

MiLES & MiNUTES

Publication of the Richmond Road Runners Club

Spring 2021 | Volume 44, Issue 2

The Joy of Running



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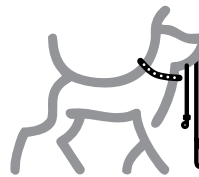


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Miles & Minutes is the official newsletter for and by members of the Richmond Road Runners Club (RRRC). The RRRC is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to foster fitness and a healthy lifestyle through running in the metro Richmond, Virginia area. The club is affiliated with the Road Runners Club of America and sponsors nearly 20 races throughout the year with distances ranging from 1 mile to

50K. As a service to the community, the club contracts to provide race services. These services range from renting equipment to full-computerized race timing. The club provides services for over 30 events during the year.

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Deadline: The deadline for submitting letters, articles, pictures and volunteer credits is posted on the club website. Send articles directly to the editorial staff at milesandminutes@rrrc.org. Please keep article submissions to under 1,000 words. *Miles & Minutes* is distributed quarterly.

Membership: RRRC dues are \$5 for students, \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. The club mailing address is Richmond Road Runners Club P.O. Box 8724, Richmond, VA 23226. Members can renew or sign up on-line at www.rrrc.org. Unless otherwise noted, opinions expressed in *Miles & Minutes* are those of the author, and not necessarily those of the Richmond Road Runners Club.

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[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]



There is just something about spring. Earlier sunrises, slightly warmer weather, and even a few smaller races on the horizon. A little over a year ago, our world changed, and we had to shift gears for the

pandemic. Today, we are slowly and confidently shifting forward. We are continuously innovating ways and places to race as we march toward what people have been commonly calling “the new normal.”

It still may take some time to go back to the large events and gathering closely in a corral, but seeing people out crushing PRs, trying new courses, and going the distance has made me so happy.

Running never stopped. I know for many of us, running has been our lifeline over the past year. As a club, we are working to extend that lifeline to others with new initiatives that not only support our local running community but continue to promote equity in the sport. For all the good running has done in my life, I am certain that our club can help many others find a love of running. Maybe it's meeting up with a friend that has expressed interest in getting more active or calling an old running best friend to go back out on the streets with you. It could be volunteering at a water stop or supporting local children's running programs. All these can help others find Richmond Road Runners Club and help promote running in our community.

See you on the roads, ■

Nikkia Young | *President*

On the cover: Richmond runner Kevin Carpenter on the North Bank Trail of the James River Park System. Photo by Doug Ash Photography.



Richmond Road Runners Club



@rvaroadrunners

[EDITOR'S LETTER]

Springing back to life as we knew it



Before I became a runner, I just knew I would never run a marathon. After all, I reasoned, I didn't even want to sit through a four-hour movie, much less run for longer than four hours!

Before I became a runner, I avoided getting up early for any reason.

Before I became a runner, I despised winter.

Now, I've run a bunch of marathons and logged many lengthy training runs. I've discovered that running is my zen. I measure the passage of miles and landmarks, not time.

Now, running is still the only reason I voluntarily awaken before 7. I won't hesitate to set an early alarm to run with a group, attend a race, or beat the heat.

OK, so I still am not a fan of winter, but I mitigate seasonal misery by getting out into the cold. I've discovered that running with a winter training team provides accountability that helps me through my least favorite season. I've learned that running in cold temperatures seasons my body – and even my warmth-loving soul – to lower temperatures.

These are but a few benefits of running. For this issue of Miles & Minutes, we surveyed RRRC members on what they enjoy about running and being active (see Page 16). Assuredly, you'll find either your own words or sentiments you could have penned.

Running is life

The first three questions in the "Joy of Motion" survey had nothing to do with the pandemic, but the topic arose nonetheless. How could it not? It pervades every aspect of our lives.

A recent episode of BBC's "The Evidence" covered pandemic-related mental health issues. Panelist Andrew Steptoe, professor of psychology and epidemiology at University College London in the UK, led a study on the mental health impact of enforced isolation due to the pandemic. The UK Social Study looked at how a variety of activities improved or

As runners, we wonder what running-related repercussions might persist. How soon will people feel comfortable packed into a pre-race corral? Will races have changed?

harm mental health. Steptoe reported, "The things which come up most strikingly as related to improvements in mental health are gardening and also being physically active outside."

Runners, including many who responded to the Miles & Minutes survey, can confirm that finding!

Returning to normal

The panelists on "The Evidence" also discussed how quickly and thoroughly people would rebound from the pandemic.

Personally, I experience a sudden visceral reaction when I see characters in a TV show or movie gathered too close without masks (and then I laugh at myself!). I got out of the habit of early morning runs (winter can share the blame for that) and of meeting up with running friends. However, with Pfizer shot number one in my arm, I've committed to helping with the Sports Backers marathon training team ... in person ... for real!

As runners, we wonder what running-related repercussions might persist. How soon will people feel comfortable packed into a pre-race corral? Will races have changed?

The Chicago Marathon anticipates hosting the same field size for their October 2021 event – organizers will announce safety protocols as the date draws closer. The Boston Athletic Association has postponed the 2021 Boston Marathon until October and is limiting participants to 20,000, down from 30,000. The BAA is also adding a virtual option for 70,000 additional participants. Sports Backers has scheduled the Richmond Marathon for Nov. 13. And RRRC has returned to in-person events, while still offering virtual options.

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RACE RECAPS

First Day 5K – Jan. 1, 2021

By Selina Guider

Our first race to kick off the new year was virtual, but 221 runners and walkers submitted results for RRRC's First Day 5k. (No, we did not make up that number of participants!) Many people submitted photos for our photo contest, and it was a lot of fun seeing the variety of creative routes and fun "first" sightings on your routes. Thanks for sharing with us, runners!

Photos: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/ParticipantPhotos-146509/40615?rsus=100-200-78a17af8-ab13-4f7e-a1de-7a146934cfb2>



continued on page 4

UPCOMING RACES

As COVID regulations evolve, RRRC is working with the city of Richmond and surrounding counties to get more races on the calendar in the coming months. Stay tuned!

RRRC Virtual Carytown 10k – April 24 – May 3

Run when, where, and with whomever you want and simply submit your results by May 3. This will qualify as an RRRC Grand Prix (GP) event for 2021.

RRRC Carytown 10k at Pocahontas State Park – May 2

This will be an in-person race with a participation cap of 225 runners. It will qualify as an RRRC Grand Prix (GP) event for 2021.

KEEP ON RACIN'

Check out the Richmond Road Runners Club website for other event opportunities – and not just RRRC! It's all part of our commitment to support runners throughout the region. Go to RRRC.org and click on the RVA RACE CALENDAR tab.

Race Recaps

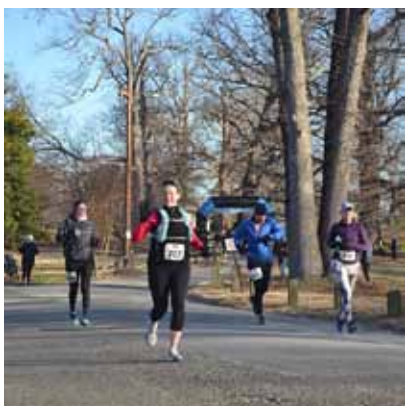
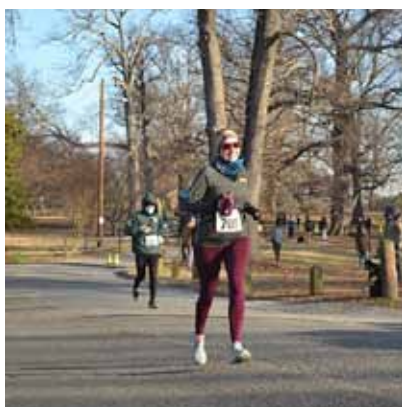
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Frostbite 12K – Jan. 24, 2021

RRRC's Frostbite was certainly memorable this year! For starters, the distance was cut to 12k from the traditional 15k, and the in-person race was conducted at Bryan Park – runners encountered a few more hills than our usual course. Masks, staggered wave starts, social distancing, and other COVID guidelines were certainly Frostbite firsts – and hopefully Frostbite lasts. Additionally, the race certainly lived up to its name this year: the temperature was well below freezing at start time, although the sun was out.

Nonetheless, 211 runners finished the in-person race, and 145 runners posted virtual results. A big shoutout goes to race directors Mara George and Chris Mason, who pulled together the first in-person race of 2021. It was a success – and the redesigned, COVIDized medals and shirts were fantastic!

Photos: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=richmondroadrunnersclub&set=a.3782807151796101>



Sweetheart 8k – Feb. 14, 2021

Sadly, the in-person version of RRRC's Sweetheart 8k had to be cancelled due to icy conditions. But 184 runners and walkers still submitted times for virtual results! Thank you to everybody for being flexible with this race and still participating virtually. We <3 our runners, and we're glad you all stayed safe.

*Photos: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/VA/Midlothian/Huguenot3Miler>
ParticipantPhotos-175084/41437*

Huguenot 3 Miler – March 7, 2021

RRRC's Huguenot 3 Miler was another in-person success. It also marked almost exactly 1 year since our last "regular" race pre-COVID! This year, 119 runners finished the small, no-frills trail race on a non-muddy course, and 41 runners submitted virtual results.

Photos: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/VA/Midlothian/Huguenot3Miler>

OTHER NEWS

More information and registration at RRRC.org.

Diversity And Inclusion Policy

ACE (Access, Connection, and Experience)

In February, RRRC's Board of Directors voted to adopt a new Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The initiative has three parts:

Access: We will seek to provide community programs for new, current, and returning runners. We will take actions to ensure our activities are accessible to those who want to join and participate (e.g., a shoe clinic for those in need, membership scholarships on an as-needed basis, community coaching sessions, and running group support).

Connection: We will actively invite other groups throughout the Greater Richmond area to come to our events, including our monthly board meetings, and to share more about themselves. We will invite them to become members. We will aim to collaborate with other active run groups to ensure they have the support they need to thrive, and we will use our platform to support and elevate what they bring to the area (e.g., social events with local clubs and having representatives from various groups in the area come to board meetings to inform and develop ideas for the area as a whole).

Experience: Our events will respect each participant from beginning to end. People of all paces will be welcomed and celebrated (e.g., races being walker-friendly, having a sweeper for each event, and keeping the finish line open until the final participant has arrived).

Club Member Keira D'Amato Continues To Shine

After breaking the women-only 10-mile American race record in November 2020, Midlothian runner Keira D'Amato took a big step and went pro, signing a deal with Nike in February. Shortly after, she participated in the Trials of Miles Texas Qualifier, finishing with a time that qualifies her to compete in the 10,000-meter event at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in June.

Way to go, Keira! We're rooting for you!

RRRC Merchandise

If you haven't taken a look at the RRRC Store, you're missing out! Find face masks, neck gaiters, tech shirts, hats and visors, mugs, and our 40th anniversary hooded sweatshirt, at a remarkable sale price. Oh, and with hot, sweaty Richmond summer runs coming up, the waterproof and odor-proof, RRRC branded UltraSport car seat covers are a must.

Show off your support for the Richmond Road Runners Club!

Editor's Letter

continued from page 2

I see the return to "normalcy" like spring after a long winter – gradual. Days get longer and nights shorter. Crocuses push through the cold ground, then daffodils. Buds and blooms begin to appear, on one tree then another. Slowly but certainly come the full leaf of the trees and consistently warm temperatures.

And slowly but certainly come the mosquitoes, ticks, and yard work. Even the beauty of warm weather comes with downsides!

The end of the pandemic might bring a few downsides, too, and we might want to maintain a few of our adaptations.

More working from home means fewer greenhouse gas emissions. Virtual viewing options bring greater accessibility, from online tours of the Louvre to kids' sports. And virtual races (though hopefully paired with in-person options) provide motivation and enjoyment to those who can't do the real thing.

Life is a series of changes. To many, the pandemic brought heartache. For others, the past year will simply be a welcome sight in the rearview mirror. And for us as runners, the experience highlighted the joy of our chosen sport.

Cheers to the literal and metaphorical spring! ■

Annie Tobey | *Editor*
milesandminutes@rrrc.org

A killer stalks Richmond runners, walkers, and cyclists

By Annie Tobey



Pick up a pedestrian safety yard sign for free, available outside the Sports Backers office at 100 Avenue of Champions, behind The Diamond.

As I was crossing Broad Street at Roseneath Road, I waited patiently for the pedestrian signal giving me permission to cross. Unfortunately, my go-ahead coincided with the green light for cars turning right, and the drivers were either unaware of or apathetic of my rights as a pedestrian and their responsibilities as drivers.

Locally and nationally, reports of pedestrian-related traffic fatalities have increased. Brantley Tyndall of Bike Walk RVA reports that in 2020, during the pandemic, driving in Virginia dropped significantly (16.6%). However, traffic fatalities increased (2.4%). Pedestrian fatalities in Virginia, which hit a record high of 126 in 2019, dropped only to 123 in 2020. “When compared to the unprecedented drop in driving, pedestrian fatalities actually increased a whopping 17%,” says Tyndall. In metro Richmond in 2019, 23 pedestrians were killed. In 2020, deaths rose to 32, and 243 pedestrians were injured.

What can we do?

When lives are at stake, action is imperative.

As runners, we can be cautious and aware as we run, following some of the basics of running safety:

- Run facing traffic.

- Look both ways before crossing (yes, even when crossing a one-way street).
- Stay single file when running on roads.
- Obey traffic signals.
- Don't wear headphones, but if you do, turn down the volume.

As drivers, we should exercise as much caution as we do when running. Obey speed limits, avoid distracted driving, never drive drunk, and always be on the lookout for pedestrians, runners, and bikers.

As citizens, we can reach out to our government representatives to advocate for change and to our fellow citizens to encourage advocacy and safety awareness.

During the pandemic, when driving decreased and the number of people walking, running, and biking increased, “cities around the world, including many in the United States, closed major sections of streets and roads to allow people opportunities for safe walking and biking, free from cars and with enough space to be spread out and socially distanced from each other,” says Tyndall. However, he adds, the Richmond region lacked these initiatives. “People walking and biking had to stick to the same narrow and broken sidewalks or worn grass goat paths while drivers sped with reckless abandon.”

It's also worth noting that people in lower-income areas are killed at a higher rate. These individuals often depend upon walking or biking for transportation, yet their neighborhoods get less infrastructure attention in terms of sidewalks and dedicated bike lanes.

We can advocate for changes that make running, walking, and biking safer throughout the Richmond region. For updates and action items regarding safety improvements for runners, walkers, and cyclists in the Richmond region, connect with Sports Backers Bike Walk RVA. ■

[Sportsbackers.org/program/bike-walk-rva](https://sportsbackers.org/program/bike-walk-rva)

Downhill running – up does not equal down

“What goes up must go down.” *Isaac Newton*



By Damien Howell

Running uphill does not equal running downhill.

The faster speed of running downhill does not equal the slower speed of running uphill. The rule of thumb expressed in Daniels' Running Formula, the classic by running guru

Jack Daniels, states that every percent gradient of uphill will slow you by 12 to 15 seconds per mile, and every percent of gradient downhill will speed you by 8 seconds per mile. You do not get back the extra time it takes to get up the hill on the downhill.

Not surprisingly, because of the increased gravitational forces, greater forces are transmitted to the legs during downhill running. What is somewhat surprising is the magnitude of the difference. A 2005 study by Jinger Gottschall and Rodger Kram found that impact forces increase 54% above level running, and parallel braking forces increase by 73%. Downhill running substantially increases the probability of repetitive use injury.

Speed increases when running downhill because of increased step/stride length and increased cadence. This increases ground reaction and impact forces, thus increasing the risk of injury and tissue damage.

It is well accepted that downhill running is the culprit when it comes to delayed onset muscle soreness. Runners who have had the pleasure of running the first 17 miles of the Boston Marathon, which is basically all downhill, remember well the sore thigh muscles which occur after the marathon. Scientific studies implicate the eccentric muscle contractions (lengthening muscle contractions), which occur with downhill running and lead to delayed onset muscle soreness.

Hills and training

For several reasons, novice runners are more susceptible to the increased forces associated with downhill running. Novice runners tend to have higher body mass index, resulting in

higher ground reaction forces. Novice runners are at increased risk of experiencing shin pain, which can be exacerbated by the force of downhill running. (Walking/running on treadmill up incline is an accepted method of managing shin pain.) In addition, novice runners' muscles are not well conditioned to handle the increased demand for the eccentric muscle contractions required for downhill running. Until their muscles are better conditioned, novice runners should consider running around a hill rather than over and/or running the uphill while walking the downhill.

Prior exposure to downhill running can prevent exercise-induced muscle soreness. The colloquial saying, “Drink the hair of the dog” applies, meaning the best cure or prevention of the exercise-induced muscle soreness associated with exposure to downhill running is to run downhill more often.

Some coaches see downhill running as a desired training technique, one that helps runners to learn a faster cadence. Other coaches advocate avoiding the damaging effects of downhill running while focusing instead on repeat uphill runs to increase the intensity of the workout and to strengthen the muscles in the leg. Sebastian Coe, who held the 1500-meter world record, used to do intervals uphill and his dad would drive him back to the bottom.

Cues for smarter downhill running

The increased risks of downhill running can be mitigated by consciously increasing step/stride length from the hip joint and not reaching by extending the knee joint and lower leg forward. Keep the foot strike close to center of mass (pelvis). When the foot strikes the ground, the knee should be slightly bent, allowing the knee to lessen some of the high ground reaction forces.

Avoid landing with a thud. A thud landing sends tremendous shock all the way up to your spine.

Stay erect and avoid leaning backwards. The trunk should be perpendicular to the slope of the hill, which likely means a slight forward lean.

The arms should be held away from the body for balance on steep down hills.

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Understanding Neutral, Stability, and Motion Control Running Shoes and Applying Them to Your Needs



By George Lane, DPM, FAAPSM

Running shoe companies for decades have categorized individual shoe models as neutral, stability, or motion control. These running shoe categories were created with the intention of reducing overuse injury rates by allowing one to

select a shoe intended to provide protection based on the amount their foot pronates (explained below) as the foot strikes and then plants on the ground (called early stance phase of gait) with each step.

Lack of understanding amongst runners and walkers – as well as some footwear retailers, coaches, and health care providers – about these shoe categories and how to properly apply them has led to the unintended consequence of causing overuse injuries in individuals who selected the incorrect shoe type for their specific foot requirements.

Looking At The Lingo

For our purposes, pronation can be described as the amount the heel and ankle roll inward after the foot lands on the ground, from the little toe side of the heel/foot (lateral side) to the big toe side of the heel/foot (medial side). A mild amount of foot pronation is normal. An excessive amount of pronation is considered overpronation. Almost no pronation is termed underpronation. Foot motion in the opposite direction – toward the lateral side – is called supination. Overpronation, underpronation, and supination are abnormal foot movement patterns in early stance phase of gait.

The determination of normal pronation vs. mild, moderate, or severe overpronation is subjectively made by someone knowledgeable in biomechanics and experienced in observing walking and running gait. Such a person may work at a running shoe specialty store or be a podiatrist, physical therapist, orthopedist, or chiropractor, although expertise in gait analysis in all these fields can vary.

Why Shoe Differences Matter

Neutral shoes are intended for people who do not overpronate, who underpronate, or who supinate mildly.

Stability shoes are for those who overpronate mildly to moderately, and motion control shoes are for those who overpronate severely or are very heavy individuals who overpronate moderately.

A key concept to understand is that unless one is wearing an effective orthotic device within the shoe (a specialized insole that provides enough arch and foot support to stop excessive pronation or resist supination, a foot that overpronates or supinates barefoot still does so within the running shoe, no matter what the shoe type.

When walking or running in neutral running shoes, if the medial side of the foot rolls inward from overpronation so much that the entire shoe starts to tilt inward (valgus tilt), this is typically because the midsole is being excessively compressed on the medial side. Additional overpronation to the foot is being added by the shoe itself, compounding overpronation severity.

Over time, one can expect the midsoles of those running shoes to become permanently compressed in one of two ways: on the medial side with valgus tilt of the shoe for overpronators; and on the lateral side tilting outward (varus tilt) for supinators. Both of these scenarios promote more severe overpronation or supination, respectively. These excessive foot motions, worsened by the improper shoe, increase the possibility of overuse injuries such as tendinitis, stress fractures, foot deformities, and arthritis.

Features And Functions

The typical way the shoe is altered by running shoe companies to counteract foot overpronation is by increasing the density of the midsole of the shoe only on the medial side of the shoe, at the heel and arch area, often seen as a different-colored section of the midsole. If one presses that section of the midsole, it feels firmer than the rest of the midsole. Other features used by shoe companies can increase shoe resistance to overpronation. One of those features is an increase in the width of the midsole at the medial arch, seen as a reduction in the “carved-out” appearance at that location.

Another method is to extend the midsole material or a firmer material as a thin wall or “rail” several millimeters or more above the level of the midsole along the medial margin of the

shoe upper alongside the arch and/or heel. Running shoes are categorized as stability or motion control based on how aggressively these features are incorporated into the design, with neutral shoes having none of these features, stability shoes having a mild to moderate amount, and motion control being the most aggressive.

Currently, there are no running shoes made with specific features for moderate to severe supinators; however, those individuals should generally avoid stability or motion control running shoes as those shoes will contribute to varus tilt and lateral midsole breakdown of the shoe, increasing the degree of supination. My recommendation is to wear neutral type shoes with a firm enough midsole to better resist lateral midsole compression and to ensure that the shoe is wide enough such that the lateral side of the foot isn't overhanging the lateral side of the insole when one stands with full weight on the removed insole. A lateral "guard rail" feature on the shoe may also help in some cases. Properly made custom foot orthotics can help to redistribute pressure more evenly under the supinated foot for additional help.

The Bottom Line

The key to selecting the correct level of stability in your running shoes is to ensure that the shoes do not deform in either the direction of valgus (from overpronation) or varus (from supination) in early stance phase of gait. This can best be determined when viewed from behind while walking or running in the shoes. Running shoe specialty store staff will often use slow motion video on a treadmill or they will carefully observe one running or walking on a runway, with or without slow motion video, to help in making this determination. If you notice a pair of shoes you've been wearing for some weeks starting to tilt inward or outward when placed on a flat surface, this is a reliable sign that those shoes either have too little or too much pronation control for your needs, respectively, and you should switch shoe type accordingly.

If overpronation or supination cannot be adequately controlled, off-the-shelf orthotics (in milder cases) or properly made custom orthotics from a podiatrist or other professional who specializes in orthotic management can often be used to provide the necessary control. A benefit of properly made

custom orthotics is that they often can normalize foot motion within the shoe, allowing one to wear neutral running shoes, which are generally lighter and less bulky than stability and motion control shoes. ■

*George Lane, DPM, Richmond, Virginia
Fellow, American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine
Owner, Superior Foot Supports, SuperiorFootSupports.com*

Downhill Running

continued from page 7

Run downhill as if you are sneaking up behind someone. Keep your feet under you and the foot fall as quiet as possible.

The key to downhill running is control. If you go too fast, you burn excess energy and risk falling or straining the body. If you go too slow, consciously leaning back or braking as many beginners do, you'll place a severe strain on the legs and lose time in races. Running up or down hill, it's important to hold yourself together and to stay relaxed while maintaining control of your movement.

Making the most of hills and races

Running hills is hard work and it hurts. But it can be enjoyable.

Experienced runners can reflect on how the topography of racecourses influences the level of enjoyment. Because it was flat, the Mardi Gras Marathon, along the causeway across Lake Pontchartrain, was fast but less enjoyable – until I hit one of the overpasses that boats go under. The brief up and down on the overpass was an enjoyable relief. Uphill racecourses like Grandfather Mountain Marathon are slow, and it's joyful to accomplish a difficult event. Downhill racecourses like the Boston Marathon are fast, but they hurt afterwards. Courses like the old Florida Relays Marathon, with equal up and down rolling hills, are enjoyable. ■

Physical therapist Damien Howell was a competitive runner for more than 45 years. He retired from competition in 2014 when diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. He has assisted injured runners in managing and preventing injuries since 1972. DamienHowellPT.com

Running in the Present

By Laura Welch, PT, DPT, OCS, CFMT

Owner of Inspire Physical Therapy LLC



Have you ever been on a run and, when it was over, felt like you were actually working on that deadline, or replaying that difficult conversation, or thinking about the to-do list for the day? Who knows what you saw on your jaunt? The ruminating brain may take little interest in what's going on around it. While your legs were turning over on the pavement, your thoughts were following suit. One thought after the next, one worry after the next. Sometimes runs feel good physically but almost stressful mentally.

Not all of this thinking is actually a bad thing. In psychotherapy, it is actually encouraged to address fear or worry in a non-threatening way. So, it may actually be very

productive and even helpful to think of hardships in your life while you run, combining the positive exercise experience with thoughts that may be unpleasant. But what if we limited our thoughts to only part of the run and allowed ourselves to be present during the remainder?

Be There

It is no mystery that one of the most important skills to develop in this lifetime is mindfulness. In the research, mindfulness has been repeatedly demonstrated to be associated with better quality of life. Suggestions to strengthen the mindfulness muscle include meditation, focused deep breathing, and bringing your awareness gently back to the

present. As with any skill, this takes practice. Being in the present involves observing, feeling, listening, smelling, touching, and tasting with awareness.

The mindfulness exercise I would like to share is based on Dr. Daniel J. Siegel's work in his book *Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation*, and it is called body scanning. In his book, Siegel talks at length about the benefits of body scanning to your brain and its integration with your body. It's a great read!

Below, I offer an exercise that brings awareness to various areas of your body while you run. It may be best to record yourself reading this body scan activity so that you can listen to it while you run. If it feels difficult running and scanning at the same time, try it while you are lying on your back first, and if the whole scan is too much to take on at once, try one or two parts at a time. Some of the metaphors I use are ones I've learned from studying Tai Chi and Eastern philosophy. I only wish I was that poetic! In this scan, you will find clues to what appropriate running form feels like. The goal is to run relaxed and with ease. Let's start with the top ... literally.

The Scan

- First, focus on the crown of your head. Is your head forward so that your ears are in front of your shoulders? If so, imagine the crown of your head is gently suspended from the sky and your chin is slightly tucked, feeling the back of your neck lengthen. This creates elongation down your entire spine, like a string of pearls. Where is your tongue and how is your breath coming and going? Gently meet your tongue to the roof of your mouth and breathe through your nose.
- Are your shoulders relaxed or are they scrunched and pumping hard? Feel your shoulder blades relax down and back on your ribcage, keeping them away from your ears.
- Does your chest feel open and relaxed or tightened and held?
- Feel your collar bones widen and the muscles just under your collar bones soften. Your breastbone, or sternum, relaxes in a vertical position without facing upwards toward the sky or down at your belly button.
- Now your ribcage. Do you hold your ribcage still or do you allow your ribcage to rotate freely over your pelvis?

Relax your belly and let the bottom ribs rotate freely. Where does your inhale expand in your body? Can you feel it in your belly?

- How about your back? How about your side ribs? With each inhale, fill your trunk with air so that it is expanding toward the front, back, and sides.
- Now to the pelvis. Allow your tailbone to gently relax down toward the ground. Can you feel how that relaxes your low back? Where are the points of the front of your pelvis pointing? Can they stay facing forward like headlights of a car?
- How are your hands? Do you have tightly clenched fists? Imagine you are gently holding a feather in each hand and you don't want to squish it.
- When you push off of each foot, where is the work coming from? Can you feel your feet connected to your glutes with each push?
- Now to the feet. What part of your foot is pushing off the ground? How hard are your steps? Can you make them gentle, like you're kissing the Earth? Where do you land on your feet? Is your whole foot in contact with the ground each time you land?
- Now let's go back to the entire system. Do you feel at ease when you run? Can you run in a way that feels like floating across the ground? Does it make a difference where your center of gravity is? What happens if you lean forward more or lean less? Feel how leaning forward, making a diagonal line from your heel to the back of your head, makes moving forward less effortful. Feel your body working together to synchronize your gait.

In his book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Malcolm Gladwell concludes from a research study that experts put in at least 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to become who they are in their field. Now, there are plenty of arguments out there about how people are more complex than that and there is no magic number of practice hours that makes an expert. The bit about 10,000 hours didn't speak to me as much as the term "deliberate practice." This phrase, to me, is everything. In a sense, this means when you are doing something over and over again, you are THERE DOING IT. When you are running, be there running. ■

Running the Capital Trail for a Capital Cause

51 Miles for the National Alliance on Mental Illness

By Shelly Klinger

I am a grateful “back of the pack” runner who has had the good fortune to be mentored by experienced runners and coaches to find my passion. I am also passionate about my day job as a psychiatrist. I started running for the benefit of my mental and physical health as an intern in internal medicine many years ago, to cope with the emotions of caring for ill and dying patients. I spent the first part of my career as a psychiatrist at an HIV/AIDS clinic, back when most people died from the virus or from the syndrome that follows. Running after work was my pressure release valve. Later, I had lived experience with depression and realized the power of running as a tool for healing and recovery, in combination with psychotherapy and medication treatment.



I had never run more than a 5K until I was about to turn 50, when I decided to run a half marathon in gratitude for being healthy and alive at an age when my mother and other family members hadn't been so fortunate. I trained for the Patrick Henry Half Marathon in Ashland in 2008, with coaches Tom Grant and Ashland Dave, and treasured the feeling of being out there with other runners, often pairing it with raising money and awareness for worthwhile causes.

I wanted to go farther after every run and race completed, and I ran 11 marathons and about 20 half marathons over the next 12 years. In 2020, all of the races I signed up for were cancelled, but running remained my go-to activity for health and happiness. I actually ran so much, I was sidelined by an overuse injury for a month or two; but thanks to Laura Welch, DPT of Inspire Physical Therapy, I learned the root causes of my injuries and am running better than ever.

Capital motivations

Like many people in RVA, I've spent a lot of time on the Capital Trail. I've also spent a lot of time thinking about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the closure of schools and workplaces, job loss, financial hardship, and isolation. My heart goes out to the families of those affected and to the health-care providers who have cared for patients while fearing for their own safety. The rates of mental health concerns and substance use have increased in the general public, particularly in highly impacted communities of color. Individuals and families who were already living with mental health and substance use have been hit hard. As a psychiatrist, I am grateful to continue to be employed and able to serve, but I wanted to do more.

As I continued to run the Capital Trail, I had the thought of running the entire 51 miles. This seemed unbelievable at the time, but I was encouraged by people who had faith in me, particularly Laura, an experienced ultramarathoner. I thought about donating the money I would have paid for race fees to help others and to ask friends and family to do the same if they were so moved.

My thoughts turned to NAMI-CVA, our local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which provides education, support, and advocacy to individuals and families living with serious mental health issues. During this year of COVID-19, NAMI-CVA has continued to offer education, connection, and support to families and individuals on their journey to recovery through online and virtual resources.

Springing to action

I picked the first day of spring, March 20, as a target, and I reached out to NAMI-CVA to make it an official opportunity to raise awareness and funds. I have been overwhelmed by the love and support of family, friends, and coworkers who donated, sent their good wishes and prayers, and came out to accompany me on parts of the trail. I started at 7 AM at mile 0 in Jamestown and hoped to be in RVA at 7 PM. My amazing spouse, Barbara, was my crew every step of the way, meeting me every five to eight miles to fill water bottles and offer changes of socks, food, and support. Two other family members were there for more than 12 hours. Multiple friends and coworkers showed up at just the right time when I was struggling. They were there to walk, run, or cycle a few miles with me, cheer me on, and, in one case, hang out at Four Mile Creek with their therapy dog, who encouraged me with “doggie kisses.”



I was nervous going in – my longest training run had been 33 miles, and I’d never exceeded the marathon distance officially. I worried about blisters, fatigue, injuries, none of which happened, thanks to advice from friends and the folks at Fleet Feet, who sold me the best socks ever.

I didn’t worry about gastrointestinal issues because I’d had no trouble fueling on my training runs. Unfortunately, GI issues turned out to be the big problem, to the point where any solid food caused the immediate need for a toilet, rare on the Capital Trail. (NOTE to the Capital Trail Foundation: I know most of the trail passes through private property, but wouldn’t a few more porta-potties be preferable to the alternative in the woods by the side of the road? Just asking.) I was only able to stomach Tailwind and a few dry pretzels throughout, probably taking in no more than 500 calories for the 51 miles, but it did the trick.

I wasn’t able to run the last 10 miles – I assume I ran out of fuel – but a wonderful coworker walked with me from Four Mile Creek and told me funny stories the whole way. It took 14.5 hours instead of 12, and I definitely wasn’t up for the planned pizza and beer celebration afterwards, but it was worth it.

Words cannot express my gratitude to everyone who helped me and supported NAMI in this run. Remember, life is a journey, not a destination, and none of us can make it without each other. Please consider supporting the work of NAMI, too. ■

NAMI Central Virginia: www.namicva.org

Nami donations: www.namicva.org/get-involved/donate

To view and register for NAMI CVA online mental health support programs: namicva.org/calendar

NEW RRRC RICHMOND RUNNING TOURS

*Enhance your run with
Richmond history and trivia*



By Annie Tobey

Combining life's pleasures doubles the joy. Think peanut butter and chocolate, travel with family, al fresco dining, and running with friends ... and with history!

A summer of solo marathon training (a pandemic-induced decision) gave me experience in using running apps to plan my long runs. When I heard that Richmond Road Runners Club needed routes for the winter marathon and half marathon training teams, I volunteered. Never one to bite off only what I can chew, I decided to double the fun. While providing a safe and effective run, each route would also take runners past noteworthy Richmond sites, tour notes included.

Thus, this year's teams had the usual step-by-step directions plus maps on MapMyRun and RunGo running apps. And,

as a bonus, team members could access a RunGo route that included both turn-by-turn voice navigation and voice notification of tour sites. Each themed route also included background information on the route's highlights.

To share the fun, RRRC has made some of the runs available on its website. These themed routes cover four centuries of history, both high notes and low notes. All of them begin and end at Byrd Park, where this season's training teams gathered for Saturday runs. Most can be easily modified to trim or add miles.

The routes will also be shared in an upcoming issue of the Richmond Region Tourism Field Guide.

You can access the routes at www.RRRC.org, on the Richmond Running Tours tab.

Early Richmond History Highlights

13 miles

Run by some of Richmond's most historic and iconic sites. Starting at Byrd Park, you'll pass near or through Maymont, Oregon Hill, Shockoe, Union Hill, Church Hill, Manchester, Forest Hill, and more – plus notable spots such as the canal, the Floodwall, and the James River Park System.

The James River, Richmond's Raison d'être

18 miles with a 13-mile option

Richmond owes its existence and longevity to the Fall Line of the James River. This scenic run takes you past history and beauty along the river: to the Huguenot Bridge at Westham, along Riverside Drive and the James River Park System, and to the bridge above Belle Isle, Hollywood Rapids, and Tredegar Iron Works. Much of this route, notably south of the James, follows the traditional fall Richmond Sports Backers marathon route. An easy turn cuts the run to 13 miles.

Richmond Transportation Highlights

12 miles

Take a running tour highlighting the city's transportation history and its most iconic sites, including the James River Arch Bridge, the one-of-a-kind Triple Crossing, the three-mile-long CSX Viaduct, and the Canal Walk. The route also takes you through three of the city's "streetcar suburbs" south of the river.

Black History Highlights

14.25 miles, plus options for additional miles and sites

Richmond's history is inextricably tied up with that of African Americans. Before the Emancipation Proclamation, the city was the largest trading market for enslaved Africans



on the East Coast. Run along the Richmond Slave Trail, which spotlights that dark past. Go through Jackson Ward, a prominent post-Civil War Black neighborhood. And make your way up Monument Avenue, past emblems of Richmond's struggle with its past.

Richmond's Historic Northside Plus Culinary Tidbits

12 miles

Lewis Ginter, Richmond entrepreneur, philanthropist, and a major in the Confederate army, is generally credited with creating Richmond's Northside.

Take this 12-mile route through some of the beautiful neighborhoods that Ginter kickstarted and through scenic Bryan Park. Plus, it just so happens that you'll be passing some historic culinary sites, too, so expect to work up an appetite in more ways than one!

Tipsy Tour

11 miles with a 13.1-mile option

This running tour route takes you through Richmond's most concentrated areas for craft beverage makers, including Scott's Addition. You will run past 20 breweries, cideries, distilleries, a meadery, and a couple of other places of note. Get your miles in, pick your favorite beverage maker, and return to toast your run! The route includes a 13.1-mile option, adding one brewery and giving you a half marathon for the day.

Richmond Historic Parks & Rec

10 miles

Learn about three of Richmond's most noteworthy and scenic parks. Starting and ending at Byrd Park, you'll visit Forest Hill Park and the James River Park System as well as other noteworthy places. ■



Why RRRC members appreciate the active life

Perhaps you also have heard this from non-runners: “Why should I want to run? Runners never look happy.”

Runners know – those non-runners are missing the point. After all, there’s more to running than grinning while you gambol. Or perhaps they aren’t out early enough to see the coveys of runners together, chewing the fat while they run and swapping greetings at each hydration stop. Likely, too, these non-runners don’t hang out at the finish lines of races to see the huge grins, tears of joy, and arms raised in triumph.

To learn about the joy that Richmond runners experience in the sport, we polled RRRC members and received 94 responses. Here’s what you told us.

WHAT WE APPRECIATE ABOUT RUNNING AND BEING ACTIVE

Respondents were encouraged to choose all applicable answers to this question, and each person expressed multiple reasons to run.

The overwhelming response was to stay physically healthy (88). This was closely followed by the desire to stay sane and mentally healthy (80). Fifty-eight runners run so they can hang out with other runners, and 57 just want to have fun! More than half of the runners also relish alone time to recharge and think (53) and the chance to build personal self-discipline through running (51).

Nearly half (46) appreciate running as a means to burn calories to consume later (as one respondent commented later in the survey, “I like to eat ice cream.”). Forty-two runners appreciate running as an aid to long-term brain health; 39 as a way to stay fit, trim, and/or hot; and 33 enjoy the chance to compete.

Several runners added their own reasons to the list. “To live longer and feel better,” said George Somerville. “Running trails takes me back to my childhood,” said Stephen D. Nolan. “I run faster, longer, harder with others than by myself!” said Barbara Leonard.

Other exercises that RRRC runners participate in include weight and resistance training (54); yoga, stretching, and meditation (52); biking (38); swimming (21); exercise classes (17); team sports (8); walking (8); and 1 each for kayaking, yard work and gardening, horseback riding, shooting, triathlons, a physical job – and well, reading email!?

WHEN WE FEEL JOY

The non-runner who’s never seen a happy runner hasn’t met the people who responded to our survey! Of those who responded, some pointed to simple enjoyment – no reasons necessary. “Always I love to exercise, and it makes me happy!” said Jessica. Mike Daly said, “Every run that I go on makes me feel good ... at the end.”

People stated that they enjoy running all of the time or some of the time, during the run or after, to experience fitness improvements and defy aging, or to enjoy the adventure. And others recalled very specific experiences that bring the most joy.

- This past Sunday when a small group of us ran up Jarman’s Gap Road (1,750 feet) and back down and then enjoyed

wine and cheese together after. Running, sun, laughter, so much joy! *Katie Langley*

- Last Sunday at Huguenot 3 Miler! Weather was perfect and it was awesome to be running through the woods in an in-person race (I’ve missed races SO much!). *Rebecca Randolph*
- On a perfect day temperature-wise and I feel no aches, pains or other ailments ... I am a Joyful Runner. *Amy McLeod*
- Yoga and walking my dogs always make me joyful. Running with hundreds of other people makes me joyful, especially when my husband and/or daughter are running with me, too. *Barbara Leonard*
- When I am exploring a new place. *Heather Shelton*
- Cycling thru my hometown reminiscing. *Stephen D. Nolan*
- I love having adventures with family and friends: paddle boarding with my kids on the James, running trails in the early morning with friends, hiking anywhere! *Molly Brannan*

Nature therapy

Even city and suburban runs can give us a dose of nature therapy, while trail runs offer a buffet of benefits. The dosage naturally increases when Mother Nature is at her best, as in a “sunny jog,” “perfect morning weather,” “watching the sun rise,” and spring and fall. Other nature-infused runs listed were “finishing a good swim [since] water is so peaceful,” and “running along the water.” Other runners were more specific: “Being the first to see season transitions – first snow on a run, first buds on trees or warm breeze, or first color change to leaves.”

- Running in the early light. *Eric Van Quill*
- When I am alone, early in the morning, when dawn is cresting the horizon and the world is waking and all I am aware of is the sound of my feet and breath! *Leslee Gensinger*

Cheaper than a therapist

Runners noted other emotional benefits of running, too, such as stress relief and a chance to move after a sedentary workday. “Many mornings I notice that I am in a better frame of mind and light-hearted after a routine morning run,” said one runner.

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The Active Life

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- Running helps keep things in perspective for me. Any time I am facing a big personal challenge, I try to push myself for longer mileage than I'm used to in order to prove to myself that most personal limits are self-imposed. *William Glavin*
- When life gets you down, a run makes all the difference. *Linda Newman*
- Right after the workout – I have an exercise high happy feeling! *Kim Moore*

The best trophies

Crossing the finish line of a race, hitting a PR, setting and achieving a goal, or simply lacing up the shoes and getting out there – running offers a major sense of accomplishment. Other achievements our runners mentioned included long runs and hard workouts, “pushing myself and feeling satisfied with my body being able to do amazing things,” “being up early in the cold,” feeling energized after, or just having a good run.

- Every time after it's done and I feel accomplished. *Laura Thoe*

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- I feel so accomplished when I work out or run first thing in the morning. My endorphins are flowing, and it just starts my day in such a positive note. *Ruthie Kinker*
- When I was able to accomplish a goal, overcome an obstacle. *Janina Bognar*
- At the age of 44, I'm the healthiest version of myself and getting faster. There is a huge sense of joy in that. *David Goode*

Companionship and camaraderie

It should come as no surprise that those responding to a Richmond Road Runners Club survey praised the social aspects of running. One respondent recalled running an out-of-town race with a friend who had moved away. Another described the thrill that coaches feel in seeing their team complete a race. And others extolled the glories of running with people, of settling in for social time afterwards, and of the “amazing friendships” developed along the way.

- I'm joyful after every run when I sit with friends and have coffee, a social activity that usually takes longer than the run. *Debbie Bader*
- Running with others, training with others and developing a social life with those very positive folks. *Peter Schreiber*
- I love running with all of the various groups around the city – One for the Road, City Stadium Runners, and MTT. *Kathleen Murphy*
- When I'm with other people, helping them on their run journey. *Mark O'Brien*
- I had a lot of fun training on Saturdays with the WMTT and was planning on doing the Shamrock marathon in VA Beach. When COVID happened, one of the neighborhood moms (a runner herself, who was planning on doing the half) was able to coordinate a route where some of my cross country friends could join me for part of it. Overall, it was an amazing experience. *Nicole Hays*
- I've caught up with some old running mates from my high school days via Strava. It's been fun challenging each other in timed miles and 5ks. We occasionally meet up for long runs along Pocahontas or the city. *David Goode*

Pandemic relief

This past year, running has highlighted additional benefits. Several runners who responded to the question about when running brought them joy referenced the pandemic. For

example, said one, “During the pandemic, it’s the only thing that made me feel normal.”

“Throughout the pandemic – so much was out of our control, but I could find a way to exercise outside every day,” recalled another respondent. “Sometimes that provided a way to see other people, and sometimes it helped me clear my head of all the unpleasantness of the situation. It also always made me feel good to get in a good workout.”

- Especially during the first few weeks of the pandemic and shutdowns, when there was so much uncertainty and our other routines really stopped, getting outside and running became even more special. *Paul Logan*

HOW THIS PERVASIVE BUG HAS AFFECTED OUR RUNNING

The pandemic touched all of us and permeated every aspect of our lives. How could it not? The next questions in the survey specifically referenced the effects of this past year on our running mileage and enjoyment.

Of course, some people were affected more than others. One runner had to devote full-time care to a partner with COVID, so running went by the wayside. Those who were more cautious about social contact stepped away from group runs.

Mileage

Of those who responded to the survey, about half (45) maintained their mileage during the past year. Only 13 people ran less (some for reasons other than social distancing). Without her longer midweek runs with friends or in-person races to train for, Julie Wilcox said she was less motivated.

However, 36 respondents increased their mileage: they had more time and fewer conflicting commitments and opportunities; they needed to replace gym workouts; they ran to maintain mental health and sanity or to counteract an increase in sedentary time or boredom; or they just felt the need to get out! Two runners found virtual, online challenges helpful in logging more miles.

“Isolation made me want to be outside more,” admitted one person. “Then as I became more fit it became fun to push my limits.”

- Running was an escape and a mental health habit. It got me outside, moving, and interacting with other people (when safe and COVID measures taken). *Kathleen Murphy*

- I ran a LOT more in 2020, mostly to stay sane. I also had goals that I still wanted to reach, even with races cancelled. And it felt really good to see the progress I made! *Selina Guider*

Many informal and formal groups continued to meet, including the RRRC winter training teams and RVA group runs (on the RRRC website and on page 24), though comfort with group runs varied. Some respondents ran more because of the opportunity for social interaction; others ran less to avoid contact.

- It’s a way to visit with friends while staying socially distanced. *Molly Brannan*
- Group activities are out, so running is something you can do more safely, by yourself. *Kim Moore*
- The only thing I have felt comfortable, free, and happy doing for the past year is getting outside on my own and running ... When other people are in my vicinity on my runs, I feel like my space is being invaded, and that has lessened the joy I experience – just a sign of the times. *Frank Jacocks*

Coloring our joy

The numbers don’t tell a complete story. Running more, less, about the same – mileage is but one factor that colors the experience of running. External factors matter, and we shared one common external factor this year – pandemic restrictions.

A slight majority of respondents stated that the coronavirus has affected their running experience. But how? Comments reflected a glass half full / half empty kind of feeling. As one runner put it, “There is no simple answer to this question.”

Overwhelmingly, those who highlighted the negative effects emphasized how much they missed in-person races (especially with friends) and group runs. Then there was this wonderful answer: “Masks hide those beautiful smiles.”

Some shared positive experiences from this unique year, including several people who appreciate running even more now. For a some, having the opportunity to run more meant fitness improvements, thus increased enjoyment. Another said, “I’ve explored new routes and types of running, like trail running.” Those who still felt comfortable running in groups appreciated the social element of running more than ever.

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The Active Life

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“Some days it was the only time I saw other people,” said one. “Running is my constant in a world full of things that are otherwise constantly changing,” answered another.

- I appreciate that time spent outside more. *Paul Logan*
- I enjoy running more because I don't take it for granted. Because I lost the opportunity to run races, I learned to appreciate running just to run. *Ruthie Kinker*
- I enjoy it more. It's a sense of freedom. *David Goode*

Several respondents noted the year's mixed blessings. “I enjoy the quiet time to myself but miss the social enjoyment I used to get from it a lot,” said one.

- I am thankful to have running as a solo sport when I cannot connect with my friends and groups like I want to. *Leslee Gensinger*
- It's helped me appreciate the feeling of freedom I have when I run. *Molly Brannan*
- I am even more thankful for the ability to run, my running community, and my health. *Kathleen Murphy*
- Makes me appreciate running buddies even more. *Debbie Bader*
- I am thankful to have been a runner/cyclist before the pandemic and now see how lucky I have been all these years when I see all my neighbors have discovered exercise and the great outdoors. *Stephen D. Nolan*
- It honestly made me realize how much of running for me is about the people I run with. I enjoy running with my people and not alone. *Selina Guider*
- It keeps me sane, but I miss racing and competing. So I feel less excited overall. *Andrew Hersey*
- I've maybe enjoyed it more because it's one of the only normal, consistent things! *Nicole Hays*

Eighteen people didn't feel the situation has affected their enjoyment of running at all. “No ... life is all about adjustments,” answered Mike Daly.

THE FINISH LINE

The final question was open-ended: “Anything else you'd like to add about the joy of running, exercise, or being active?” Which of these responses can you relate to?

- I couldn't give up running if I tried at this point.
- Road Runners is a great club for resources and events. I appreciate everyone who works to sponsor and organize the races.
- Mind follows body. [I] have lost count of number of times my mind said I could not complete my run, walk, etc. but once I was moving, I finished it.
- I wish this was something that was shown to me as a child – I feel that I wasted so much time on things that did not bring me this much joy!
- Never take running or exercise for granted, because you never know when it can be taken away. *Amy McLeod*
- Health is freedom, and setting out on foot makes me feel free. *Heather Shelton*
- Richmond has the best running community I've experienced. *Kathleen Murphy*
- I really look forward to group runs and track sessions, feeling connected and motivated to continue progressing and challenging myself. *Paul Logan*
- Exercise is good for you mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally. *Kim Moore*
- It is my Prozac substitute and gets me through tough times like this past year :-)
- You can start anytime, anywhere, any speed. I did! *Julie Wilcox*
- Makes me feel strong and proud that I get out and do it! *Debbie Bader*
- Get out there and try it. You'll become addicted to something healthy. *Linda Newman*
- It has become my most consistent daily self-care time. *Molly Brannan*
- Running is my raison d'être. *Rebecca Randolph*
- Being an active person makes my annual doctor visits go much smoother. *Eddie Parsley Jr.*
- I'm planning on it contributing to me being physically and mentally healthy until I pass away peacefully at a very old age :) *Barbara Leonard*

MARINE CORPS MARATHON 2019

*An in-person marathon
(remember those?),
memorable weather,
and Kathrine Switzer*

Reviving a blog post by Anne Magee
at AnneTheVegan.com



My medal. This is in front of the Iwo Jima memorial
near the finish line of the MCM.

It's really hard to believe that the last time I ran a marathon in person was in 2019. If you've been running races for a while, you understand that there are certain ones where weather conditions are so deplorable, they become legendary. MCM 2019 was one of those races. If you were there, you know! That being said, I'm sure any multiple marathoner would welcome a race under these conditions today, just to get the opportunity to race again. One day, the world will hopefully return to normal. For now, we reminisce, and we dream of running an in-person race again.

RACE RECAP!

The 44th Marine Corps Marathon is over. My seventh, and perhaps toughest, marathon. I'm grateful to Team Safe House Project for the opportunity to run for them, raise awareness, and support their organization. I'm really, really happy that I finished. That's the short story. Here's the long one:

The lead-up

I didn't enter this race weekend as prepared as I'd hoped. I made poor choices, like wearing new shoes for my 20 miler (same beloved Hoka model, just new!). I found myself nursing some posterior tibialis tendonitis after that run, so I rested as a precaution. I worked on gentle stretching and strengthening, and I tried a couple of KT taping methods to provide some support to allow me to run this race. My test run went well, so I was grateful to give it a go.

I think every average athlete goes through the same emotions during taper. We begin to have doubts. We are restless. We lose sight of our "why." We eat all the foods. We have nightmares about race day. (I always have at least one about showing up to run without race attire and

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Marine Corps Marathon

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with a huge, heavy backpack I have to carry!) All of these anxieties really play with our mental game. I discuss this phenomenon freely in emails to my sub-team and with our runners during training runs with Sports Backers Marathon Training Team. This way, when they feel these things, too, they know it's normal.

I am so lucky that my best friend Patty was running this race. Patty and Steve picked me up early Saturday to make the journey from Richmond to National Harbor for the expo. I was so excited about the race shirts! MCM did an amazing job this year! I stopped by the Nuun booth. I couldn't be there for the ambassadors' meet up at noon, but I did see the sign in social media posts, and I found my name!

We had a great hotel location about a half mile from the race finish. We ate a delicious meal at True Food Kitchen. I had a roasted butternut squash vegan pizza that was amazing!



My name on the Team Nuun sign at the expo.



From left to right, me, Becky Hapeman, Kathrine Switzer, and Patty Henson-Dacey. Photo courtesy of Becky Hapeman.

The day

And then it was race day. I had controlled everything I could. I had my race gear laid out. I taped my right ankle. I didn't overdress. I body glided/Aquaphored everything that needed it. I donned my poncho. And we were out the door.

Yes. I said rain poncho. Because, as my teammate and fellow MTT Pink Nation coach Amanda said, we all thought the weather in 2016 was awful. And then Mother Nature said, "Hold my beer." In 2016, there were heat advisories. And as much as I love running in heat and humidity (note the sarcasm!), it's even better when it's preceded by hours running through torrential rain. Patty and I ran together. The race started in just a drizzle after waiting for over an hour for the race to begin in steady rain. The rain picked up at about mile 6. Miles 13-14 were punctuated by driving rains and wind with multiple, ankle-deep puddles. Patty was starting to struggle at mile 14, and she told me to go. I gave her a hug, shed a couple of tears, and went.

The slog

By the time we reached the National Mall, it had stopped raining, and the sun emerged. This really only served to heat up the asphalt and puddles and to make conditions, well, steamy. It was also 80 degrees. By mile 17, still on the mall, I saw a med tent. I was so close to walking right off the course. I was spent. And then Patty caught up to me. She pushed me through the next few miles. One of our Richmond supporters rubbed Biofreeze on my upper back

on the 395 bridge. I almost cried at each gauntlet, the final one at mile 22 in Crystal City. It was a party at that point! There were spectators handing out all kinds of goodies! I felt much better after eating a bag of Skittles and sharing a bag of Lay's with Patty!

At mile 23, we had friends we didn't expect to see from Richmond cheering on the sidelines! I pretty much cried like a baby in Becky's arms when I saw her. She pointed out that legendary runner Kathrine Switzer was nearby, who graciously agreed to take a selfie with us! Without Kathrine running the Boston Marathon in 1967 despite the rules restricting women from participating, women may not have the opportunities to compete in endurance races as we do now. She's inspiring!

At this point, we knew we were going to finish. It was hot, but we were relieved. There was a lot of walking during the last 5k, but we didn't care. We were in great company, as most everyone on the still-crowded course was walking at that point. And in the end, we finally got to run and finish a marathon together! So grateful for Patty!



My amazing vegan pizza from True Food Kitchen!

While we were running MCM, our teams were running 20 miles in Richmond. Pink Nation is about half first-time marathoners. I'm so excited to finish this season with them, and I can't wait to witness their successes in two weeks at the Richmond Marathon!

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Anne is a physical therapist, wife, and mom of two teenage daughters in Glen Allen. She started running in 2012 as a way to stay motivated after completing a weight loss journey. Once the kid in gym class who sought every excuse in the book to get out of running the mile, she has now completed eight marathons, thanks to the help of her sole sisters and the Richmond running community. She also helps coach the Pink Nation, one of the subteams for the Sports Backers Marathon Training Team.



Patty and me after the race. Happy, but definitely spent. Photo courtesy of Steve Yancey.

[GROUP RUNS]

Name	Day of the Week	Time	Location	Pace	Contact
Basch's Group	Tuesdays, Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	4605 Monument Avenue	8:00 to 9:00	Ellie Basch, ellieruns@gmail.com, 804-873-5156
Back of the Pack Trail Group	Sundays	9:00 a.m.	Vary	12:00 to 16:00	https://www.facebook.com/groups/201907430234622/
Black Girls Run	Mondays	5:45 p.m.	Wells Fargo parking lot, White Oak Village Shopping Center	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/bgrichmond/ blackgirlsrunva@gmail.com
	Tuesdays	6:45 p.m.	Great Shiplock Park	Various	
	Saturdays	8:00 a.m.	Parking lot next to Rockwood Park	Various	
	Sundays	2:30 p.m.	Parking lot next to Rockwood Park	Various	
Black Men Run	Sundays	8:00 a.m.	Fountain at Byrd Park Lake	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/BMRRichmond
Bryan Park Group	Saturdays	7:00 a.m.	Stir Crazy Café	8:00 to 12:00	Susan Deusebio skdeusebio@gmail.com
City Stadium Runners	Saturdays	7:45 a.m.	City Stadium	8:00 to 14:00	https://www.facebook.com/groups/577195912350952 citystadiumrunners@gmail.com
Crossroads	Wednesdays	6:00 p.m.	Crossroads Coffee	9:00 or faster	ysman75@yahoo.com
Dog Pack	Sundays	7:30 a.m.	Carytown Panera	8:30 to 14:30	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1671581323100585
Fan Foxes	Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	Fox Elementary School	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/fanfoxes
Fleet Feet Sports	Tuesdays	6:00 p.m.	5600 Patterson Avenue	Various	www.fleetfeetrichmond.com https://www.facebook.com/fleetfeetsportsrichmond
Mary Munford Sunday Runners	Sundays	7:30 a.m.	Mary Munford Elementary School	8:00 to 8:30	
Midlothian ACAC	Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	11621 Robious Road	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/MidloACACRun
Midlo Mafia	Daily	5:30 a.m. / 6:00 a.m.	Midlothian YMCA	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/429449713804077
Morning Workout Group	Daily	6:00 a.m.	Various	Various	https://www.facebook.com/MorningWorkoutGroup
Mountain Hearts Running Club	Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	Tredegar parking lot	Various	www.strava.com/clubs/mountainhearts https://www.facebook.com/mtnhearts
Museum Run	Thursdays	5:30 p.m.	Behind VMFA (on Sheppard St. between VMFA and Benedictine)	7:00 to 9:45	Mark "Iscool" Guzzi, (804) 651-5415, markiscool1@hotmail.com

Name	Day of the Week	Time	Location	Pace	Contact
New Kent in Motion	Saturdays	8:30 a.m.	New Kent Active Life Fitness Center	Various	https://www.facebook.com/ActiveLifeFitnessCenterRunning
One for the Road	Wednesdays	6:00 p.m.	Various breweries	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/100890573593214
Richmond Running and Social Meetup	Mondays Wednesdays Thursdays Saturdays	6:30p.m. 6:30p.m. 6:30p.m. 8:30 a.m.	Libby Park Carytown Panera Retreat Hospital (ER side) Byrd Park VITA Course	Various	https://www.meetup.com/RVA-Running-Social-Meetup
Ridgefield Runners	Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	John Rolfe Commons Publix / YMCA	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/368386789999522
RiVAh Runners	Thursdays	6:00 p.m.	Dogwood Dell Carillon	6:30 to 8:30	https://www.facebook.com/TheRiVAhRunners
Road Runner Running Store	Mondays	7:00 p.m.	3002 W. Cary Street	Various	https://www.facebook.com/RoadRunnerRunningStore
Rogue Runners	Tuesdays, Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	Starbucks at Libbie and Grove	7:30 to 10:00	https://www.facebook.com/groups/254849741268828
Run Short Pump	Tuesdays, Thursdays	5:30 a.m.	Einstein Bros. Bagels on Pump Road	7:00 to 10:00	Frank Finn, finn.frank@gmail.com
RVA Monthly Trail Run	1st or 2nd Saturday or Sunday of each month	8:00 a.m.	Pump House Parking Lot Trailhead	Various	RVA Monthly Trail Run Facebook page Mark "Iscool" Guzzi, 804-651- 5415, markiscool1@hotmail.com
RVA Stroller Runners	Tuesdays, Thursdays	9:45 a.m.	Various	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1597418347194024
Sandston Striders	Saturdays	8:00 a.m.	Chicahominy Family YMCA	Various	George Talley, email gc_talley@verizon.net
Shady Grove Runners	Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays	5:45 a.m.	Shady Grove YMCA	Various	https://www.facebook.com/shadygroverunners
Sugar & Twine Training Team	Tuesdays, Thursdays	6:00 a.m.	2928 W. Cary Street	8:00 to 9:00	https://www.facebook.com/groups/361699573878105
Team Wednesday Night (TWN) Fan Run	Wednesdays	6:15 p.m.	Monument and Boulevard from steps of First Baptist Church (don't park in church lot)	8:00 to 12:00	https://www.facebook.com/twnfanrun twn.fan.run@gmail.com
Tuesday Nite Trail Run	Tuesdays	5:45 p.m.	Dogwood Dell parking lot, grassy field near dog park	9:30 or faster	Mark "Iscool" Guzzi, markiscool1@hotmail.com
Tuesday Night Speed Group	Tuesdays	6:00 p.m.	Midlothian Athletic Club	Various (speed workouts)	Jay, (803) 379-2686
Winter Trail Group	Saturdays	9:00 a.m.	North Bank Pump House Trail Head	Various	https://www.facebook.com/groups/shamrocktraining



The Richmond Road Runners Club
PO Box 8724 • Richmond, VA 23226



Huguenot 3 Miler – March 7, 2021

Photos by Larry Holstrom

