton, a 26-year-old member of the stadium's grounds crew. Talton will graduate from Kennesaw State University in December, where he's been a track standout with a 10.35 PR in the 100 meters. He nearly qualified for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Trials, but has yet to earn a sponsorship and turn pro. So to pay the bills, he leaned on his job at SunTrust Park. When his bosses discovered his blazing talent, they asked him to don the suit and race a fan on opening day. The Freeze's exploits have since earned him national attention, an appearance at the MLB All-Star Game, and hundreds of thousands of views on YouTube. Now, while Talton showcases his speed in the outfield, he's hoping that fame will transfer to the track. **–CHARLES BETHEA**



"The attention right now is a little weird. It's the biggest audience I've ever had for running."

"The outfit doesn't affect me. I'm used to running in one-piece track suits. As for those big goggles, I just picture myself wearing shades."

"Fans put up a good challenge. But once I get around the warning track curve, I know precisely when I will catch them."

"It feels good when I pass them. People in the stands stand and cheer. I love that reaction."

"I think being The Freeze is going to help my running career. I hope someone will have faith in me like I have faith in myself."

"I've told The Braves they should make me a pinch runner! Maybe that money can help my track career. Maybe."

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The Intersection

Where running and culture collide

MOMENTOUS

London police search for a male runner who pushed a woman into the street, causing her to narrowly miss being struck by a bus.

Reebok designs a shoe for next-generation spacesuits (the Floatride Space Boot SB-01) using tech from its running-shoe foam, presumably a precursor to the inaugural Moon Marathon.

A recent study shows you may have been able to outrun a T. rex, ruining the plot of *Jurassic Park*. Researchers believe the dinosaur was better suited for a brisk walk and would likely have broken its legs if it tried to sprint.

U.S. sprinter Gil Roberts fails a USADA drug test but avoids sanctions after an investigation determines the banned substance entered his system when he "frequently and passionately" kissed his girlfriend.

Mo Farah is no longer the fastest man on the planet—in sack racing. A 36-year-old Englishman broke the Olympian's 100-meter hopping world record by more than 10 seconds, pending verification from Guinness.

A bill introduced in Congress, designed to limit legal immigration to the U.S., includes one quality that would significantly aid in obtaining a visa: recently winning an Olympic medal.

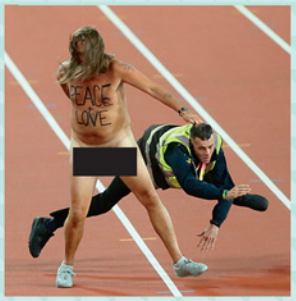
STOP!

GO!

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio often includes nap time after daily workouts, according to the *New York Post*, snoozing in his office before conducting daily business.

Gossip site TMZ releases video of Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Terrance Williams competing in a late-night footrace against his friend, conducted in the parking lot of a strip club.

Newly retired Usain Bolt announces his next challenge: poker. He'll compete at the PokerStars Championship Bahamas in January against comedian (and soon-to-be marathoner) Kevin Hart.



A totally nude streaker with "Peace + Love" written on his chest and "For mum" written on his back interrupts the 100-meter final at the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London. He was unable to out-sprint security.

A group of ultramarathoners binge-watch six seasons of *Game of Thrones* while running 350-plus miles in Italy behind a truck fitted with a giant TV screen, presumably pleasing the old gods and the new.

FRIVOLOUS

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When the Race Wins

The marathon will often defeat you. That's part of its appeal.

BY JONATHAN BEVERLY

Standing on the roadside at mile 25 of Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota, my son was concerned. As I shuffled past in a cramped facsimile of my usual stride, 20 minutes later than expected, he asked my wife, "Is this normal?" ¶ A veteran of many marathon sidelines, she answered, "Yes. More often than not, this is what it looks like at the end of a marathon." ¶ I've been fascinated by the distance since my first attempt as a 16-year-old, way back in 1980. That day, I'd managed a 3:23, despite hitting the wall and stumbling home in a depleted daze. Thirty-seven years since my debut, I set that first mark as my "realistic" goal for my comeback as a 53-year-old after eight years away from the distance. I had planned on writing an account of how much easier it is now than it had been then, given how much I've learned. The marathon gods had different ideas. ¶ On race day, even my "ideal" goal of sub-3:20 had seemed conservative and eminently doable for the first cool, scenic 15 miles alongside Lake Superior. But then, as the sun soared higher and hotter and my pace slowed, I found myself clinging to, then letting go of, one lesser goal after another, until all that was left was the Jackson Browne refrain playing in my head: "If it takes all night, that'll be all right." No matter how ugly it got, I was determined to finish.

The author of *Your Best Stride* and *Run Strong, Stay Hungry*, Jonathan Beverly runs, writes, and coaches on the high plains of western Nebraska.

It was a familiar place to be. I have ended up here in all but six of the 27 marathons I've started. More often than not, the marathon controls the plot and we runners play bit parts in its great drama of attrition. You have to respect a distance that can reduce you to survival four out of five times, despite the best laid plans and preparation.

I eventually limped home, far off my stated goals. It would be easy to consider this a failure and all the training and focus a waste. And it would be appropriate to decide that the distance is too long and I would have more satisfying experiences by training to excel at shorter distances rather than being mediocre at one over my head.

But there are times in our lives when we need to tilt at windmills, times when the scale of the quest frightens us, focuses us, and motivates us to stretch higher than before. The fact that we'll more than likely fail is largely the point.

About that failure: I've learned that even when the marathon wins—perhaps especially when it does—we discover truths about ourselves. When all goals were abandoned, when it didn't matter if I walked, crawled, or curled up in the ditch, I found a core that still cared. I found myself still pushing through the fog toward the finish as fast as my compromised body would allow.

Nearly a week later, still suffering residual aches, I feel a contented pride in the effort that produced that pain. I'm not, however, satisfied with race-day heroism. I came away from the race with one compelling thought: *I can do better.* I know from experience that the marathon gives up its fruit reluctantly, but it can be had. To have succeeded the first time back would have been somewhat disappointing. It should be hard. It has always been hard.

I have learned a lot since that first marathon—about training, biomechanics, nutrition, and strategy. I'll use all of this knowledge as I set my sights again on toeing the line. And I'll add to that knowledge one thing I relearned last week: The marathon usually wins.

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SAMUEL ADAMS

VIRGINIA BEACH LIVE THE LIFE

WE RUN THE

They're edgy. They're explorers. They're misfits. What they are NOT is a club. Meet the urban running crews who are changing the culture of running, block by block, city by city, beer by hard-earned beer.

By Matt Gross

PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILIANO GRANADO

STREETS

As far back as I can remember, I *hated* runners. Not running—running was fine, it was fun, it was what my dad did every morning. But runners? They were jocks. They were disciplined, had coaches, wore skimpy outfits. They were—*blech*—athletes. Me? In high school, I was an asthmatic, four-eyed, smart-aleck skateboarder. The cultural chasm between us could not be bridged.

Then, in my mid-20s, I started running to stay in shape. I'd leave my Brooklyn apartment in a singlet, my sensitive bits slathered in antichafing schmutz, an interval workout on my mind.

Except… Except that when I looked around at members of running clubs in New York (and around the country), I did not see myself—a nerdy punk-ass skater. I saw the clean-cut, hyperorganized, mainstream athletes I'd always resented. Where were the weirdos, the misfits, the eccentric explorers who wanted more from their running lives than to train like Meb Keflezighi?

As it turns out, they were there—but not in running clubs. They were in running crews. Such a tiny distinction—a mere three letters!—but crews and clubs are worlds apart.

The idea of a crew began around 2004, when a New Yorker named Mike Saes organized nighttime runs that began downtown and ranged over the East River into Brooklyn and back. They were unstructured, with exploration and community building as important as the actual exercise. The group called themselves the Bridge Runners.

Soon after, crews began popping up elsewhere. London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Paris all saw crews arrive and thrive. In New York, Orchard Street Runners organized an unsanctioned Midnight Half that for years was the coolest race in the city (and possibly the world).

As the movement grew, what differentiated crews from clubs wasn't just where, or when, or how they ran (everywhere, often at night, uncoached) but who was doing the running. Frequently, these were men and women who didn't fit the traditional runner profile, though many were damn serious about running and would crush you in a race. They were skaters, DJs, street artists. They had tattoos and piercings well before everyone had tattoos and piercings. They were not necessarily white, not necessarily skinny, and not necessarily straight. They were, although few probably understood it at the time, the future of running.

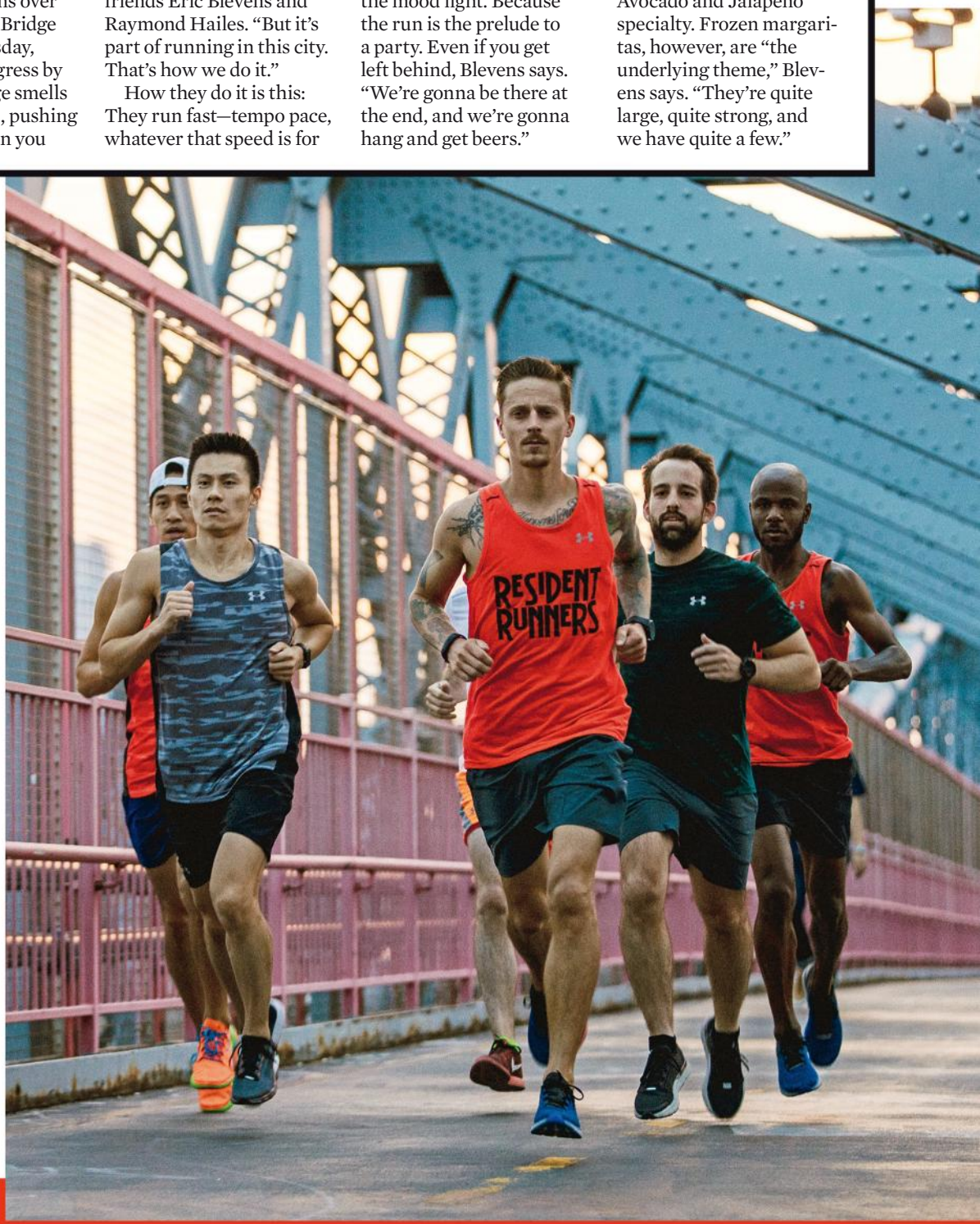
Today, urban running crews are proliferating at a mad pace, each with its own theme (diversity, intensity, wackiness), each organizing and drawing in new members via social media (Instagram in particular), but all united across thousands of miles by their love of running, their defiant independence, and their bone-deep respect for individuality. Here are six we're dying to run (and party) with.

To run in New York is to run through chaos—to time the lights, to hurdle fetid puddles, to piss off cyclists. To do it alone is a burden. But to do it alongside 25 others, all of you swarming past pedestrians over the Williamsburg Bridge at dusk on a Thursday, marking your progress by graffiti and strange smells (fried fish? weed?), pushing yourself faster than you thought you could—well, that's the challenge and joy of Resident Runners.

"Yeah, it's a little reckless," says Rahsaan Rogers, who leads the crew (founded in 2013), along with his friends Eric Blevens and Raymond Hailes. "But it's part of running in this city. That's how we do it."

How they do it is this: They run fast—tempo pace, whatever that speed is for each runner. "We tell people to chase whoever's a bit faster than you," Blevens says. They don't wait for stragglers. They don't talk much. And yet, despite the aggro façade, they keep the mood light. Because the run is the prelude to a party. Even if you get left behind, Blevens says. "We're gonna be there at the end, and we're gonna hang and get beers."

Or tacos. Resident may be most famous for its monthly Taco Runs, chill five-milers that end with 40 to 60 runners cramming into Güeros, a Brooklyn joint, for the Fried Avocado and Jalapeño specialty. Frozen margaritas, however, are "the underlying theme," Blevens says. "They're quite large, quite strong, and we have quite a few."



WORDS WE LIVE BY:
"There's nothing better than getting lost in New York when you're running—it's how you figure everything out," Blevens says.

OUR NEMESIS:
"The biggest beef, honestly, isn't even with the cars or traffic—it's cyclists who hate us," says Rogers. "There are a lot of times when we're running in the bike lanes, and some guy will come by and curse us out. It's a nonstop battle."

FOLLOW US:
On Instagram @residentrunners

PHOTOGRAPH BY **EMILIANO GRANADO**

UNNAMED RUN CREW // BOSTON

The Unnamed Run Crew (UNMD for short) was created as "an act of defiance," its founder, Leandrew Belnavis, says jokingly. He wanted to promote the diversity and friendliness he felt were missing from Boston's hypercompetitive, traditionally preppy running clubs.

Today, the UNMD's group runs of three to five miles, which start at a high-end sneaker boutique called Laced near the city's Back Bay neighborhood, are energetic and *loud*—designed to attract attention in whichever neighborhood the 30-plus members ("of every possible color," Belnavis says) are passing through.

"What the f--k is this?" Belnavis wants observers to say. Followed by, "You know what, I'm gonna drop what I'm doing and join you."

And people do. Over the summer, two random women, visiting from New York, spotted the UNMD doing track relays and demanded to join right then and there. It was raining, and they didn't have running gear, but that didn't matter. They ran.

Which is exactly why the crew was created. Belnavis wants *everyone* to join weekly rambles through the city's different neighborhoods: the fast, the slow ("sexy-pace runners," Belnavis calls them), and everyone in between. "I want them all to feel like rock stars at the end of the session every time."

WE DRESS TO: Impress. What you put on your feet matters to Belnavis, who plans the runs out of the sneaker shop Laced to reflect his sneaker obsession. He appreciates "any type of collaboration between fashion and function."

DON'T RUN WITH US IF: "You have derogatory things to say about the LGBT community, find racial remarks appropriate in normal conversation, believe feminism is a joke," Belnavis says. "But if you care about community, celebrating diversity, and getting fit, there's a place in this crew for you."

FOLLOW US: On Instagram @unnamedruncrew

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **CHRIS CARDOZ**

BLACKLISTLA // LOS ANGELES

L.A. is a city built for cars: the freeways, the winding canyon roads, the sun-bleached strip-mall parking lots. But for the last four years, every Monday night at 10 p.m. as many as 300 runners roam on foot with BlacklistLA, in search of eye-popping murals, public art, and graffiti.

"It's like running through a museum," says Erik Valiente, the 29-year-old former Nike retail worker who started the crew in 2013. "It keeps your head on the swivel and makes the run more interesting."

While each run may pass multiple pieces of public art, there's usually one destination mural. Past routes have featured Tristan Eaton's "Peace by Piece"—a commentary on conflict located at The Container Yard in the downtown district—or work by the famed French street artist JR.

While the art runs are BlacklistLA's big draw, the crew is at heart about getting Angelenos to appreciate all aspects of their city. On Wednesdays, members will design routes that run through up to six different neighborhoods. And once a year, the crew puts on the HBD LA 5K—a sanctioned race that commemorates the city's founding—which starts and ends at the LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes. "We wanted to make sure that we trace the founders' routes when they walked in to declare this city a city," Valiente says.

OUR CITY IS:
"Untapped. L.A. is car-centric, and people arriving here simply rent a car to get from point A to point B," Valiente says. "They don't realize you can run two or three miles through urban scenery, end up at Griffith or Elysian Park, do some workouts there, then run trails, see the Hollywood sign, see the Valley, and finish—all within seven miles."

DON'T RUN WITH US IF:
"You're impatient waiting at lights."

WORDS WE LIVE BY:
"*Echale ganas.* Give it your all."

FOLLOW US:
On Instagram @blacklistla

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RYAN YOUNG**

"What should we be hitting on this rep?" "How far should we be running on this long run?" These were the types of ultraspecific questions that Tim Kelly was hearing all the time—and realized not everyone wants to hear them. A coach for marathon and half-marathon programs at 2nd Sole, a running shop in Lakewood, Ohio, Kelly felt that too many of his runners were missing out on running's free-form joy. "When I run for fun, I don't need a watch," said the 27-year-old Cleveland native. "I just go out there on my own."

So in the winter of 2015, Kelly launched Run Wild CLE, a crew dedicated to weekly workouts that can be as wacky as they are grueling. Think games of Duck Duck Goose, "but instead of sitting on the ground you're doing squats, you're doing burpees and lunges." Or relays where you sprint up a grass hill, roll halfway back down—yup, just like you did when you were 10—then dash dizzily down to tag the next racer. Along the way, Kelly's groups of 40 to 90 runners make use of overlooked aspects of Cleveland's urban environment, like the grass terraces next to the state courthouse, the benches and grass field above the convention center, or the sand dunes on Edgewater Beach.

DON'T RUN WITH US IF: You only want to run. There will be bodyweight work, not to mention silliness. "People are thrown off by that," Kelly says. "But they leave happy."

WHAT IT COSTS: Nothing. "It will always be free," Kelly says. "But the payment is, you have to do one good deed in the week to follow."

WORDS WE LIVE BY: "Run wild, do good. #rwdg"

WHERE YOU'LL FIND US: Friday night at different locations around the city. "Not everyone wants to go out with their friends to dinner and then beer on Fridays." So that's when they run, and have the city to themselves.

FOLLOW US: On Instagram @runwildcle

PHOTOGRAPH BY **CHRIS LANGER**

THE 504TH // NEW ORLEANS

This bayou city is like nowhere else. It's a constant party. It's hot, flat, and humid. Its neighborhoods—some well-to-do, others less so—are tight-knit and full of personality.

And through them all, the 504th runs. The young crew aims to unite New Orleans's disparate aspects. "For me," says Trey Monaghan, a restaurateur who is one of five co-captains, "this crew represents family—like a gang. Some gangs fight, but we're fortunate enough that my gang just runs, and we run all over the city," from the touristy French Quarter to the Lower Ninth Ward.

Though some of the neighborhoods aren't used to seeing group runs, they've welcomed the 504th. "We get curious waves from neighbors," says Monaghan. On a recent jaunt through Hollygrove (home to Lil Wayne), one kid rode his BMX bike alongside the group, popping wheelies.

"Folks are already acclimated to seeing a crew of people roaming together," says Marquest "Quest" Meeks, another co-captain. "The quizzical part for them is seeing us running, with nothing to run from. But they see our togetherness, and you don't need to translate that."

WORDS WE LIVE BY: "Get out and explore," Monaghan says.

HOW WE RISE: New Orleans may be flat, but Monaghan says there's a workaround: "For elevation we've found the best thing that we can do is run in the parking garages and hit the ramps."

OUR CAUSE: Youth Run NOLA, a program in 30 schools around the city that encourages kids to log miles. (504th co-captain Denali Lander is the organization's executive director.) The training culminates in the Crescent City Classic, "which is an amazingly fun, fast 10K," Monaghan says.

FOLLOW US: On Instagram @the504th

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BRYAN TARNOWSKI**

WORDS WE LIVE BY: "We run where others don't walk."

WE WERE FOUNDED: "To show that the ghetto is much more than a cliché. And to show that the women in here can do much more than they can imagine."

WHY WE RUN: "The search for equity has become our real flag," he says.

AFTER A RUN, WE'RE: In "the bunker"—a.k.a. Cruz's place. "There, we can be real people, talk about economics, art, marketing, and people's personal lives." But sometimes, he adds, "we go to the bar and drink, drink, drink."

FOLLOW US: On instagram @ghettoruncrew

GHETTO RUN CREW // RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

▶ In Zona Norte, the gritty north side of Rio de Janeiro, "things are difficult, more slow," says Junior Cruz, founder of the Ghetto Run Crew. The government and police are of little help, he says, so he often asks himself, "How can I do more?" His answer: running.

He founded the crew in 2013 as a movement for Zona Norte women to connect, get healthier, and feel energized. "Women from the north side need to fight much harder to win in life than those from the rich parts of the city do," he says.

Quickly, the crew blossomed and has since expanded to include all genders. Roughly 50 runners show up for twice-weekly nighttime *corres* (jogs), and as many as 300 join two mass runs a month. "We don't invite people—people just come," Cruz says. "If you want to run, come with us. The door is open."

Scan the crew's Instagram, and you'll understand why: The images are gorgeous. Runners wear black T-shirts, charging past graffitied retaining walls, down narrow alleys, across chain-link-fenced overpasses lit by distant street lamps—it's a romantic vision of athletics conquering inhuman infrastructure. "It's a social movement," says Cruz. "In the end, they run and the sport wins."

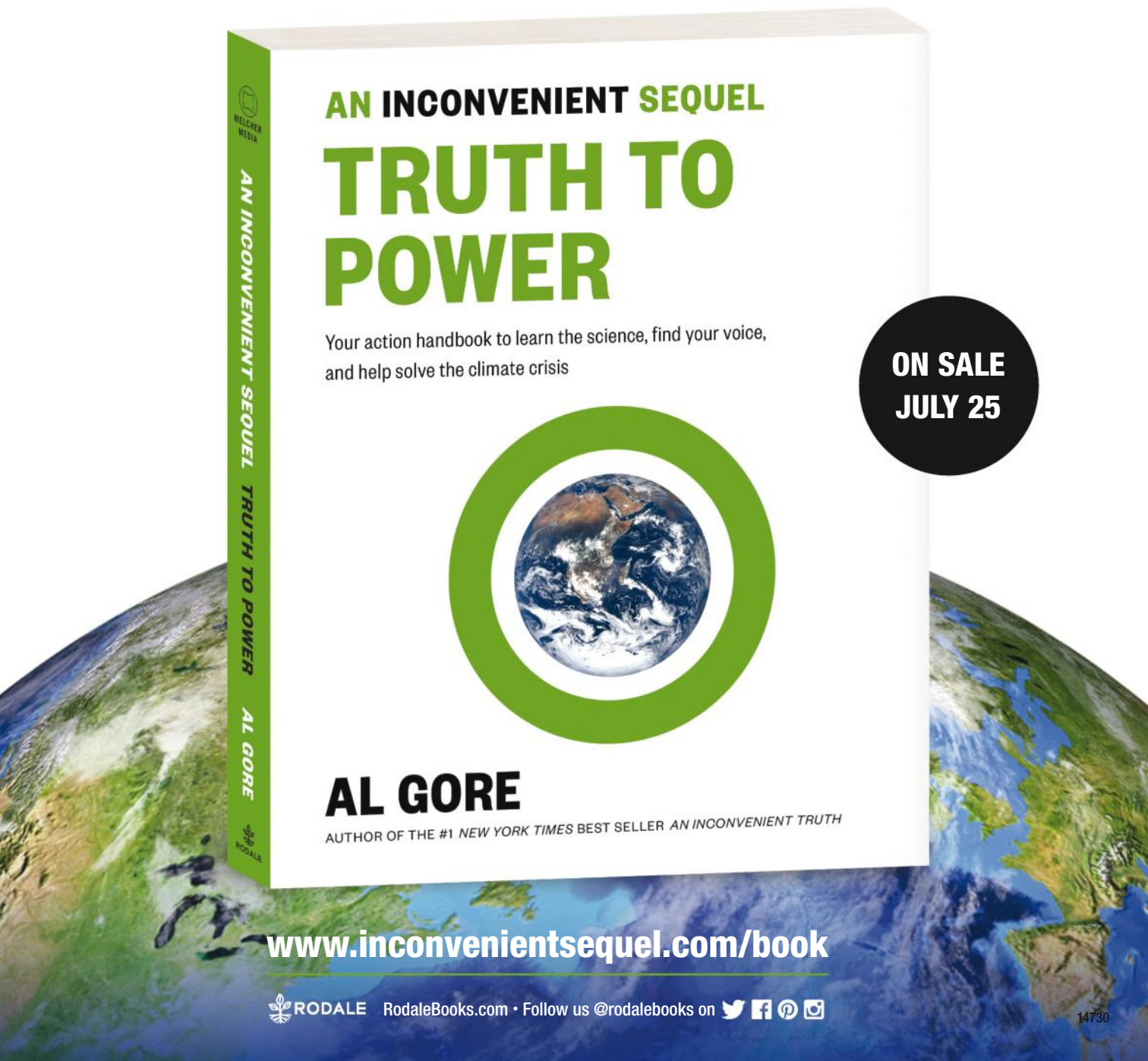
PHOTOGRAPH BY MATHEUS RODRIGUES

The follow up to the #1 *New York Times* bestselling *An Inconvenient Truth*

AN INCONVENIENT SEQUEL

TRUTH TO POWER

Your action guide to fighting the climate crisis



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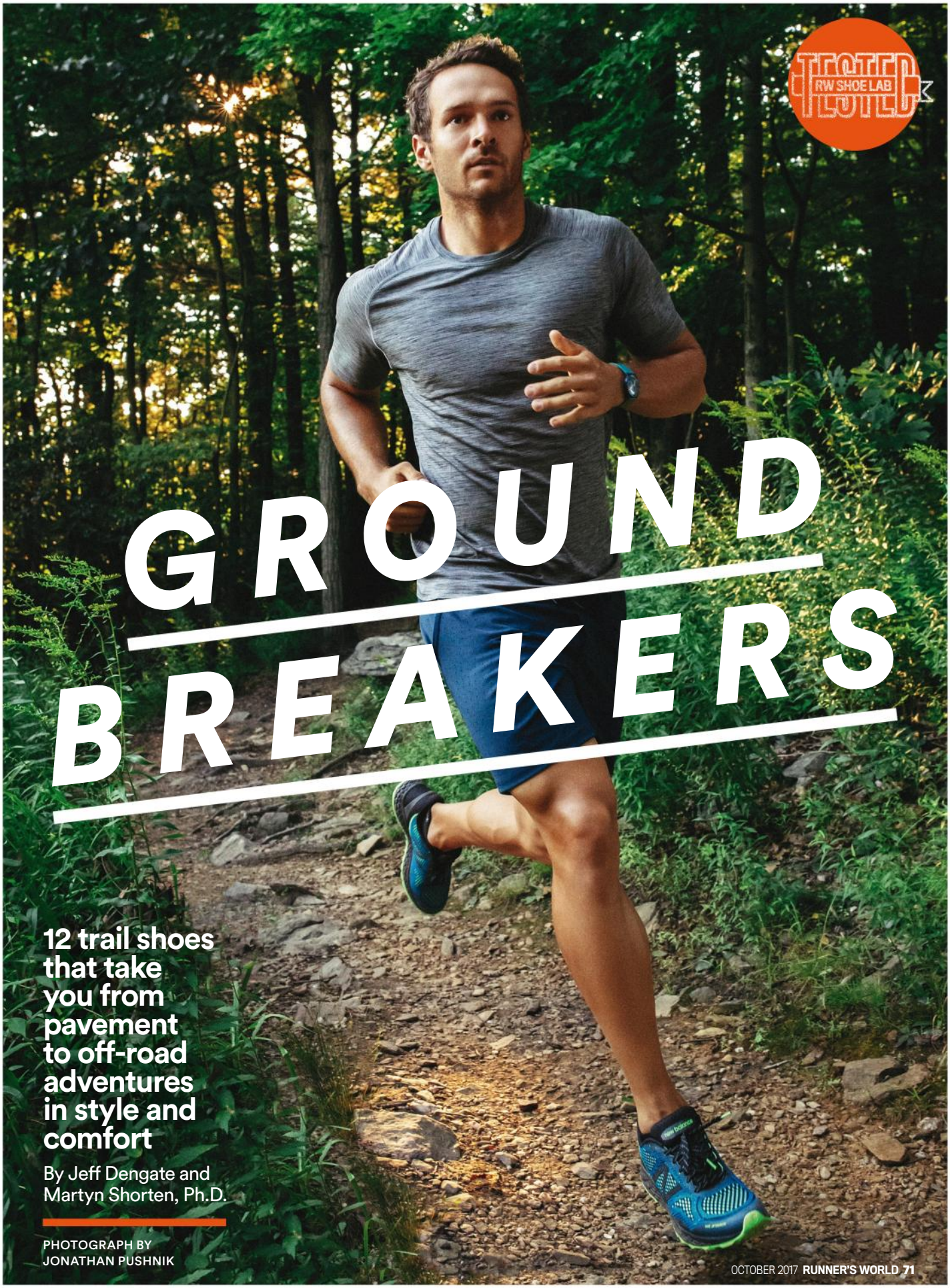

GROUND BREAKERS

12 trail shoes that take you from pavement to off-road adventures in style and comfort

By Jeff Dengate and Martyn Shorten, Ph.D.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN PUSHNIK

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Hoka One One Speedgoat 2 $140

Named after ultrarunner Karl "Speedgoat" Meltzer, director of a rugged 50K race in Utah by the same name, the Speedgoat is all about grip and long-run cushioning over tough terrain. Testers appreciated the roomy fit and the new engineered mesh, especially toward the end of long training runs, when feet swell. The shoe excels on loose ground, with a Vibram Megagrip outsole that has many curved lugs.

WEIGHT: **M** 10.2 oz; **W** 8.4 oz

"BEST TRAIL SHOE HOKA HAS MADE! MY FIRST RUN IN IT WAS 50 MILES ON THE WESTERN STATES TRAIL. THIS SHOE PERFORMS REMARKABLY WELL IN ALL CONDITIONS!"

–MICHAEL RICHMOND, 52; OAKLEY, CA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT RAINEY

361 Degrees Ortega 2 $120

Ideal for runners who want a road shoe that can handle dirt paths as well as snowy roads, the Ortega 2 has the DNA of the company's KgM2, a lightweight performance trainer. In fact, it shares the same midsole, and its rubber is in a similar configuration, though with beefier patches and grippy edges. A water-resistant mesh and gusseted tongue keep nature out where it belongs, while a rock plate protects the bottom of your foot should you decide to attack more technical terrain.

WEIGHT: M 10.5 oz; **W** 8.6 oz

BEST DEBUT

Saucony Koa TR $110

Here at *Runner's World* HQ, we have to log more than a mile on blacktop to reach our local trail loop. It's on such runs that the Koa TR shines. The outsole features a lot of closely spaced 3.5 mm lugs that roll almost as smoothly as a road shoe on flat surfaces. But when you hit the dirt, they have enough bite to deliver confidence. And like a good hybrid shoe, they have that road-worthy comfort—a full-length layer of bouncy foam sits just beneath the sockliner to give you a little extra cushioning.

WEIGHT: M 10.3 oz; **W** 8.3 oz

Salomon Sense Ride $120

Salomon is bringing some of the high-tech features found in its premium-priced shoes down to a more affordable range. One of those is a light-duty outsole that works on a mix of surfaces but shines on wet rocks—it uses the company's Premium Wet Traction Contagrip rubber that was previously only found on elite-level S/Lab models. The shoe is soft but stable thanks to a full-length piece of foam that's intended to reduce vibrations.

WEIGHT: M 9.9 oz; **W** 8.6 oz

BEST BUY

New Balance Fresh Foam Gobi v2 $100

Last year's "Best Debut" award winner returns with some small tweaks to the midsole and outsole, but retains its high-performing ride and wallet-friendly price tag. Based on the company's popular Fresh Foam Zante road shoe, the Gobi gives trail runners a go-fast option for training or races. The lightweight shoe is relatively soft underfoot, with big diamond-shaped lugs that keep you upright on nearly any surface. They are spaced out enough to bite into soft ground, but have a uniform height and flat tops to go unnoticed on hard trails and dirt roads.

WEIGHT: M 9.1 oz; **W** 7.3 oz

BEST RUNNER'S BUY

"THE GOBI IS THE PERFECT ROAD-TO-TRAIL SHOE. IT ADAPTS TO CONCRETE, ASPHALT, GRAVEL, GRASS, AND TRAILS."

–ELLIOT RUDERT, 29; EAST LANSING, MI

Brooks PureGrit 6 $120
Testers like the light, close-to-the-ground ride of the new Grit 6. It delivers a quick sensation on groomed dirt but still has enough rugged character when the terrain turns gnarly. A rock plate protects your foot from the bottom, while a new upper with a gusseted tongue helps keep it dry and comfortable. A rubberized dot pattern printed over the lower half of the mesh helps it stand up to abrasion and fends off water. WEIGHT: **M** 9.9 oz; **W** 7.9 oz

Inov-8 TrailRoc 285 $150
Inov-8 has long made thin, light shoes that excel on a variety of extreme terrain, but the TrailRoc 285 is the shoe to reach for when traversing hard, rocky ground. Its outsole isn't exceptionally toothy, but it has sharp studs angled to give you traction—whether powering uphill or slowing on a descent. The outsole also features a mix of sticky and harder rubbers, so you have confident footing on both rocks and dirt. Overlays at the midfoot keep the shoe locked to your foot.
WEIGHT: **M** 9.9 oz; **W** 8.0 oz

Merrell Bare Access Flex $90
The Bare Access Flex delivers a nimble ride with just enough cushioning to handle most terrain, though some testers (especially those pounding miles on Pennsylvania's most jagged rocks) wanted a bit more under the heel. Testers also reported that the upper fits a little snug, but not enough to warrant going up in size. A possible cause of this is the thin, deconstructed upper made from breathable mesh. It resists stretching without the use of overlays. WEIGHT: **M** 7.4 oz; **W** 5.5 oz

Altra Timp Trail $130
Want a little more shoe than the Lone Peak, but not so much as the Hoka-esque Olympus? This is where the Timp falls in Altra's lineup. It has a toothy, all-mountain outsole that holds tight on steep ground. Other trail-ready features include attachments for gaiters, a water-resistant upper, and a grippy edge at the back of the heel to help maintain traction when going downhill.
WEIGHT: **M** 11.5 oz; **W** 9.0 oz

"LIKE AN ALL-SEASON TIRE, THE TIMP IS LIGHT AND FLEXIBLE ENOUGH FOR SPEEDY DAYS BUT HAS ENOUGH UNDERFOOT CUSHIONING. I LOVE THE TRACTION PATTERN."
–MICHELLE SWIATEK-SHULTZ, 31; SINKING SPRING, PA

La Sportiva Akyra $140
For truly epic adventures where you're covering mountainous terrain at slower paces, the Akyra excels. It has aggressive lugs made from sticky rubber so they hold tight in all conditions. Testers appreciated it on steep ground and when power hiking, but found it hot and heavy on summer training runs. That's a small trade-off for the protection it delivers.
WEIGHT: M 13.3 oz; W 10.7 oz

Under Armour UA Horizon RTT $110
This burly trail shoe is built for hard miles. The upper is coated in a polyurethane skin, which helps keep water out and protects the mesh from getting shredded. It also makes the shoe slightly warm, say our testers, despite it having a lot of ventilation holes. That combination makes it ideally suited for damp runs in the fall or even on snow-covered roads. The sole has a tanklike tread, with lugs that grip tight on a variety of terrain.
WEIGHT: M 11.3 oz; W 8.9 oz

New Balance 910v4 $110
Testers found that the thick midsole of the 910 offers a stable platform on uneven ground, while a protective plate wedged between the foam and rubber stops any hard objects from poking through. The triangular lugs adapt to a variety of hard surfaces and are spaced out to shed mud if you run wet trails. We like the sturdy overlays in the back half of the shoe for stability, along with the stitched-on toe cap.
WEIGHT: M 10.7 oz; W 8.4 oz

HAPPY TRAILS

Rugged materials combine with sleek designs to let you perform (and look) your best on tough terrain. By Jeff Dengate

Petzl Actik Headlamp » Rated at 300 max lumens, the Actik will shed plenty of light on the path ahead. We like the low-power wide beam when moving slow over trails. It's powered by three AAA batteries or a Petzl's Core rechargeable battery ($30). **$45**

LAYERS FOR HER

Buff Pack Run Cap »
The crushable brim keeps sun and rain out of your eyes but is short enough so you can easily spot low-hanging branches over narrow trails. The whole hat can be folded and tucked in a waistband when not needed but snaps back to its original shape on your head. **$32**

Arc'teryx Cita Hoody »
This rip-resistant windbreaker is a featherweight (4.1 oz.), yet it stands up to driving winds and rain along exposed trails. Its slim cut keeps the fabric close to your body with just enough room for a base layer underneath. **$139**

Smartwool Merino 150 Base Layer Short Sleeve »
Temperature-regulating wool is versatile on technical trail runs—it sheds heat during strenuous climbs but still keeps you warm when moving more slowly, even if you're soaked with sweat. **$75**

The North Face Flight Trail Skirt »
Take cover with this unlined running skirt. The shell has a waterproof barrier to keep rain out and, because it's a separate piece of outerwear, you can choose your most comfortable running shorts or tights to wear underneath. **$80**

Katadyn BeFree Water Filtration System » Iodine tablets and long waits for purified water are things of the past. This 20-ounce soft flask has a microfilter that strips out almost all of the trail-side nasties in North America. Just fill it from a stream and squeeze to drink. **$40**

PHOTOGRAPH BY **MATT RAINEY**

Swix Sonic X-Trail Carbon Poles » For extremely steep or long outings, try poles—they'll help you power up hills without resorting to hands-on-knees form. This foldable carbon-fiber pair collapses quickly: A single button push releases the three sections so you can stow them on the fly. **$200**

HIS AUTUMN PICKS

Brooks Cascadia Thermal Vest »
Perfect for crisp fall days, this sleeveless top has synthetic insulation in the chest for extra warmth. Its trim fit includes stretchy side panels to boost comfort when sucking in deep breaths, and elastic arm openings to help keep wind gusts out. **$110**

Lululemon All-Terrain Shorts »
You'd typically expect to find Lululemon confined to indoor workouts, but its new trail-ready shorts boast a six-inch inseam and rip-resistant stretchy fabric that fends off brush scrapes. A big zippered pocket on the back (not waterproof) and two drop-in mesh pockets for gels boost long-run utility. **$78**

Columbia Titan Ultra Half-Zip Shirt »
Long sleeves may seem undesirable on sunny days, but this half-zip keeps you cool using sweat-activated technology that lowers the temperature of the polyester fabric and accelerates the wicking process to prevent overheating. Mesh underarms provide ventilation for heat to escape, and a drop-tail hem prevents unwanted exposure when twisting and bending. **$70**

Garmin Fenix 5X » The Fenix still features locked-in GPS, digital compass, and barometric altimeter, but the new 5X also gets truly useful on-watch mapping. You can see street names and natural features like lakes and rivers to help keep you on course. In civilization, the watch can create a round-trip running loop of any distance you want (up to 100 miles), complete with turn-by-turn directions. **$700**

END ON A HIGH

NOTE

It takes a lot more than a picture-perfect smile to nail crossing that finish line. Here's how to make sure you conquer it in Insta-worthy fashion.

BY KRISTEN DOLD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DALE EDWIN MURRAY

It doesn't matter whether your race is just over three miles or a whopping 26.2—every runner craves that triumphant, arms-in-the-air photo finish. (Because looking like a slumped-over hot mess ain't cute.) If only a grand finale were as easy as a quick arm toss: "Runners often have a lot of misconceptions about what it takes to finish strong—it involves planning, proper pacing, and some surreal mental and physical fortitude to keep going when your body wants to slow down," says Ryan Warrenburg, head coach for ZAP Fitness Coaching in North Carolina. And while a lot has to go right to feel good at the end of a race, it only takes a few missteps (sometimes in the first few minutes or miles) to throw your body and brain off track, torpedoing your dreams of crushing a PR or dominating a new-to-you distance. Achieve your goals—and snag that victorious finish-line snap—with a smart race-day plan of attack.

At the Starting Line

It's tough not getting swept up in the excitement of a starting line (music pumping, crowds roaring, legs feeling fresh AF), but gunning it out of the gate—especially if you're running a half or full marathon—will almost always add extra time to the clock later on, cautions Jason Fitzgerald, a 2:39 marathoner and founder and head coach of Strength Running. "You can't win a race in those first few minutes, but you can lose one—speeding up too early wastes precious carbs you're going to need during the last leg of the race, and it creates muscle damage that will cause a slowdown as you try to recover." These simple strategies can help you simmer, so you can later hit a full boil.

PAUSE THE PUMP-UP JAMS

Whether it's a new course or one you've run time and time again, your tunes at the starting line matter. Adjust your playlist so the first few songs promote control rather than high-energy frenzy, says Boston Marathon psychologist Jeffrey Brown, Psy.D., author of *The Racer's Brain*. You can even choose ones with a slower tempo—science shows we often match our stride to the beat of the music, so playing a song with a slower pace can help keep you from going HAM.

SEED YOURSELF CORRECTLY

While it's exciting to start near the front of the pack, slower runners risk getting pulled along at too fast a pace, says Lisa Reichmann, a Maryland-based running coach. If your event doesn't have corrals or signs that instruct where to line up according to your expected pace, try to gauge where you should be based on your usual finishing place. (If the course around you tends to be jammed from beginning to end, you're probably a midpacker—line up there.) Chronic fast starters should err on the side of beginning farther back to force a first-mile slowdown.

START SLOW

Tech addicts, this is where your watch can be crazy helpful. Run 10 to 20 seconds slower than your target pace per mile for anywhere from a few minutes (if you're running a 5K or 10K) to a few miles (if it's a half or full marathon) before easing into your goal pace, says Reichmann.

When You Crush That Halfway Mark

Getting to the middle of a race can stir feelings of badassness for making it this far, coupled with a hit of exhaustion because, damn, you still have a ways to go. "When you're starting to tire but the finish is still miles away, ask yourself what you need. More fuel? A different pace? A mental boost?" suggests Maryland running coach Julie Sapper.

The answer is likely one of those three—but a fuel check is a good place to start. "A common mistake in longer races is to skip water or gels because you don't feel like you need it," says Kelly Pritchett, Ph.D., R.D., assistant professor of nutrition and exercise science at Central Washington University. "But it then becomes impossible to catch up on fuel, and you'll feel wasted by the end of the race." Make sure that isn't you with these tweaks.

NAIL A FAST FINISH

Sail across the finish line by strategically ramping up your pace.

When you're starting to tire but the finish is still miles away, ask yourself what you need. More fuel? A different pace? A mental boost?"

GAS UP EARLY

Many 5K and 10K runners can get away with drinking just water, but if it's hot, you're a salty sweater, or you tend to cramp up, sip a sports drink midrace, says Pritchett. Half- and full-marathoners should practice their fueling plan several times before race day to avoid tummy trauma. "We suggest 30 to 60 grams of carbs (from energy gels, chews, or bars) per hour starting 15 to 30 minutes into the race," says Pritchett. "Bring a variety of options and save your favorite for last as extra motivation."

PACE LIKE A PRO

"If you're running a flat course, focus on even pacing with a kick at the end," says Reichmann. "If the race starts downhill and then moves uphill, plan for a positive split, taking extra time for the incline so you don't burn out before the final leg." And while it may sound obvious, don't forget to revise your strategy depending on the weather: If it's an unseasonably warm day, slow your roll or you may not finish at all, says Reichmann.

FIND PRODUCTIVE DISTRACTIONS

When exhaustion hits and pain's on the brain, Nikki Reiter, a biomechanist and coach for The Run SMART Project, tells her runners to focus on form cues for a reset. "If your turnover is slowing down and you're starting to hunch over, think *Run tall, Faster feet,* or *Push from the toes,* to distract yourself and get your form back."

THE SAFETY OF A SWIFT KICK

Is it smart to sprint across the finish line? Here's what experts say.

We love a dramatic ending as much as the next runner, but are finishing kicks—those final sprints to the line—a good idea? "If you're not fighting for a place in the Olympics, I tell middle-aged runners to skip the sprint and put that extra gas toward a sustained increase earlier in the race," says Paul Thompson, M.D., chief of cardiology at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut. Sudden acceleration causes a surge in heart rate, and if you have a preexisting condition, the strain may put you at increased risk for a heart attack or cardiac arrest. (Keep in mind that these events are still super rare.) If you're young and healthy and have been consistently training with lots of speedwork, you can sprint the last 100 meters, says Thompson.

For the Grand Finale

With most of the race behind you, it's finally safe to max out your engine. "For both short and long races, I suggest following the two-thirds rule—if you're controlled and have some extra gas left in the tank with just a third of the race left, it's okay to pick up your speed," says Warrenburg. Sound like you? Here's how to kick it into high gear.

TAP YOUR PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS

The last leg of the race is the time to blast the mood-boosting tunes, feed off the energy of the crowd, and visualize yourself finishing with power and strength. "At this point, a lot of runners will think *I'm hitting the wall*, so imagine it's made of Styrofoam instead of bricks—you can just push right through it," says Brown.

ADD SPEED GRADUALLY

"I've seen people decide to throw the kitchen sink at the race with too much course left, and it can go horribly wrong," says Warrenburg. A better approach: Ease into a quicker pace using the conservative guidelines below.

5K

Pick up the pace by a few seconds per mile every couple of minutes.

10K

After 4 miles, pick it up by a few seconds per mile every 3 or 4 minutes for as long as the pace feels manageable.

HALF MARATHON

From miles 9 to 11, drop the pace by 5 to 10 seconds each mile as it feels sustainable. Speed up more after mile 11.

FULL MARATHON

Same as a half, but speed up between miles 18 and 22, and consider bringing it in faster if you feel good after that.

DIEPSLOOT

56 MILES OF FREEDOM

The brutal yet wildly popular Comrades Marathon helped unite apartheid-era South Africa and still keeps hope alive in the hearts of runners—even those from segregated settlements like the indefatigable Sindi Magade.

By Ryan Lenora Brown

Photographs by Jonathan Torgovnik

IT'S 6:30 A.M. ON A HAZY MAY MORNING IN DIEPSLOOT, A RUN-DOWN TOWNSHIP IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.

As the sun crests over the horizon, casting a pink glow over the low-slung fog and cooking fire smoke, Sindi Magade emerges from the slumped, one-room tin house she shares with her three children and a nephew, and starts to run.

Her undulating nine-mile route will take her to the chic, gated development where she works full-time as a maid. Twice every week she traces this route in the morning, the runs forming the core of her training for the 56-mile Comrades Marathon, the world's oldest and largest ultra, which is held in South Africa each June.

Sindi, 40, jogs onto a street already thick with commuters, many of them dressed in the reflective blue coveralls of the city's gardeners and day laborers or the branded blazers of private security companies, the front lines of South Africa's notorious crime epidemic.

Every morning, on the fringes of every South African city, a mass exodus like this repeats itself again and again, as residents of the country's poorest neighborhoods trudge off to work in the shops, houses, and offices of its richest. Until the 1990s, black South Africans were forcibly confined to neighborhoods like this—huddled on the distant perimeters of its cities, far from jobs and services. Millions still live there.

This particular neighborhood, Diepsloot, sprung up after apartheid ended, a knot of shacks that grew into a village and then a small city filled with people looking for jobs in the high-end gated communities nearby. Sindi moved here in the neighborhood's early years, and nearly two decades later, her neighborhood still has a haphazard, unfinished look to it. There are few paved roads or sewers, and streams of blue-gray liquid flowing from houses and shops carve gullies into the roadside. Piles of garbage slump uncollected on nearly every street corner.

As she reaches the main road out of Diepsloot, Sindi weaves past a long line of dented mini-buses wheezing and heaving their way south toward the developments. By comparison, she looks like she could go forever, her loose, lanky limbs moving with practiced ease over trash and broken bottles as she thinks about her 5-year-old daughter's upcoming debate tournament, her teenage son's soccer championship, the new running shoes she hopes to buy next weekend. "I tell myself, I must push," Sindi says. "I must do it."

In the United States, ultramarathoners are, by reputation and reality, a very specific kind of runner—and a very specific kind of person. It's a Trader Joe's–loving, national park–vacationing, Subaru-driving kind of crowd, white collar and just plain white. (One 2013 survey of American ultrarunners found that less than .1 percent were black.)

In South Africa, ultrarunning may be an oddball pursuit, but it's a far more mainstream kind of oddball. In a country where race and class still cleave society in painful and obvious ways, distance running is a rare experience that seems to transcend both. And at the root of why is the hellishly hilly, stupidly long footrace that Sindi is getting ready to run.

"We just think it's a bucket-list thing—something you have to do," says Cheryl Winn, the vice-chairwoman of the Comrades Marathon Association and the 1982 female winner.

That appeals to Sindi. As a runner, she's not fast, but she's consistent. The last miles of her marathons are often faster than the first. And the deeper she sinks into a run, the more comfortable she feels. "Those longer runs, you can just relax," she says. "Shorter races are over too fast."

After a couple miles in Diepsloot, the city's grip slackens, and the crowded settlement gives way to rolling brown fields. Sindi jogs past the gates of Steyn City, a massive development that boasts the country's most expensive house, a garish faux-Italian villa worth nearly $19 million perched high on the hillside above her.

Past Steyn City, the city picks up again, this time as an end-

Previous pages: Sindi training in Diepsloot, the Johannesburg township where she lives with her three children and a nephew.

Above: At home getting ready for a run.

Right: Enjoying a laugh with neighborhood kids, including one of her own.

less parade of shopping malls and high-end car dealers. Billboards advertise Swedish furniture and personal trainers. When she turns down a residential street in a neighborhood called Four-ways, it's eerily empty and nearly silent, the only sounds the quiet metronome of her footfalls and the low buzz and snap of the electric fences that encircle the tall walls all around her.

It's about 8 a.m. when Sindi finally reaches the door to the suburban house where she works, which gives her just enough time to shower and change before beginning a long day on her feet—ironing clothes and cooking for the middle-aged white couple who employs her full-time for about $400 a month. This weekend, she'll run 26 miles, maybe a little more.

All of this, she is hoping, will be enough so that when she finds herself in the inky black of a Durban winter morning a month from now, jostling up against thousands of other runners tensely waiting at the Comrades starting line, she will be ready to face the race that, in many ways, she's been waiting her entire life to run.

> "Race and class cleave society in obvious ways, but running seems to transcend both.

Like any ultra, Comrades is a mean race—though weirdly, it's also a pretty democratic one. To qualify, runners need simply to run a standard marathon in five hours or less, slower than the median finishing time for either men or women in American marathons last year. And unlike most ultras, Comrades is run entirely on paved roads, not rocky mountain trails. That, plus aid stations every two kilometers or so and a generous 12-hour cutoff to finish the 56-mile course, seems ample encouragement to the slow, plodding, or simply ultra-uninitiated.

But that's where the good news ends. For one thing, Comrades stretches across a parcel of land between the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg known locally as the "Valley of a Thousand Hills"—of which at least eight or nine hundred seem to be part of the racecourse. The race is known for five major ones, each of which, in the words of nine-time Comrades winner Bruce Fordyce, "makes [Boston's] Heartbreak Hill look like a speed bump."

Indeed, nearly the entire route, which alternates direction between the two

cities each year, is uncomfortably undulating. During years that the race goes uphill, from coastal Durban to inland Pietermaritzburg, the challenge is more aerobic, a battle of lungs and legs. In the years that it goes the other way, the question becomes how much pain can you tolerate as you thrash your legs into submission.

But lonely suffer-fest, Comrades is not. In fact, it's more like the Boston Marathon run at the Super Bowl during a rowdy Fourth of July party. The race is massive—nearly 20,000 runners per year—joyful, and immensely popular. It's broadcast live on national TV for 13 straight hours on race day, from before the moment the mob of runners first takes off an hour before dawn until after the last runners stagger across the finish line. For nearly the entire route, spectators pack the course two and three and five people deep, some in costume, many with grills and coolers of beer, all improbably excited to watch a bunch of people running really far, really slowly.

And Comrades has another unusual distinction. In a country still sliced apart by segregation, this dizzying carnival is strangely integrated. And in a sport so stereotypically undiverse that "marathons" appears just behind yoga and microbreweries on a satirical blog called "Stuff White People Like," Comrades actually looks a whole lot like the country around it.

For many South Africans, Comrades was the first nonsegregated sporting event they saw. At the height of the antiapartheid struggle in the 1970s, Comrades began allowing women and black runners. A few years later, it began appearing in its glorious, tedious entirety on national TV. And though the state broadcaster tried to cut away from shots of blacks and whites sharing bottles of water or consoling each other on the road, it was too late. Comrades was a revelation.

Back then, "black people knew soccer, they didn't know Comrades," says Teleko "Samuel" Ralejalla, a 21-time Comrades finisher and prison cook. But "people come [to the race] after they see people they know. In those days we were few, but now we are many."

For many viewers, the race seemed to neatly shear away all the social pretenses of segregation. For an ephemeral moment, it reordered the universe. Gardeners jogged past professors. Construction workers consoled doctors. Black runners hobbled alongside white runners, traversing a distance so long and humbling that it would eventually strip them of any social grace, of any walls between them. For 56 miles, they had something that most other days of the year eluded them—a shared goal, and even more important, a shared pain.

Perhaps in the grand scheme of things, that doesn't matter much. An ultramarathon, after all, can't save a country. It won't reduce income inequality. It can't turn over centuries of colonialism or reverse a vicious system of segregation that still hangs low over the country's present.

But for one day, on one crowded stretch of road, South Africans can hold a mirror to themselves and see staring back the country they'd always hoped they could become.

Sports have long played an oversized role in South African history. During apartheid, one of the most visible forms of international protest against the country was sports boycotts. For more than two decades, South Africa was barred from the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup because it refused to integrate its teams. And as pressure against the apartheid regime increased in the '70s and '80s, its beloved rugby and cricket teams met with protesters and booing

PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJESH JANTILAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Far left: The scene in downtown Durban just before the start of the Comrades Marathon, June 4, 2017.

Near left: Nine-time winner Bruce Fordyce breaks the tape in the 1986 race.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BRUCE FORDYCE

crowds when they traveled abroad. So when apartheid ended at last in the early 1990s, sports naturally was an equally important turf for reconciliation.

You might remember this moment: President Nelson Mandela in the center of a rugby pitch, wearing a green and gold jersey buttoned awkwardly to the collar. At his back is the roar of 60,000 South African rugby fans, and in front of him, their hero, Francois Pienaar, captain of the national rugby team.

It's June 1995, and for the first time since the end of apartheid, a South African sports team has won a major international tournament, the Rugby World Cup—and on their home turf to boot. Forget for a second, Mandela's presence says, that all but one of the members of the squad are white. Forget that most of the fans are, too. For now, for this moment, the country is in this together. It's our victory. It's our team.

"Sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire," Mandela later famously said. "It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers."

But if rugby was where Mandela made that point most visibly, the president's real sporting passions lay elsewhere.

> "For one day, South Africans can see the country they always hoped they'd become.

Though best known for his prowess in the boxing ring, Mandela's first love was distance running. For most of his adult life, Mandela was a regular jogger—an unremarkable feat, perhaps, were it not for the fact that he did it without ever leaving the eight-by-seven-foot prison cell to which he was confined for 18 of his 27 years behind bars.

"Running taught me valuable lessons," he wrote in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. "Training counted more than intrinsic ability, and I could compensate for a lack of natural aptitude with diligence and discipline. I applied this in everything I did."

So when Mandela got out of jail, he didn't just attend rugby matches. He went to Comrades, too.

At the finish line of the 1995 Comrades, one week before the president presented Pienaar with that rugby trophy, Mandela congratulated the two winners—both white—and stood with the race's organizers, posing for a photo. On every side of him were white men—plus two white women—in crisp blazers embroidered with Comrades logos and purple Comrades neckties. These were the people a local newspaper called, "the almost exclusively white, male...colonial set which controls Comrades." But Mandela's smile was wide and genuine.

Comrades, Mandela would tell a similar crowd at the finish line two years later, had been the dream of a white World War I veteran looking to honor his fallen fellow soldiers—a noble, if narrow, aim. But like South Africa itself, that vision had warped and stretched across the years. Now, the ultra had become a thing that "unites people from all over the country." Like nearly everything Mandela said in those years, his words felt bigger than their literal meaning. If this race could change, he seemed to suggest, maybe, just maybe, this country could, too.

Sindi was born in 1976, the year the old South Africa began to fall apart. That June, police gunned down a group of high-school students in the Johannesburg township of Soweto during a peaceful protest march. This wasn't the first time the government attacked protesters, or even the first time it killed children in the process. But this particular moment went viral. Jutting out from the edge of a continent of newly independent states, South Africa suddenly seemed a sad and antiquated thing—a living fossil of a (Continued on page 93)

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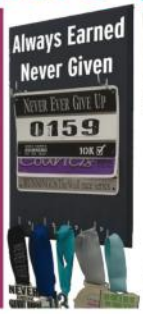

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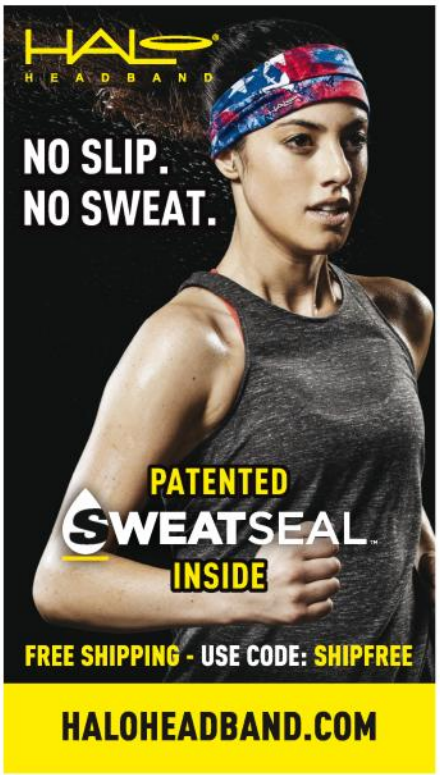

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colonial era come and gone.

For historians, this moment represents the beginning of the end. But for Sindi, growing up, all of that was a million miles away. In her village in the Eastern Cape, the country's racial divisions were as heavy and solid as ever. Every January both her parents went away for the year to work for white people in Johannesburg—her mother as a maid, her father as an airport porter. Whites were the ones with nice houses and swimming pools. But Kolomane was far removed, a rural village of thatched-roof rondavels scattered across dramatic hills, with lean horned cattle wandering between them.

From the time she was young, Sindi competed in every athletics event her school offered. "I did javelin, shotput, netball," she says. "I played soccer and there were no girls playing, so I played with the boys." And she ran, racing barefoot on a gravel track for 100 or 800 or 5,000 meters. She wasn't particularly fast, but she liked the feeling running gave her. When you were running, life couldn't keep up with you. And if it couldn't keep up with you, it couldn't hurt you.

And there was a lot, in those days, to run from. From the boys who taunted her mercilessly the day she came to school in her first-ever pair of shoes. They were old high heels, hand-me-downs from the white woman whose house her mother cleaned. *Are you trying to be white now?* the boys taunted her. *Are you a fancy madam now?* She was running, too, from the realization that she would never finish school, that her family simply couldn't afford it. Later on, running would carry her away from the grief of losing a boyfriend to a mugging gone wrong and the slow-burning fear she had each day as she sent her kids off to school in a neighborhood infamous for its violent crime.

In Kolomane, she ran the gravel track. In Cape Town, where she moved after dropping out of high school, it was laps around a sports field. But it was Johannesburg where the runs began to take on new purpose. In 2000, when she was 24, Sindi relocated to the city and found part-time work as a maid. But in Joburg, just as in Cape Town, it seemed that she could never earn money fast enough to keep up with the hands that stretched out to take it. Whenever she could, Sindi sent a few dollars home to her mother. But often, it was impossible. She was only making about $6 a week, and there were precious few places she could cut corners on expenses.

Then one day it hit her—what if instead of riding a shared commuter mini-bus six miles to work, she jogged? Why not get to work for free? *This is the way I'll save money,* she thought.

And so she did. But as Sindi settled into her commute, she began to realize something—she enjoyed it. Other people she'd met who jogged for exercise told her that as the miles added up, they grew more and more tired. But Sindi often found the opposite was true. As the miles ticked by in her long, slow runs, she simply sunk deeper into a rhythm, relaxing into the sound of her own rasping breaths, or the *woosh-woosh-woosh* of cars sliding past on the road beside her.

And as life grew more knotted and complicated, running became a clean reset. So when she was offered a full-time cleaning job a few miles farther from home, she continued jogging there. It saved her a bit of money, yes, but it was also the best way she knew to clear her head and carry on.

And soon running became her out from a crumbling relationship. Sindi had met Zane shortly after she moved to Johannesburg. He was tall and sturdily built, quiet in a way that struck Sindi as deeply thoughtful. He listened attentively and liked to buy her chocolates sometimes just to remind her he loved her.

Then the fights began. She enrolled in a course to finish her high school diploma. Zane told her he didn't like her being out so late with other men. She joined the Diepsloot Athletic Club. Zane complained she wasn't home to cook dinner. She ran her first half marathon. He said that her leggings were too tight, her shirt cut too low. The accusations came fast and furious, and there was, it seemed, no way to stop them.

One evening in 2007, Sindi was getting into a friend's car after a running club practice when Zane appeared and charged at them, in a rage, hurling invectives. "That was when I decided, I don't want this life," she says. The following week, she took her children to her mother's house and then went home

to pack up the last of their belongings.

Zane begged her not to leave. Instead, she walked out and never returned.

ON THE DAY BEFORE the Comrades Marathon, Durban is a sea of spandex. In its hotels and on its streets, in the queues for ice cream at the beachfront promenade and in the blue glow of the slot machines in its vast casino, it looks like the entire city is, at any moment, ready to break into a jog. Tomorrow, more than 17,000 people will do just that, and by now they are nearly all here, many of them slouched in the lobby of the local Hilton, adjusting their Kinesio tape or fiddling with piles of energy gels.

By 7 a.m., when Sindi and 15 other Diepsloot runners start a shake-out jog on the wide ribbon of concrete that stretches along the Indian Ocean in downtown Durban, it is already full of people. Fishermen and surfers head toward the water as the last of the late-night revelers stumble off the beach, loud and bleary-eyed and merry.

But those coming off the beach this morning are met with an equally jubilant wall of color and noise. The packs of Comrades runners move slowly, wearing a rainbow of race-finisher T-shirts. Sindi and her crew greet other Joburg clubs as they pass.

"Randburg!" "Soweto!" "Kagiso!" "Hello, Diepsloot, hello!"

A generation after the end of apartheid, running clubs, like society itself, are still neatly siloed. They cluster around neighborhoods, and they look like the places they come from. Most Diepsloot members work, as Sindi does, in more affluent adjoining neighborhoods. Several are security guards. One is a teacher. Another, a broad-shouldered middle-aged man named Ali, drives an armored van. Almost all train for ultras by run-commuting. Occasionally, they meet up for a rambling group run along the flanks of Diepsloot, past sand mines and guest farms and mile upon mile of wilting brown prairie.

But despite segregation along geographical lines, there's a flickering, ephemeral camaraderie that club culture seems to build among runners themselves. During a big-city marathon in the U.S., runners might draw strength from crowd support—friends and family with silly signs, random spectators calling out names on bibs. But runners who don't know each other don't often chat among themselves. South African runners, conversely, are—for those few minutes or hours on the road—a tribe. They befriend each other and offer condolences. They share gels and crack jokes.

"It feels like we all like to struggle in this country," Sindi's teammate Ali says.

COMRADES WAS NEVER supposed to be political. But really it always has been, ever since 1923, the third year it was run, when a bank typist named Frances Hayward showed up on the starting line next to all the men in "a very businesslike green gymnasium costume" and then ran the whole race without a number, just to show that a woman could. A black runner named Robert Mtshali did a similar thing in 1935. And over the years, they stacked up, these interlopers, these "unofficial" black and female Comrades finishers, until finally, in the mid-1970s, race directors begrudgingly agreed to strike the "white men only" rule.

Yet it wasn't until 1981 that many people here realized just how political the race had become. That year, a group of white university students in Johannesburg had launched a protest against Republic Day, a kind of South African independence day that, in practice, had become a celebration of a repressive, out-of-touch white government. Since Comrades was to be run on Republic Day as an official part of the festivities, the students asked runners to boycott the race.

Bruce Fordyce, a rising distance-running star in South Africa, didn't want to. The year before, he'd finished second, and this might be his year to finally take the title. But he agreed with the aims of the protest. So the night before the race, he took a friend's headband and dyed it black, then twisted it into an armband—the official symbol of the protest.

A number of other runners did the same. But Fordyce's armband drew the most attention, and the most ire, because he won the race wearing it. ("One of the proudest moments in my life," he later said).

Fordyce went on to win another Comrades, then another, then another. Between 1981 and 1990, he won nine of the 10 Comrades held, sealing his reputation as its greatest champion. But by the mid-1980s, many of the runners in the lead group chasing him were black, as were a growing number of the mid- and back-of-the-packers. And television captured, in real time, how the race was spinning away from its segregated beginnings: since 2009, every male winner has been black.

If Comrades had had a way of briefly subverting apartheid, however, ultimately it hasn't outrun it. Even if Fordyce's life intersected with many elite black runners on the course, when they left the finish line they quickly drifted back into the vastly different South Africas from which they had come. Today, Fordyce lives in a spacious suburban Johannesburg house. Fluffy purebred dogs pad across his wood floors, and the garden outside is lush and well-tended. By contrast, Hoseah Tjale, who twice finished second to Fordyce and won South Africa's other major ultra, the Two Oceans Marathon, returned after his running career to a shack settlement and his job as a delivery driver.

Some black elites sank even further into obscurity. In 2010, word spread that Gabashane "Vincent" Rakabaele, the first official black finisher of Comrades and the first black winner of Two Oceans, had died the previous year in his home country of Lesotho. But then a more distressing fact came to light. Rakabaele had, in fact, died almost seven years earlier; 2009 had just been when his grave was discovered.

"It's bad news," Fordyce says. "They disappear and you just can't find them."

IT'S STILL PITCH BLACK out when Sindi and her running mates wake up on June 4, put on their orange and black Diepsloot jerseys, and walk tensely through the quiet morning to Durban City Hall.

There, they say their goodbyes and good lucks and head off for their starting pens, sorted by qualifying time. In Pen G, Sindi meets a man who tells her this is his sixth time starting Comrades but that he's never once finished—and she swallows another wave of nerves and thinks of her kids at home, watching hopefully for their mother on their small TV. A few minutes later, the South African national anthem begins to play, and afterward, an old song that migrant workers from villages like hers used to sing as they worked in and traveled home from Zimbabwean mines.

Shosholoza, Ku lezontaba. Moving fast, moving strong, through those mountains.

Wenu yabaleka, Ku lezontaba. You are leaving, through those mountains.

Around her, she hears quiet sniffles—from big white guys who look like rugby players, from wiry middle-aged Indian men, and from a wispy young woman who a few minutes earlier had been cracking a smile in a selfie. And that's the moment when, for the first time today, Sindi finds herself tearing up, too. *Jesus, I'm somewhere,* she thinks. *This isn't a normal race.*

A few seconds after that, the sound of a man mimicking the throaty cock-a-doodle-do of a rooster pipes out over the loudspeaker, another Comrades tradition. And then, quite suddenly, the race begins.

It will be easy and then it will be hard and then it will be easy again. There will be hills longer than any she has trained on, but there will be more encouragement, too, loud and constant. In the tidy, walled Durban suburbs, she'll pass microbreweries and farms boasting views of the valleys below, and the cheers will come mostly

from white people. But further on, in small, sleepy towns that orbit around a lone general store and past vast swaying cornfields and a seemingly endless stretch of chicken farms, she'll see black and brown and white faces staring at her from the crowd, calling out her name as she passes. It begins to feel to Sindi like if she stops running she won't just be letting down her family and friends watching back home. She'll be letting down all of the spectators, too.

As she runs, she'll think often of everyone who's helped her get here. There's her 5-year-old daughter, Somila, who, whenever her mother is having a hard day, likes to tell her elaborate stories about the kind of house she plans to build for her when she's grown. "A place with an upstairs," she'll hear Somila explaining. "A place with a gym where my mom can do all her exercise. A safe place where no one is going to disturb her." There's her employer, Simonne, a woman who sits across a social divide from Sindi but who she nonetheless sees as being "like family," who years ago encouraged her to leave her husband and who this year helped raise over $1,000 to cover the cost of new running shoes and gear for Sindi as well as her trip to Durban. (The money also helped feed her children while she was away.)

Several times, she'll see runners struggling, strangers, people she has never seen before and will never see again, and she'll offer them what she can—encouragement, aspirin, a sachet of water. Others will do the same for her. "Pain and joy mix together to yield the Comrades experience," Sindi's teammate Sizo says. "The spirit of this race is that you forget for a moment what's happening in South Africa around you."

Several times, Sindi will pass "buses"—the massive, colorful riots of runners that serve as pace groups in South African races. As they chant, dance, and sing, she'll wonder where they muster the energy. Sometimes she'll be engulfed by them as they stream past. But she keeps hearing Ali's words in her head, *Run your own race,* and she lets them go.

Near the end of the race, a white woman from Fourways, the suburb where Sindi works, will jog up alongside her. On another day, in another place, they'd pass without speaking, a white suburbanite and a black maid. But today, 10 and a half hours into the longest run of their lives, they have a lot in common, and for the next five or six kilometers they'll hobble along together, talking about the months of training that brought them here, how unbelievable it is to them both that it's now almost over.

On the race's notorious final hill, she'll slow to a walk and, for the first time all day, really take in the scenery all around her—a thunderous crescendo of green hills that the South African writer Alan Paton once called "lovely beyond any singing of it."

Before she finishes (in 11:21:10), legs and lungs aching, she'll think, *No one is making you do this*. And those words will push her forward one more step, then another. No one is making her do this. No landlord. No children. No boss. No angry ex-husband. In a life neatly fenced in on all sides by obligations, the final miles of a long run like this have only one: her own.

"Once you've done a Comrades," Sizo says, "you've created history for yourself, which is not easy for most individuals to do." For Sindi, as she runs, it will feel like that. She's doing something on the cusp of impossible. And if she can do this thing, maybe she can also learn to drive. Maybe she can move her family out of Diepsloot. Maybe she can finally get that high-school diploma she's been imagining for so long.

And in that moment, as much as her body will hurt, she almost won't want the race to end. Because for now, she will realize, for exactly as long as this insane hill and this insane road and this insane race carry on, she is exactly where she, and she alone, has chosen to be.

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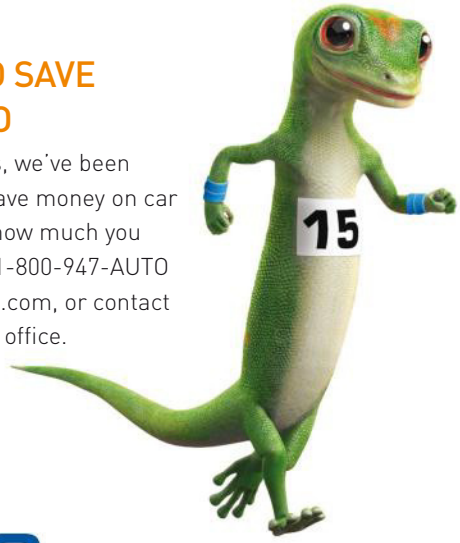

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I'M A RUNNER

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AMIN EL GAMAL

31, ACTOR, LOS ANGELES

"Running has a profound effect on everything I do. It gives me a state of well-being."

I stumbled upon running at the end of middle school. I would create stories midrun in my head about overcoming my bullies. It was very therapeutic.

I was overweight as a kid. Yes, running keeps me in good physical shape. But, mentally, it made me more empathic toward myself.

A good run is one where you've completely surrendered. It's very cleansing. It's almost like prayer for me.

You have to be creative about squeezing runs in wherever you can. Sometimes I'll just sleep in my running clothes. Other times, I'll keep a set of clothes and running shoes in my car, so if I have a meeting in Santa Monica, I can just go for a run at the beach.

Running is emotional. It's good for me to occasionally have an angsty, cry run where tears are streaming down my face. Sometimes really slow, sad music gets my heart rate going. I think my body is trained to be receptive to my feelings. It must be an actor thing.

I still stretch before, in the middle, and after a run. I do the same stretches I learned while competing in track in high school. Sometimes I'll do a little bit of yoga afterward.

I hate running on treadmills. I don't know why. I've tried and I just can't do it. I feel like I need to be moving somewhere and experiencing something out in the world.

I usually wear tube socks and shorts like a '70s runner from hell. I'm not inconspicuous.

On one of the rainiest days in L.A. last winter, I had promised myself I would go for a run. It was flooding and my roof was leaking, but I was like, "I'm going to go for it!" So I went running in the rain. I liked being that crazy person in puddles and splashing about. It reminds me that I'm alive.

I know I've had the perfect run when I feel like I have a new lease on life. I have this "Hell, yeah!" attitude.

My body feels lighter and I'm ready to take the next step, whatever that is. I'm ready to accomplish the next thing, to tackle the next mountain.

● El Gamal played Cyclops, a villain in last spring's *Prison Break: Resurrection* on FOX. He is also on the leadership committee of GenR, a group advocating for refugee rights.

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