

## on the PULSE

**Marathons – the real story – By Rachael Pellatt**

Anyone who has been bonkers enough (like me!) to apply for the 2010 Virgin London Marathon will know that the time is nearing when you find out if you have got in through the ballot system. The excitement is flowing through you, but in a single moment you can transform into a gibbering wreck thinking of the hard work that lies ahead of you.

No-one can lie about Marathon training, it's not fun and it's not glamorous – it's painful and soul destroying hard work. The upset stomachs, the blisters, the muscle aches...as I said, not at all glamorous. However there is a bright side, a very bright side – if you can deal with the training and get through to that day, where you line up with the other 30,000 runners to begin the worlds most famous marathon you will be amazed at how great you feel!

The very best thing about Marathon day is that most of the hard work is done; it's just another run (or it's best to tell yourself that!). From getting on the train and exchanging knowing glances with your fellow runners, to crossing THAT finish line, you will have fun. Don't get me wrong, it will hurt but the London Marathon atmosphere is in a league of its own – only those who have experienced first hand what its like can really appreciate the spine-tingling electricity that comes from those 26.2 miles.

My best piece of advice...don't wear earphones or listen to music. Relish the cheering and atmosphere that thousands of spectators create. Enjoy the children 'high-fiving' you as you run past, the kind people spraying water from their garden hoses over the runners, and the huge number of complete strangers who smile at you, give encouragement and a kind word. The bands play, people sing and you run by with people shouting your name to 'keep going' and 'remember why you're doing it'....and that right there is it. Why are you doing it? What has given you the strength to pound your way 26.2 miles round the streets of our Nations capital? Whatever it is, keep that at the forefront of your mind and you will cross that line.

For most recreational runners like myself, the marathon isn't a race nor is it a 'distance challenge' it is wholly and completely a test of inner strength and the greatest sense of pride that you will ever feel.

Just remember the wise words of Adidas (!) - you will find they ring true.....

*"Impossible is nothing"*

*"The pride will be worth it"*

**AGILITY TRAINING – By Evan Jenkins**

Agility is simply the ability to decelerate and change direction. This is a key component in all motor sports. It is important to focus on the proper mechanics and decrease wasted motion to enhance your ability during game play. When decelerating to change direction it is important to be in the proper position of sinking and pushing the hips back, knees over the mid point of the foot, and shoulders over the knees. This position will enhance your ability to change directions quicker and decrease the chance of injury. Also when changing direction it is important that the eyes and head initiate the movement with the shoulders and hips following. Let the hips and shoulders follow the eyes.

All drills should be performed with full recovery between sets. Sink your hips, focus on the proper mechanics and explode round the corners. Focus on the proper body mechanics and give max effort for each repetition. Control is the key!!

Can you think of any agility drills appropriate to your sport? Design one and discuss it with an instructor of your choice!!!

**Cheerio Claire! – By Rachael Pellatt**

As many of you may be aware, Claire will be leaving us this month to return to her specialism in the field of GP Referral clients. Although she has only been with us for a short while, Claire has had a very positive impact on the team and is widely known for her friendly approach and great sense of humour. She has done an exceptional job at keeping her male colleagues in check and I'm sure you will agree that her presence will be sorely missed.

I hope that you will join me and the rest of the team in wishing her all the best in her future career.

## **Shin Splits – By Claire Bishop**

### **What are they?**

It is the general name given to pain at the front of the lower leg.

### **Causes**

The most common cause is inflammation of soft tissue surrounding the bone, which is usually caused by running on hard surfaces or running on your tip toes. People who over pronate are more susceptible to injury. Inadequate rest periods between specific training can also exacerbate symptoms.

### **Symptoms can include**

- Tenderness over the inside of the shin
- Occasional swelling
- Pain on pointing the toes towards the floor

### **Treatment**

- Rest, then gradual return to activity
- Ice the area post activity
- Equip yourself with the correct style of running shoes
- Stretch the functional muscles

As with most things in life, prevention is better than cure. The following points can help to prevent shin splints:

- Purchasing the proper shoe for your foot is the first step in preventing shin splints. Knowing whether you are an overpronator or underpronator (your feet may roll in or roll out) is very important. Some local sports shops will be able to assess your gait and select suitable trainers for you.
- Shock absorbing insoles
- Make you sure complete a full warm up and cool down with each running session including stretches,
- Strengthening exercises. Try simple exercises such as walking down steep hills, walking on toes, walking on heels or even picking up marbles with your toes!!

<http://www.watfx.com/>

## **Nature Vs Nurture**

### **A genetic study – By Matt Gurney**

A common but intriguing topic to discuss with fellow fitness freaks! Usain Bolt, 9.58 secs is this immense feat down to sheer hard graft, determination and sport science, or is it an inherited proportion of genes that has given such an athlete a sublime anatomical advantage over his peers?

There is no right or wrong answer with this one guys, however there are certainly limits to how strong, fast, flexible and aerobically fit we can be. There are 2 types of muscle fibres that constitute to which specific disciplines we can excel at, be it strength or cardiovascular fitness etc. These fibres are classified by type 1 and type 2 fibres. Type 1 are slower to contract have higher mitochondrial and capillary density therefore suiting endurance athletes. Type 2 contrasts by contracting rapidly and lower mitochondrial density therefore suiting sprinters. These fibres can also be dissected further into type 1a, 2a which are basically set in the middle of the two opposites!! All of us are born with a slightly higher proportion of either fibres (Nature) however with intense and focused training it has been proven to increase the ratio of a certain fibre to specify performance furthermore (Nurture)

However with regard to Bolt, if you analyse his physique you will notice he is 6ft 4' 90kg of lean mass, therefore limb length is a serious advantage over fellow athletes, so much so that the nearest athlete was Tyson Gay who also ran PB standing at 5ft 10" some 6 inches smaller and an incredible 15kg lighter. Obviously not taking away the extreme sacrifice and training needed to become an Olympic athlete but it is evident to see the natural genetics athletic characteristics Bolt has which evidently shows with his times and achievements thus far!

So check your family history to see whether there's an athlete inside you!!