

**Distance athlete's on urban rhythm**  
**How do ultrarunners run in automatized cities?**



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## Thor | Presentation | Introduction =====

I am Thor. But not in the good god sense. I am not a Norse God, nor a semigod comic hero. Nor am I a Chris Hemsworth, with which a Tahani Al-Jamil fantasizes more about social status than erotically. Nor am I the actor representing a James Hunt that intensively lives a merciless 1970s rivalry in Formula 1. I do have the worse trait of Hunt's representation.

James Hunt, as shown in the movie *\*Rush\** (2013v), is not interested in a lot of things, most simply he wants to run a fast ride, feel the thrill to live, and win a world championship. Here comes a key point. Some people want to reach a certain personal expectation in a certain way: for some, like Hunt, it may be to become a champion. But, he just wants to know how far up he can reach, even if it is a single time. Others, like his nemesis and later friend Niki Lauda, want to be at the top for ever. In a certain sense, James Hunt is a relaxed character that knows how to enjoy life after he wins his ultimate sport goal. And yet, why do some people just set the bar once and then lay back, while others have a drive to always be struggling, even when successful? Both try to aim to a horizon, yearn: only that one stays on track for more time. (Inspiration for yearning: George Costanza, aka Cartwright)

One can be very silly with goals. Trying to run a marathon can be the goal of a lifetime for some. For my self, running a marathon was a high point after running 10Ks for over a decade, while delving into 20Ks and 30Ks. Marathon was my high point from which I then descended into almost total couch potato (Later on I would remain more or less thin, and with a calm jog around the nearby park on a weekly basis for over 15 years, but without it coming naturally, or with ease and companionship as before when I took races with my dad, who left running golf). It is in this sense in which I say to myself, with very little or no pride, that I am Thor. I am the James Hunt that wanted to reach a peak. Suffice to say that by bar was very much lower: I simply wanted to jog a full 42.195K, and then I just didn't do much of anything else athletically after that 2004. I ran a marathon at age 24, and then I left all athletic challenges, and much more, aside. This is not a text about Marvel movies, nor about formula one. But it is an attempt to understand what humans (including myself), non humans, and more-than-humans are made of and what moves them (here: ultra running), and/or gives them wings, even if at their footwear, like *\*Hermes\**; or simply what makes the spirit take off, cruise, or crash.

Do you have a friend that is doing so bad in life that you don't tell him anything shocking, nor critique him afraid about his fragility and that s/he may kill himself? I do. Actually the delicate point is not about the possible ulterior drastic measures, but the fact that we all carry some level of fragility: what to do with it? One point of view is to say *\*be gentle\**. Another point of view states that we shouldn't put cotton on every edgy corner of the world to be cautious. *\*The world belongs to the bold\** goes the saying. I worry about my fragile

friend/s, and I also think that they should be more active. And me too. That is a little bit of two reasons why I pushed myself over the edge to go ultra. So: yearn on the one hand; and as another layer that superposes with the prior, a need for activation, overcoming.

Moral-Technical Note: I just wrote that I *\*should\** be more active. The implication is not an ethical one, but simply a analysis of consequences. If the wish is to live feeling well, then more activity is deemed to be better than sedentary. I may believe this to be true for others as well under specific circumstances. But I don't want to be self-righteous, nor a moral proselytizer: not everyone needs to do sport nor go outdoors, nor even move if not in the scope of interests. Many people don't need (more of) that whatsoever. It's simply that I believe that in many cases a little of activity and outdoors would benefit people that lack them and that are not doing very well. Some people may lack and do just fine. I do *\*not\** believe that running or going ultra in any sense is a general recipe to move forward, or strive: simply a handy hack for those interested in coming closer to another (outer) world.

I am recalling, right now, the width of interests and active pursuit of a self taught young boy who at a Ted Talk quoted "how to find your way to a complete view of the world", in *\*Hackschooling makes me happy\** [Logan LaPlante @ TEDxUniversityofNevada 2013v]. He finds inspiration in Roger Walsh's *\*Lifestyle Mental Health\**, who promotes, 8 Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes [TLCs]:

+ Exercise + Diet Nutrition + Time in Nature + Contribution Service + Relationships + Recreation + Relaxation and Stress Management + Religious Spiritual

It is a bit by chance that very separate things end up getting mixed together: athletics, motivation, and adding a bit now of nutrition, and why not, also some considerations on meditation, focus on breathing, stretching and being outdoors. This sum up may seem a bit out of hand but are the components that I ended putting together to make in short time the most to boost conditioning.

In my 20s I simply trained by moving outside and just putting hours under my feet. I really enjoyed the process but I knew several things were missing, but at that time it felt OK to do without. At nearly 40 years of age, I find that I need to stretch plenty since I am below average on that spot, and I also need to readapt my body to running.

As of meditation and breathing, I enjoy them and have found that they help to combat physical stress, along with cold showers and stretching, a recipe by the Wim Hof Method, it is claimed that all activates the circulatory system, and the autonomic nervous system. It is not sure that there is already a scientific basis for this, but it seems to help me out with strength in mood and it is an enjoyable try out. So summing up some preliminary training methods, a brief athletic resume, and motivations I would add that apart from a desire to aim higher, and to lead an active life, there may be at least two other reasons I want to go ultra.

1. After finishing marathon, there was a little voice inside still thinking and asking. \*I think I still have more inside me. How much more may there be left, and how much further could I go?\*

2. I think I am pretty lazy nowadays: my jobs have been very intermittent, I don't seem to have much energy in mood and physic (mentally I always feel active, even if I have some patches of very bad chess performance) and I don't show myself to others as very useful (I am an unemployed Sociologist in a country that doesn't even know that the profession exists, or what it is capable of). So there begins the paradox: Can a person be lazy and run ultra at the same time? I believe so. Later on we shall examine the ramifications.

3. As a bonus, one should suspect that the reasons to do things are not always explicit, even for oneself, or possible to be listed in numbers. + \*I felt like breaking something beautiful\* they say in *\*Fight Club\**, while beating with inspiration. + \*Sometimes you just\* do *\*things\**, says ultra runner Scott Jurek in his first memoir. + A certain christian masochism can say that being selfless, and forgetting about the body and its pain is OK. + Opposite to the prior: what's so bad about having a six-pack (abs)? + In sync with the prior: is it not pleasant to go to the countryside and eat all that you can and want?

2019-01-09

This text is being written with love, joy, and fun. It needs not to be the biggest text ever, and it may well be forgotten amongst the infinity of digital copies and trees turned into paper. And at the same time it tries to make some important points, not to be left aside. This is why one may need a certain degree of attention to go through it, sometimes in a not so easy way. Because science can be fun, but serious too, and sometimes neither or both at the same time.

Why always the need for a prelude? Because raw material is not always processed and understandable and shareable. Because maybe accessing a black and white text is bizarre enough that one needs to make it entertaining, to read, as well as during the writing process. And yet, what would happen if the writer would like to reach a wider audience? Maybe one could flirt with the idea that if all of this would turn into a short info-mercial video, to be shot in three minutes more people would be able to access it. And the producers would put more effort in trimming the edges and non-sensical redundancies that make a message unclear.

Because we have become used to reading text over paper and screen it seems that black and white information is a given. But what would happen if we show black and white videos? Would that make a documentary less interesting? Certainly the interviewees become much more eager and enthusiastic when asked to participate in a film than over a book. Maybe a BW film could attain a middle ground. The point to be highlighted is not the mixture of half way emotions between boring and entertaining but rather that a black and white film could be more affordable for the amateur film ethnographer that wants to try a new (a)venue. Would you like to be in this interview? Would you like to watch it?

Maybe I could add some shapes over the pictures to make more dream-like as in Linclater's *\*Waking Life\**. Also that could help to draw significant points and stereotype typify and cut through certain lenses, with the additional benefit of resting some always imposed self-importance that science so desperately seeks for. And claiming it back at the same time, but another optic. Could you share that camera filter please? I need some help on the post-production and distribution. Do you have a friend in the National TV so that we can reach more people? Even a simple written composition can reach another single reader if they can browse the internet through a matrix-like aesthetic terminal console through a unix system, or any computer or tablet device for that matter. 2019-01-11

I am not a runner. I am reading Rich Roll's recovery from alcohol and all the dark and low spots are quite descriptive of the life I live. It is not that there aren't any happy times and people, but I let them down in a daily basis and they somehow allow me to misstep because they love me, as if I were a bit of a child or an idiot who they can oversee on the faults. Of course I have my own view and think I am right about so many things, but when things go wrong, when co-workers can't take it anymore, that is a stop sign, telling me that I am not leading at all a functional life. I'm a blood-sucker, tacking out and in my favour, in advantage, the life of those who are tolerant enough to still have me around.

Let's move to some non important facts. I think I can run and enjoy, but it has become a chore I only enjoy because of the aftermath, but only to a certain extent because it is isolated moving the body, not a complete experience. Why would I run nowadays anyway? Unclear. But the need is out there, and for any reason the stoppage is there as well. Since the beginning of year I can count very few moments of running at all, I have even thought of hacking miles into the distance counter by adding up miles done trekking through the mountains. I even had a rush of adrenalin and rock climbed with a above expected performance: I tried to pay attention to technique, relied mostly on my feet, had some hanging training behind my back for the last two months, and could manage well the communication and trust rapport from who was helping me out.

And yes, I didn't do awful, I can still hack these things a bit, but that is only useful for fouling myself: I don't have an excessive body mass, and I have ran quite a bit in the past, so this puts me ahead of the average man, and once in a while I am bold enough to run a longer race than my training would suggest, and finish (even if amongst the last). But that is not what makes someone a runner. What does?

See head first JQuery

A baby

Let's pretend to be a baby. (We're not all that far anyway.) I don't like being too much time indoors. There's not much to explore and not a lot of incoming information from the outside: no wind, nor heat or cold, nor sunlight, nor rain hail or snow, nor strange unexpected movements. Yes, I can play with a lot of people: fun games, family and friends, strangers when along the street and nice soothing movements when I get into a car (no buses for me, that may feel a little unstable and dangerous at my age if I can avoid them). At home I can check my old man's library full of colors and textures, but I am only five months old: I am just learning to sit up by my own, I can't even tackle the TV set by my self or adventure crawling through the floor to inspect corners, dusty empty spaces, loose objects in useless places, plugs and even knives in the kitchen and the refrigerator. Several elements are available in a average apartment, or even in a house further away from the city.

All changes if we suddenly get out for some fresh air. The sun hits in the face and I squint my eyes even un-intendedly. Even if I can hear the noises from cars in the highway the sounds that prevail are coming from the birds. By the amount of chirps and distinct frequencies I could say that there are a good amount of different species and biodiversity: although at my age I don't know much of these concepts I still have my senses quite heightened and awake. How could I let this aside? Why would I? 2019-01-21



Escaping through ultra | The useless art of running away and outside

Running is mostly useless, it has no defined purpose, no goal, and just wanders through space with repetitive motion. You could achieve many other health and sanity objectives through many other means. You can even do without any of the prior and still live a life of wellness. And yet, there is some attraction and accessibility, and a good quota of mysterious simplicity in running that pulls so much an increasing population into that vortex. And going from running to ultra adds more simplicity and even complexity on what you can learn of use to the practice and about broader areas as well.

Never run, nor go ultra. How and where could you find the urge to go outside? You can find that in many sources, and you can find many magnets to pull you indoors as well. This is an exploration on how to know more about love handles in the forties and how to hack them, about not what the heart but the soul craves and yearns about, on the idea that being a motionless blob with little reaction and agility does not feel lively when moving in a civilized era that does not call for physical challenge nor awareness on a daily basis.

Is there art in going outside and away? Is there art in running?