



**ATHLETICS  
WEEKLY**

# TRAINING GUIDE

**EXPERT ADVICE**

**KEEP INJURY AT BAY**

**THE NEED FOR SPEED**

**RULES OF HYDRATION**

**FUEL YOUR RECOVERY**

**THE ELITES' TOP TIPS**

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GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR RUNNING

# A GUIDE TO KEEP YOU ON TRACK

IT'S AROUND this point of the year when you'll hear the question 'how's your training going?' being asked most keenly.

It may be just a few short weeks since the bells brought in 2018 but already there will be schedules which are going perfectly to plan and others which might not be following the desired script.

For ultra marathon runners, marathon runners, those aiming for 5k, 10k, half-marathon PBs or others with track ambitions weighing heavily on their shoulders, this is where the really hard work is being done ahead of the big events or 'A' races to come.

With that in mind, we thought we'd present you with some advice and, hopefully, inspiration, in the form of this Training Guide to help keep you going as you log the miles and the sessions.

There's expert advice on what you should be eating and drinking, how to work exercises into your routine that will help keep dreaded injuries at bay and we've also picked out some running kit that will suit the current inclement conditions.

We outline why it's so important to feature speedwork as part of your training regime and, finally, we asked some of Britain's finest athletes for that one piece of training advice which they feel can make the biggest difference. Their responses make for interesting reading.

Enjoy the guide and happy training!

**Euan Crumley,**  
Editorial Director



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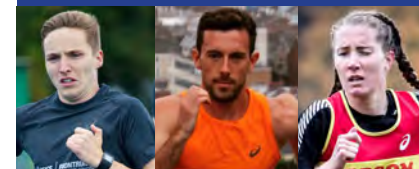
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## MEET THE ASICS FRONTRUNNERS



TURN TO PAGES 4, 10 AND 16 TO HEAR FROM THE RUNNERS WHO WANT YOU TO JOIN THEIR TEAM

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# DIVERSE TEAM IS TEACHING SAM SO MUCH



▶ Sam Lloyd-Perks: learning all the time

**S**AM LLOYD-PERKS is a young endurance runner with international ambitions. The Cardiff Met student, trained by James Thie in the Welsh capital, has been involved with ASICS since 2015 but becoming part of the brand's FrontRunner project – which offers the chance to be involved in a worldwide running community – has helped him in a number of ways.

**How much of a difference has the ASICS FrontRunner project made for you?**

It's been pretty big in terms of feeling like part of a team and part of the brand. I had a kit deal with ASICS before but, since the FrontRunner scheme came along there have been more photoshoots, more meet and greets and more promotion too so it's a big bonus.

**What do you like about the ASICS FrontRunner team?**

The group is really mixed – you've got people from all sorts of different backgrounds and all different kinds of running – and triathlon as well.

I've always been a track runner at the more elite end of things – in terms of the groups I've been a part of, the coaches I've worked with and the set-ups.

But to meet these people who are doing things like running a marathon in every country or 100km races...I'm intrigued by it all.

There are a few people who race similar distances to me, too, and we've bounced ideas off each other. It's a support mechanism as well – we're constantly speaking to each other on social media or at races.

If one of us has a bad day at the office we look after each other, show that we're a team and get each other through it. It's incredible.

**What is your favourite kind of training session?**

I'm the kind of runner that loves and hates everything! It changes from week to week. But, as a whole, I really love the longer reps. My favourite session would probably be 8-10 x 1km off 90 seconds rest.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I've had a dream since I was 16 to be a marathoner one day but I'm being really focused and strict on myself not to move up too quickly.

I see myself as a future marathoner and I hope I get there but at the moment I just want to stick to events like the 5k and then maybe step up to my first marathon when I'm around 26 or 27.

Chris Thompson is a runner I really look up to. His career path is one I'd love to follow.

He achieved a lot more than I did at youth level but he's transitioned from a 5k and 10k runner up to the marathon and has produced some phenomenal performances coming back from injury.

**SAM LLOYD-PERKS**

**AGE:** 22  
**CLUB:** Cardiff AAC/Cardiff Met University  
**COACH:** James Thie  
**PERSONAL BESTS:**  
5000m: 15:32, 10,000m: 33:07,  
5km: 15:38, 10km: 32:34



**BECOME AN ASICS FRONTRUNNER**

ASICS is calling for new applicants to join its successful FrontRunner campaign, a programme which is a diverse influencer community across the globe to champion sharing their own experiences of running to inspire more people to run.

To apply to become a member of the team, you need to demonstrate a strong passion for running, a desire to be part of the community and to be prepared to share your journey to inspire others along the way.

Applications close on February 11, 2018 and the announcement of successful applicants will be made on February 21, 2018.

Runners can apply to join the ASICS FrontRunner community by visiting [www.asics.com/frontrunner](http://www.asics.com/frontrunner); Instagram: [asicsfrontrunner](https://www.instagram.com/asicsfrontrunner) and [#asicsfrontrunner](https://www.instagram.com/asicsfrontrunner)

# TIME TO GO TO PREHAB

**PETA BEE** finds out why adding some strengthening exercises to your routine will offset the risk of injury

**YOU'RE** putting in the training miles, but are you simultaneously priming your body to protect it as much as possible and limit the risk of injuries which could interrupt your progress?

Physiotherapists insist a prehabilitation – or prehab – programme is essential for offsetting injury risk.

And, while a few stretches before you head out of the door is unlikely to be enough to make a difference, dedicating some time to prehab every day could be the best move you make.

“Prehab is a key part of a runner’s build-up to any event,” says physiotherapist Paul Hobrough, author of *Running Free of Injuries: From Pain To Personal Best* (Bloomsbury, £18.99).

“Also known as strength and conditioning, it doesn’t involve you spending 90 minutes in a gruelling gym session and can start with some basic body work exercises.”

Results of a study at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in 2011 showed that a 20-minute daily routine including some balance and agility exercises lessened the chance of getting a lower extremity injury – that included ankle sprains

and the dreaded anterior cruciate ligament tears – by up to 50 per cent. But most physios say starting with five-10 minutes a day is enough.

So how should you plan a prehab routine and what should you include?

## HOW TO PLAN YOUR PREHAB

If you have a specific injury or area of vulnerability, you will obviously need to focus more on one body part but, in general, you need to incorporate exercises for the whole body into your daily programme.

“For prehab, I say there are 21 essential exercises, some of which you will be doing already and others that are more unusual,” says Hobrough.

“It’s the ones you don’t do on a regular basis that might provide the greatest positive impact on your ability as a runner, let alone making you more impervious to injury.”

He advises breaking down your prehab exercises to a manageable 10 minutes daily, focusing on a specific set of body parts each time.

On Monday, you might work core muscles, perform hamstring



### 1 SOLEUS (stretch):

Stretch the soleus (the deeper, flat muscle in your calf).

How: Stand facing a wall with your feet 10-20cm from the wall (see above), one foot in front of each other.

Bend both knees until you feel a dull stretch deep in the calf muscle.

and soleus stretches, on Tuesday it could be hip flexors, glute activation and shin stretches and so on.

Here are three exercises for you to include:



### 2 CALF RAISES (strength)

How: Start on tiptoes, standing on the edge of a step. Slowly lower until your heel cannot lower any further. Return to the top again in one smooth movement. Repeat for 3x15 reps.



### 3 TOE RAISES (strength)

How: Stand with your back against a wall. Take a step away from the wall. Keeping your heels in contact with the floor, raise your toes up as far as you can and slowly back to the floor, but do not allow them to touch. Repeat for 4x25 reps.

## IMPROVE YOUR FOOT AND ANKLE PROPRIOCEPTION

IT’S easy to overlook your feet and ankles in favour of larger and more obvious muscle groups and joints like the hamstrings and gluteals. Yet they are of prime importance to running and there are plenty of simple things you can do to improve proprioception – or their stability and movement in space.

Matt Todman, the director of Six Physio in London, says: “One of the best injury-prevention exercises you can do is to stand on one leg for 90 seconds, three or four times a day. “It improves balance, leg strength and ankle strength.”

Paul Hobrough then suggests graduation to standing on a pillow or cushion.

“In time you will find this easy, so now try with your eyes closed or in the dark,” he says. “Suddenly you will feel every synapse of each individual nerve trying to keep you upright and working hard to do so. Once you have developed good balance, you can move to wobble cushions, or other functional training tools.”

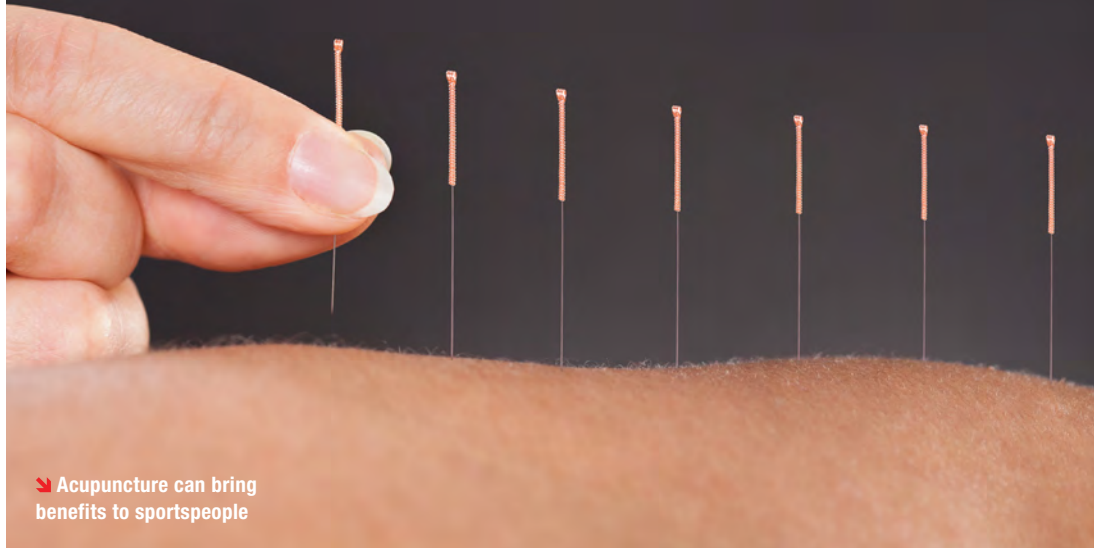
**Paul Hobrough**  
([physioandtherapyuk.co.uk](http://physioandtherapyuk.co.uk));  
**Matt Todman**  
([www.sixphysio.com](http://www.sixphysio.com))

## STATIC V DYNAMIC STRETCHES

THERE remains much confusion among runners about how to stretch – should it involve movement or should you hold a stretch in position for a set amount of time?

“Static stretching is where you place the muscle under tension and hold that position for a period of time; dynamic stretching is increasing the range of movement through a series of repeated movements,” says Paul Hobrough. “A static stretch as part of your prehab is still very relevant, although dynamic stretching as part of a warm-up is now favoured.”

# COULD ACUPUNCTURE HELP YOUR RUNNING?



Acupuncture can bring benefits to sportspeople

**P**HYSIOTHERAPY is an essential tool in allowing sportspeople to perform at their best and keep injuries at bay. However, in recent years an increasing number of athletes – both elite and recreational – have begun combining that treatment with acupuncture to improve performance.

References on file at the Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists indicate the benefits athletes can experience from acupuncture include pain relief, increased circulation, reduced inflammation, quicker recovery times from injuries and the relaxation of tense muscles.

Through an advanced knowledge of myofascial, or muscular, pain and the processes

## BUT WHAT ABOUT THE NEEDLES?

You may think it counterintuitive to needle the skin in order to relieve pain, however acupuncture does not use normal needles.

Acupuncture needles are between 0.14mm-0.3mm thick, roughly the same width as a single human hair.

of inflammation and tissue healing, physiotherapists trained in acupuncture can safely and effectively employ a variety of needling techniques for the treatment of acute and chronic sports injuries.

Acupuncture is able to safely reduce pain by stimulating the brain and central nervous system

to produce natural pain-relieving chemicals such as endorphins, melatonin and serotonin, to name a few.

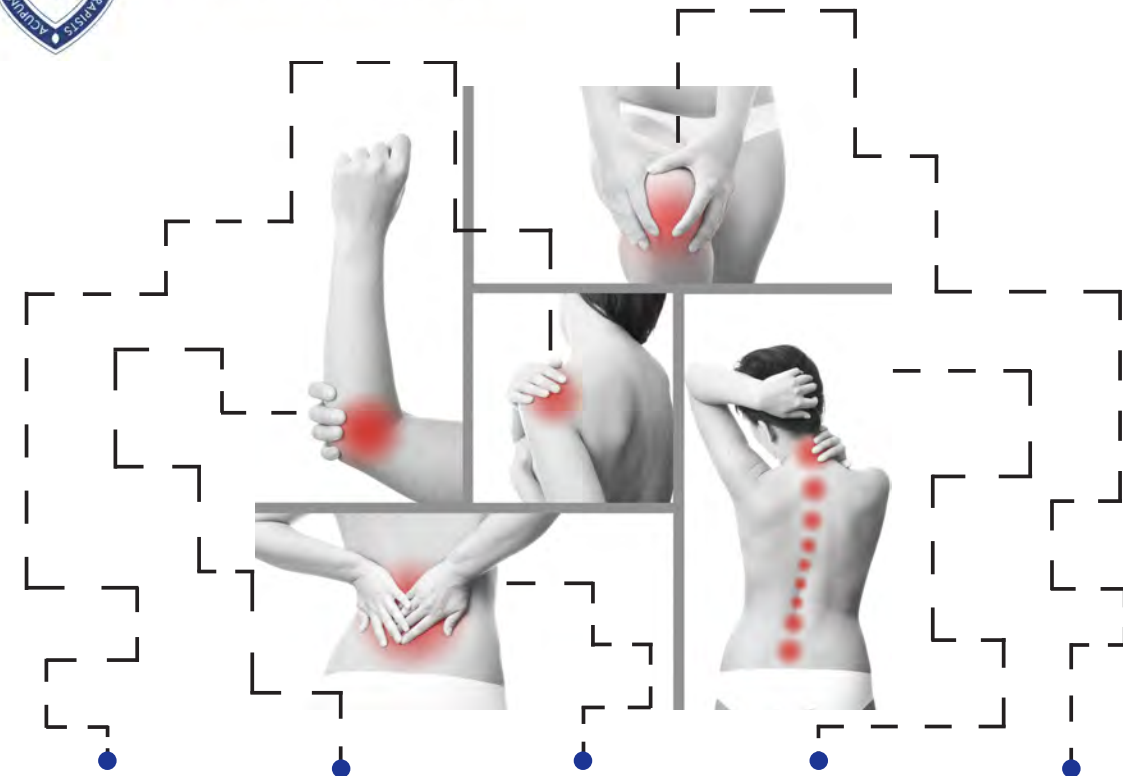
The advantage of acupuncture with physiotherapy is that patients benefit from a holistic treatment of their sports injury, including the development of an appropriate exercise and stretching programme that takes into account tissue trauma, muscle imbalance and normal movement patterns.

By managing a patient's pain, acupuncture can enhance their ability to engage in physiotherapy treatments, therefore aiding recovery.

The aim? To help patients become stronger, fitter and enjoy an injury-free active lifestyle, allowing them to conquer personal sporting and physical goals.



Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists



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Whether it's a long term condition, an acute injury or general aches and pains, Acupuncture with Physiotherapy could be the answer to getting your life back on track.

Find your local Acupuncture Physiotherapist at

[www.aacp.org.uk](http://www.aacp.org.uk)



Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists

# MATTHEW IS SO HAPPY TO HELP

**M**ATTHEW REES never used to like running much. He only took it up as a New Year's resolution three years ago but has quickly gone from strength to strength. He hit the national consciousness in April of last year when he stopped to help the stricken David Wyeth cross the finish line at the London Marathon. In fact, helping people is a big part of what he now loves about the sport.

**Why did you start running?**

I wanted to get fit but the second reason was to help with anxiety.

Initially it was really tough but after a while it gets quite addictive and it really helped. I really enjoy it now.

When I saw improvements in my fitness and my anxiety – it made me realise that if I kept on running I would get better, become more confident and deal with the symptoms better. Anxiety can build up inside me and running helps to just release that. It makes me able to deal with the day more confidently.

**You got good at running very quickly.**

I was pretty shocked with my improvement. I'd always gone

to the gym and played football but running was never really something I enjoyed.

But then the times were getting faster and faster. I joined Swansea Harriers and learned so much from them.

**Has being an Asics FrontRunner taken things to the next level?**

It really has. I've met so many people of different backgrounds and abilities through it. Everyone is just really passionate about running and we all support each other through everything.

**Are you keen to help and inspire others?**

Definitely. We try to motivate people to get out there and run, to move and enjoy being fit, or going to events, volunteering at parkruns, at races, pacing people at races and various things like that. We also have cheer zones at some races, just to try and get people to enjoy running.

Through our passion for running, we want to spread our love of it and hopefully it will make others want to try it.

**Is the ASICS FrontRunner team suitable for anyone?**

If you enjoy running then you are fast enough. We've got all

sorts of different abilities there. It's crazy, we had one girl who started and she had never run more than 10km and, now that she's part of the group, she's running half-marathons and she's now going to run the London Marathon this year.

You grow within the group. If you are someone who loves running, I'd advise you to apply.

**What are your running ambitions this year?**

I'm training for the London Marathon and, after that, I'm doing my first ultra marathon – the Race to the Towers.

It's a double marathon so it's a big jump up but there are so many people I've spoken to through the FrontRunner project and they've inspired me to try and to run the hills and the trails.

**How much are you looking forward to running in London again, after last year?**

I'm really looking forward to going back. It was an incredible day and to help Dave finish the race was really special.

He and I are good mates now. It was a positive story and it showed that we do support each other in the running community.



Matthew Rees is looking to inspire others to get active

**MATTHEW REES FACTFILE**

**AGE:** 30  
**CLUB:** Swansea Harriers  
**PERSONAL BESTS:**  
5km: 15:18, 10km: 32:20,  
Half-marathon: 71:04,  
Marathon: 2:29:55



**THE BENEFITS OF BEING AN ASICS FRONTRUNNER**

- Exclusive access to the international ASICS FrontRunner community
- Free seasonal supply of exclusive ASICS FrontRunner running clothing and footwear
- Free participation at ASICS events
- The chance to take part in International ASICS FrontRunner training camps
- Exclusive photo shoots
- Exclusive event access
- Free bib numbers for selected ASICS races worldwide
  - Meet our top athletes
- Advice from ASICS FrontRunner experts and professionals
  - ASICS FrontRunner community meetings
- The chance to be featured in our brand campaigns and PR stories
  - Product tests
- Loads of motivation and reasons to move

Apply at: [asics.com/frontrunner](https://asics.com/frontrunner)

# POWER UP YOUR RECOVERY

Post-run nutrition is as important as the food you eat beforehand. **PETA BEE** looks at the best ways to ensure you recover from your training sessions quickly

**M**OST runners have a favourite pre-run meal or snack, something they know will fuel their efforts without causing discomfort. But sports nutritionists say that recovery foods are often a second thought.

By honing your post-training diet, however, you could significantly enhance your recovery. So how best to plan your recovery strategy?

## TAKE ON FLUIDS

Drinking enough to replace fluid losses is essential. But how much do you need? Last year, a panel of scientists assembled by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) published the latest position statement on sports nutrition in the scientific journal *Medicine and Science In Sports and Exercise*.

In their guidelines, they stressed the need for athletes to consume 125-150% of their estimated fluid losses in the four to six hours after a session, the extra accounting for the continued loss of fluid from the body through sweating and urine losses.

Including a little sodium with your fluid is

helpful, says sports nutrition scientist Asker Jeukendrup on his website [mysportscience.com](http://mysportscience.com), as “it helps to retain ingested fluids, especially extracellular fluids, including plasma volume”.

Salt also triggers the thirst mechanism, meaning you are likely to take on board enough fluids as your body is restored.

## CONSUME CARBS

Muscle glycogen is the main fuel used by the body during any high intensity exercise and inadequately replacing glycogen stores will compromise performance in subsequent sessions.

In the ACSM report published in 2017, experts emphasised that carbohydrate intake should be top of your list of priorities after training.

“A carbohydrate intake of 1.0–1.2g per kg of body weight as soon as possible after exercise and every hour thereafter for four to six hours, will optimise rates of resynthesis of muscle glycogen,” states the ACSM.

This is even more important if you



SHUTTERSTOCK

are training twice a day or if your sessions are less than eight hours apart.

Complete muscle glycogen synthesis takes 24 hours or longer, so it pays to refuel well.

### POSTPONE THE PROTEIN

Given the high-profile advertising campaigns to the contrary, you may be surprised to learn that immediately replenishing protein stores is less crucial than you might think.

There is some evidence, reported the ACSM panel, that consuming protein during the

1-2 hour recovery window after sport helps to re-boot glycogen stores more quickly, but no proof that it has a direct impact on performance.

“It is unlikely that ingesting protein in the hours after a given exercise bout will impact the extent of exercise-induced muscle damage sufficient to account for functional changes,” says Dr James Betts, a researcher in nutrition and metabolism at the University of Bath.

That doesn’t mean you should avoid it and protein intake in general is important.

Where protein comes into its

own is in the longer-term recovery process.

Evidence for protein’s role in ensuring adequate muscle repair and building during a process that can take hours, days or even weeks is overwhelming and it’s vital to include it as a major part of your general diet.

### PREPARE TO REPAIR

Sports scientists have uncovered other strategies to reduce muscle soreness, including the use of various foods and supplements.

A study from Northumbria University, published in the *European Journal of Applied*

*Physiology* suggested that the nitrates and betalains in beetroot juice (try Beet It; beet-it.com), which have been shown to act like antioxidants, might enhance exercise recovery by preserving muscle function and reducing inflammation. Tart-tasting Montmorency cherry extract (try Cherry Active; cherryactive.co.uk) has been proven to be similarly effective.

Supplement use needs to be tested in training and doesn’t suit everyone – indeed, large amounts of recovery aids have been shown to interfere with training adaptation in some athletes – so make sure

you take care in testing what’s available.

And there’s no guarantee they will help. In a recent review (December 2017) published in the *Cochrane Library journal*, researchers from the University of Portsmouth and Sheffield Hallam University looked at the evidence from 50 studies that compared high-dose antioxidant supplementation with a placebo in participants who took part in ‘strenuous activity’.

Results showed that high dose antioxidant supplementation, more than the recommended daily dose, does not appear to reduce muscle

soreness early after exercise or at one, two, three or four days after exercise.

And the differences in the average muscle pain scores for those taking supplements such as tart cherry juice, blackcurrant nectar and pomegranate juice compared with those taking placebos were tiny.

According to Dr Mayur Ranchordas, senior lecturer in sport and nutrition and exercise metabolism at Sheffield Hallam and one of the researchers on the paper, “the reductions were so small that they were unlikely to make any difference”.



# ALECHIA READY TO REALISE HER TRUE POTENTIAL



➤ Alechia van Wyk: loves to tackle all sorts of events

**A**LECHIA VAN WYK is someone who enjoys plenty of variety in her running. Be it marathons, multi-stage ultra marathons, triathlon or even the steeplechase, the Epsom and Ewell Harrier is constantly challenging herself.

**Why do you take part in such a wide range of events and challenges?**

I do everything and I love all of it! My running journey began in junior school when I was forced to pick a winter sport to keep fit and cross country seemed to be the easy option on the cards.

I was hooked and I have dabbled in short events such as the 200m all the way through to my first 100km in 2016. Running is my escape, my time and my space.

**How have you found your first year as an ASICS FrontRunner?**

It has been an amazing experience. It was above and beyond anything you could dream of. It felt like being a sponsored athlete!

**Have you enjoyed being able to get advice from the elite ASICS athletes?**

Absolutely. Having the chance to speak with Kerry O’Flaherty, a Rio Olympian at the steeplechase, and getting some advice from her was just amazing. Sharing a house in Bath with all of the elite athletes was really next level.

I therefore really improved last year and now I’m thinking “can I go even faster in 2018?”. And I can. I’ve seen some improvement already and I’m really excited about the coming year.

**Has it made you want to see just what you’re capable of?**

Definitely. I would really like to qualify for a club entry to London so the aim is to run a 3:30 marathon in Manchester this year and achieve that.

**What would you say to someone thinking about applying to be an ASICS FrontRunner?**

Go for it. Get your entry in. You have access to everyone’s passion – from those who have never run before, to those who are running for health and wellbeing, the guys that are mid-pack club runners like me, the emerging young guns and then all the elite guys.

When I was working towards a goal in 2017 or when I was pushing myself to get a PB, I was surrounded by FrontRunners who at the same time picked me up when the lows of running hit the hardest.

They made me smile and giggle at the silly little things, we shared silly jokes, laughed over a love of jelly babies.

We remind each other how crazy we are, and our photos showed those smiles that I will treasure for years to come and keep me motivated to keep going out.

**ALECHIA VAN WYK**

**AGE:** 37  
**CLUB:** Epsom and Ewell Harriers  
**COACH:** Anton van Zyl  
**PERSONAL BESTS:**  
 10km: 43:04, Half-marathon:  
 1:43:56, Marathon: 4:05:45



**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME AN ASICS FRONTRUNNER?**

The ASICS FrontRunner team members are Ambassadors of Movement.

They share their passion for moving, running and creating. They inspire. They motivate. Offline and online. They simply live and love what they are doing: spending most of their free time being active and moving themselves or others. Does that sound familiar?

Applications close on February 11, 2018 and the announcement of successful applicants will be made on February 21, 2018.

Runners can apply to join the ASICS FrontRunner community by visiting [www.asics.com/frontrunner](http://www.asics.com/frontrunner); Instagram: [asicsfrontrunner](https://www.instagram.com/asicsfrontrunner) and [#asicsfrontrunner](https://www.instagram.com/asicsfrontrunner)

# HOW TO HYDRATE

**WHEN** to drink and what to drink? These concerns preoccupy the thoughts of many a distance runner and it can be baffling to decipher the mixed messages of sports drink manufacturers (who insist we should consume more fluids) and sports scientists (who often encourage us to drink less).

Confused? Don't worry, we spell out the rules of fluid intake as determined by the leading experts:

## MILD HYDRATION CAN BOOST PERFORMANCE

A report by New Zealand sport scientists suggested that a 3% drop in body weight through fluid loss doesn't slow down athletes, while a 2012 paper in the *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine* found that elite runners in the heat of the Dubai Marathon recorded fluid losses of almost 10%, yet still their finishing times were unaffected.

How is this the case? John Brewer, professor of applied sport science at St Mary's University, Twickenham, says that "tactical dehydration" is a growing phenomenon among endurance runners, triathletes and cyclists, at club and elite level.

"Each litre of fluid lost equates to approximately 1kg of body weight," Brewer explains. "Carrying around less weight has a positive impact on endurance performance, so people train their bodies to cope with dehydration."

## HOW MUCH FLUID DO YOU NEED?

Fluid needs are highly individual. In general, for every pound you lose, you need to drink approximately



Hydration needs are highly individual

two 10 fl oz glasses (half a litre) of fluids to replace the shortfall.

Checking the quantity and quality of your urine can be used as an adjunct – dark and scanty urine suggests high concentrations of metabolic waste and that you need to increase your fluid intake.

Remember that your urine will be darker if you take supplements (particularly vitamin C), so volume is a better indicator.

## DON'T PRE-HYDRATE TO EXCESS

It's the risk of over-hydration – and potential hyponatremia – that is greater than the risk of dehydration for most. Dr Mitchell Rosner, a kidney specialist from the University of Virginia school of medicine, recently chaired a group of 16 independent experts from four countries to look into the issue.

"We've documented at least 14 deaths (from Exercise-Associated Hyponatremia) since 1981," he says. "The common feature in all cases is excessive water consumption during athletic

events. This is driven by misbeliefs that over-hydration can improve performance and even prevent dehydration."

## DRINK WHEN YOU FEEL THIRSTY

When it comes to when to drink during endurance events, the guidelines have changed.

In an updated consensus statement recently published in the *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine*, Dr Rosner and his panel stress a reliance on listening to your body.

"We recommend using your thirst as a guide," he says. "If you drink when thirsty, you will not become hyponatremic and you will not suffer from significant dehydration."

## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Ron Hill drank nothing when he won the 1970 Commonwealth Games marathon with a time of 2:09:28. Neither did Mike Gratton when he won the 1983 London Marathon, and so it has continued.

Kenyan athletes adopt what researchers described in the *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* journal as an "ad libitum fluid intake", drinking what and when they feel like during the day.

Likewise, a 2011 study published in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* found that, among the top Ethiopian runners, no fluids were drunk before or during training, with only modest amounts imbibed afterwards.

The message is clear. If your body needs more fluid, take it. If it performs well with less than the general recommendation, then adjust accordingly.

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IS HYDRATION AS EFFECTIVE AS AN IV DRIP

# THE NEED FOR SPEED



**Injecting pace into your training is important, even at this time of year. Here are our tips on how to do it**

**E**VEN in winter months, it's important to schedule in faster running that fires up the fast twitch fibres on a regular basis.

“Cross-country running, an endurance entrenched discipline, still needs fast running capabilities – neglect speed and you will even find hill running difficult,” says level 4 endurance coach, David Lowes.

“Apart from the running dynamics of a faster pace, speed does help with efficiency and cadence.”

These needn't be summer-style track sessions, but some form of 'speed' or



MARK SHEARMAN

Jenny Meadows (left) and Laura Muir know the importance of using drills

certainly 'faster than race pace' work should be done on a regular basis.

Drills are also important – and an often neglected aspect of training among distance athletes.

Jenny Meadows, the world 800m bronze medallist, says she performed drills on a daily basis both before and after sessions and spent around 30 minutes each day on static stretching to extend range of movement.

Meadows says that drills are crucial for building speed.

"It's the last 25% of a race which

comes down to posture but, at the same time, you need the volume in your training to make sure you are in a position to use it in that last quarter because 'speed kills' at the end of the day," she says.

If you need convincing they are worthwhile, Meadows has evidence of their value.

"I've seen Laura Muir do drills like a lot of sprinters would," Meadows says. "I've seen Mo Farah box jumping and his plyometric ability is amazing. He can jump on to a box which just

about comes up to my chin. I had to see it to believe it."

So, what should you include? She recommends simple drills such as caterpillar walks – performed by starting with the body in a plank position and then challenging yourself by moving your hands further out above your head in order to really work the abdominals and whole body chain.

Once stretched out, walk the feet in towards the hands by small movements forwards, bending the knees.

Aim to get the feet as close to the hands as you can whilst keeping the abdominals and core muscles engaged throughout – and walking lunge rotations as a great starting point.

The end result of repeated practice is taller running posture, relaxed shoulders and arm drive and rhythmic efficiency, all of which aid running speed.

● For more on Jenny Meadows' workshops visit [jennymeadows.co.uk](http://jennymeadows.co.uk)

## SOME STEPS FOR GETTING FASTER

What other simple steps to getting faster can you take? Below are David Lowes' top 10 tips for speed injection:

- Include some fast strides (50-100m) after each quality session
- Every two to three weeks in the winter months add a 'sting-in-the-tail' effort (300-500m) after the main session. It not only helps with getting faster, it also lets the athlete realise that they can run fast when fatigued
- If most of the workload is done on the roads on the dark nights, try and get onto a track at least every 10-14 days for a 'date-pace' session that gets increasingly quicker and more specific as the spring approaches
- Use hills effectively. Long, medium gradient slopes for lactate tolerance and short, steep hills with a run off the top with good knee lift and holding form to generate power
- Use shallow downhill to exaggerate leg speed (best done on grass where possible)
- Lack of speed isn't always down to a preponderance of slow-twitch fibres, it can be down to poor running form and especially when fatigued or a lack of strength in certain body areas. Practice form running regularly and pay attention to this when nearing the end of an arduous session. Include specificity in the gym and any weight-related workout
- Use speed endurance sensibly in the summer months and use a wide variety of distances that include lung-bursting short recoveries to those with much longer recoveries that allow the quality to be constant
- For pure speed run 40m efforts at 100% or 30m at 1500m pace, 30m at 800m, 30m flat-out
- Never neglect the aerobic base. Even for 800m, the bigger it is, the more you can apply speed when most needed
- Don't get lured into thinking that each phase of periodisation should be harder than the last. It should be progressive and that means attending to the needs, goals and target races for the focused distance



**DON'T FORGET!**  
You can find plenty of training advice and news in the pages of AW, out every Thursday, or by visiting:

**AW/ATHLETICS**  
WEEKLY.COM

# WHAT'S YOUR TOP

We asked some of Britain's finest athletes for their best piece of advice when it comes to finding improvement

PICTURES BY MARK SHEARMAN

## "BE PATIENT" - Josh Griffiths

(GB INTERNATIONAL MARATHONER)

My main bit of advice for aspiring runners would be to be patient with their training. It took me a while to realise the importance of consistency and being patient.

I used to try and log huge workouts/mileage but would then suffer with fatigue in the following weeks. These days I try not to do anything crazy in training, just try and log good, consistent back-to-back weeks of training, saving my big efforts for races.

Also realise the importance of recovery, not every run has to be hard in order to improve, I do a lot of easy aerobic running to supplement my hard sessions.

## "LISTEN TO YOUR BODY" - Charlotte Purdue

(GB INTERNATIONAL MARATHONER)

Listen to your body. I heard it lots over the years growing up but it wasn't until I got older and had a load of injuries that I actually started to listen.

Everyone is different and responds differently to training. Since I started to realise that, I was able to get better results and push myself harder!

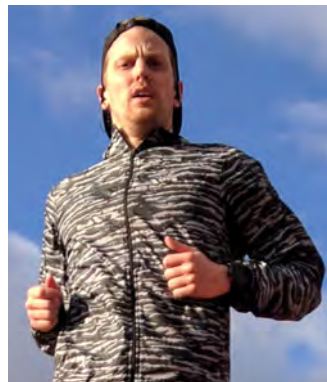
## "TREAT EACH DAY INDIVIDUALLY" - Colin McCourt

(FORMER 1500m GB INTERNATIONAL)

Treat each day as individually as you can. Don't worry too much about your pace or heart rates, just run. If you run fast or slow that day, so what? Enjoy it!

Focus on your sessions and races but, once they are done, move on and don't dwell on them. I think we look back too much and worry that that run wasn't fast enough or you should have run slower in the week.

I think if you stop worrying about it and just keep moving forward you will have so much more fun with running! I feel like that was where I gained most of my improvement over this year and how I went from 10-minute milling to six in a short space of time.



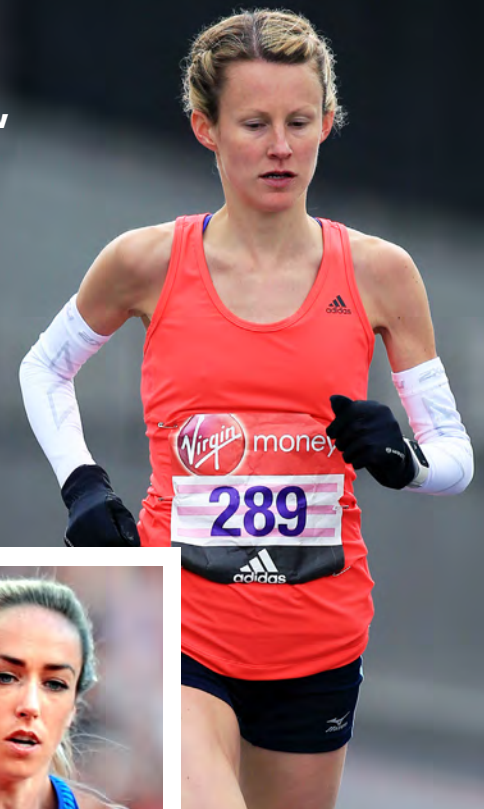
# TIP FOR TRAINING?

## "WORK ON THRESHOLD RUNNING"

- Tracy Barlow

(GB INTERNATIONAL MARATHONER)

I would say the best piece of advice I was given was to work on my threshold running, so 5km and 10km paces to improve my endurance as an athlete. Also to believe in my fitness when racing and go for it.



## "TRUST THE PROCESS" - Andrew Butchart

(GB OLYMPIC AND WORLD 5000m FINALIST)

I think the best advice I have been given is to always trust the process. You've got to have faith in your coach and the programme.



## "FOCUS ON YOURSELF, NOT OTHERS"

- Eilish McColgan

(GB OLYMPIC / WORLD FINALIST)

I'd say the biggest thing was focusing on myself and not worrying about what others were doing with regards to training.

My training schedule is a little unusual but it's one that seems to work for me so I've become more confident in following my own schedule and not worrying about what my competitors are doing.



**“BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE”**

– **Aly Dixon**

(GB OLYMPIC AND WORLD MARATHONER)

For me it’s probably a combination of two very similar pieces of advice I was given.

The first came from Charlie Spedding. When I got my first GB vest back in 2009 he signed a copy of his book for me as a present and said “be the best YOU can be, don’t think about anyone else”.

That, combined with Paula Radcliffe always telling me to concentrate on me and what I’m doing, don’t worry what others are doing, they won’t make me any faster.

Those two bits of advice made me realise that too many athletes spend too much time worrying about what others are doing instead of focusing on themselves.

Once I started to focus on me and what I’m doing, rather than chase other people’s training, my performances took a turn for the better.

**“RELAX”**

– **Luke Traynor**

(GB INTERNATIONAL)

My coach Andrew Kastor is a huge believer of relaxing on 99% of runs and sessions. If you are straining too much you are probably trying too hard.

The repercussions of this are high levels of fatigue going into the next day/week and injury follows fatigued runs pretty consistently for most.

There’s a place for really intense workouts, however they cannot be every week. You have to be sensible and be able to relax while running fast.

This was tough for me to get my head around, I want to run fast every run, however I’m now looking long term and focusing on putting good weeks on top of good weeks to equal great months – instead of a couple of great weeks followed by a few days off with minor injuries.

Relax on the majority of your runs, forget the pace, concentrate on form. Recover properly!



**“TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY”**

– **Martyn Rooney**

(GB OLYMPIC AND WORLD 4X400m RELAY BRONZE MEDALLIST)

As an 18-year-old Roger Black told me to take every opportunity that comes my way, don’t hold back when things are going well because you don’t want to peak too early.

Honesty is key, with your coach, your training partners, family, but more importantly with yourself! Be honest about your goals, your training and your performance so that you can either really enjoy the success or learn how to improve in the future.

**“DON’T BE AFRAID TO TAKE A REST DAY”**

– **Jonny Mellor**

(GB INTERNATIONAL)

Respect when your body is feeling tired or you have a niggle and either run easy or don’t be afraid to take a rest day.



**“DON’T FOCUS ON FEELINGS”**

– **Jenny Meadows**

(GB WORLD AND EUROPEAN MEDALLIST, 800m)

The best piece of advice that I would say has been the most beneficial to me is to run according to how you feel.

There are some days when we are all super-motivated, our body feels good and we just know that we are going to have a good training session or competition.

Then there are other days when we wake up and we just don’t feel as good as we want to.

That may be physically because our body has not recovered as well as expected from the last session or due to an interrupted night’s sleep or just because we have been so busy.

We all get these days and wish the training session or competition wasn’t on this day.

If it’s a training day then I adopt the mindset that I will do



my best “in the circumstances” and that usually limits any excessive anxiety in relation to hitting target times.

If it is a run I have to do that day then I will make sure I leave my Garmin watch at home and just run according to what my body tells me is the right place today.

**“LEARN HOW TO DEAL WITH AND FROM SETBACKS”**

– **Rosie Clarke**

(GB INTERNATIONAL, 3000m STEEPLECHASE)

Learn how to deal with, and learn from, setbacks. For me this was most tested after falling at the World Championships in London last summer.

I was devastated with the outcome of that race, but I picked myself up and went on to run PBs across multiple distances in the weeks after. I am a stronger athlete now because of the setbacks I have had to overcome in my career.



# GRAB THE RIGHT TRAINING TOOLS

**PAUL FREARY** picks out some of the best running kit to help keep you firmly on track during the winter

**Inov-8: AT/C Windshell Windproof Jacket – £80.00 (inov-8.com)**

As well as being a great lightweight and windproof jacket, this shell will help keep you drier in a downpour. Perhaps its greatest asset, though, is its ability to pack down into its own integrated pocket.

When stored away you are able to stash it into a bum-bag or even a pocket, meaning it can be called upon for protection when required.

Vented panels help breathability and a fitted hood helps retain heat in the very worst conditions. It's a great jacket wherever you choose to venture.



**More Mile: Train 2 Run Zip Top – £20 (moremile.co.uk)**

This long-sleeved, half-zip top is part of a range of garments from this brand, all of which offer great value for money. The lightweight, moisture-wicking fabric does a good job of keeping you comfortable and dry while training.

Available in both men's and ladies' styles, and with various colour options, it means there's something to suit any taste.



**Montane: Trail Series Long Tight – £75 (montane.co.uk)**

While initially aimed at the off-road athlete, these tights have several useful features that are of benefit to any runner. Snag-resistant fabric around the lower leg area of the tights makes them especially durable and mesh panels behind the knees add breathability and flexibility.

Stretch mesh pockets are great for holding a variety of items; while a rear zip pocket is great for keys as well as being large enough to hold your phone. The fabric is treated with a Polygiene finish to keep it smelling fresher for longer, making these great for everyday use.

**Runderwear: Compression Socks — £30 (runderwear.co.uk)**

Already familiar to many for their sports underwear, the brand has now added a compression sock to their range of products.

These socks offer graduated compression from the foot up over the calf muscle to help stimulate blood flow and aid recovery. Using a Bamboo Carbon yarn, the socks are also great at wicking moisture and keeping the feet dry.



**ASICS: Pulse 9 – £85 (asics.com)**

Often overlooked, this entry-level model from ASICS is in fact a great all-round workhorse of a shoe. With Gel heel cushioning and a lightweight SP-EVA midsole, it's packed with the kind of advanced features you'll find in shoes that should see you through many happy miles of running.

**Garmin: Forerunner 635**  
– £399.99 (garmin.com)

Packed with all the features we've come to expect from a Garmin GPS watch, this model now includes the ability to take your music with you as you train.

The watch will hold around 500 of your favourite tracks and stream them wirelessly to bluetooth headphones.

Wrist-based heart rate monitoring keeps you up to speed on your training intensity and the GPS tracks distance and speed. Advanced running dynamics including ground contact time, stride length and vertical ration are all provided and keep the data-hungry fed.



**More Mile: Lumino Hi-Viz Clip-On LED Band and Clip-On**  
– £5 each (moremile.co.uk)

Be seen and be safe by adding these great, low-cost accessories to any outfit. Both the armband and clip-on light use reflective hi-viz casings combined with LED for constant illumination or flashing light, making you more visible to other road users. Don't leave the house without them!



**Hilly: Pioneer Vest –**  
£80 (ronhill.com)

If you need to carry an essential variety of kit as well as fuel, this vest-based backpack offers the perfect solution, with plenty of storage capacity.

Twin stretch mesh pockets incorporated into the front shoulder straps are perfect for small soft flasks while zipped pockets are ideal for valuables and the main compartment holds a bladder for an additional hydration solution.



**SOS Hydration drink – from £6.99 (sosrehydrate.com)**

Any runner who has found themselves on the wrong side of dehydration will tell you just how important it is to get your hydration right during training and this product will help you do just that. The makers of this product, which comes in powdered form in a wide range of flavours and is added to water, describe it 'a drinkable IV drip'. It has been engineered by a leading doctor and two former professional athletes to combat dehydration in order to improve overall performance.



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