



HARRIER
TRAIL RUNNING

HOW TO RUN AN
ULTRA
POWERFUL LESSONS IN LONG DISTANCE TRAIL RUNNING

What a guide! Packed full of great information and advice on every step of running an ultra that even includes checklists to ensure your race day goes as smoothly as possible.
Superb! ★★★★☆

Dean Russell UTMB Finisher

THE UK'S FASTEST GROWING BRAND FOR TRAIL RUNNERS | OVER 50,000 ORDERS SHIPPED



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ABOUT HARRIER TRAIL RUNNING

Welcome to Harrier Trail Running, where trail runners in the UK find their perfect running gear without breaking the bank. Founded in 2020 by Kate Parker, a passionate trail runner herself, Harrier was born out of a desire to provide trail runners with a different option – one that offered exceptional value, thoughtful design and outstanding quality.

Our journey began with Kate collaborating closely with specialist outdoor equipment designers to develop a new range of trail running essentials. With unwavering dedication, she sought out the best suppliers and manufacturers to bring her vision to life. Through strategic partnerships and a network of contacts, Kate discovered that she could utilise the same high-quality manufacturers as the big brands, allowing Harrier to offer trail running gear of equal caliber at up to half the price.

"When I started trail running, I was overwhelmed by the amount of gear it seemed I needed. Other brands touted their expensive gear with flashy marketing campaigns featuring elite athletes, which felt intimidating and unaffordable. Neither the cheap nor the expensive options seemed to cater to my needs, and finding helpful resources on choosing the right kit was a challenge.

Harrier was born from my determination to challenge the over hyped perception of trail running and bring it back to its essence. We believe in the right gear, used in the right way, to simply enjoy the trails. Harrier is about authenticity, affordability, and never compromising on quality, design, or function. We are trail running for every body."

KATE PARKER | DIRECTOR – FOUNDER

REVIEWS

DEAN RUSSELL

UTMB Finisher | www.adventure-awaits.co.uk



What a guide! Packed full of great information and advice on every step of running an ultra that even includes checklists to ensure your race day goes as smoothly as possible. Superb.

SAM LLOYD

Dragon's Back Finisher 2023



This is a seriously impressive and comprehensive guide for anybody wanting to run an Ultra; it covers everything you need to know. I particularly like the Race Plan section, writing everything down and making notes, from kit check to rules of failure, makes decision-making come race day so much clearer, meaning you can control the controllables!

MATT EGNER

Cape Wrath Ultra Finisher 2023



Packed full of solid, practical advice to help you make it to the start line, and the finish line of your chosen race. In particular, the section on 'if/then' strategising really resonates, it helps to play through potential problems in advance, to have a plan to deal with it. Ultra running is all about problem solving after all...

LOUISE SPRACKLING

Race to the Stones Ultra Finisher 2022



An excellent guide for your first ultra or to improve on your last race that will give you confidence to be 100% prepared physically and mentally. It has easy to follow expert advice and tips that will optimise your time, resources and training plan. A blueprint for success to understand what it truly takes to run your best ultra and make it happen.

NICK BRENCHLEY

Dragons Back Finisher



If I'd read this guide when I started running ultras 8 years ago I could have saved myself a lot of tears, tantrums and toenails. Do yourself a favour and read this guide for advice on how to train for and run an ultra. It might even help you to understand why you think running one is a good idea.

PETER MCDONALD

Author of 42 Peaks, the official history of the Bob Graham Round



Dan and Ronnie have succeeded in compiling a pithy yet fully-rounded guide to preparing for a trail ultra. The slick and systematic approach will help anyone ready both their mind and body for the challenge.

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WELCOME TO THE HARRIER 'HOW TO RUN AN ULTRA' GUIDE

Do you have an ultra marathon in your sights?
Whether you're upping your distance, or training
for a more technical mountain challenge, we've put
together all the tips, tricks, strategies and tools you
need in one handy pack.

This guide contains three great modules full of
downloadable and interactive resources
that will support you as you get closer to race day.

SUPPORT CREW

WE'VE TEAMED UP WITH THE AWESOME DAN SUMMERS AND RONNIE STATON WHO BETWEEN THEM HAVE A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE OF RUNNING AND SUPPORTING ULTRAS.



DAN SUMMERS

Dan is a Mountain Leader, Fell Leader in Running Fitness and INWA Nordic Walking Instructor. He has completed a number of 100-mile races and 24hr challenges including the Arc of Attrition and Lakeland 100 (both under 24hrs), the Spine Challenger, the Bob Graham and Paddy Buckley Rounds. Dan loves to run on all surfaces and all distances but the adventure of long distance mountain challenges really inspires him. He loves to share this passion, and the skills needed to undertake these challenges, with others so they can have their own epic adventures.



RONNIE STATON

Ronnie has been working with goals for nearly 20 years after studying for a BSc Hons Coaching, Sport & Exercise Science Degree. Originally a Personal Trainer working with a range of clientele, he began to see that similar mindset patterns clearly lead to an improved success rate in achieving targets and individual fulfilment. Over time, Ronnie has become qualified in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to better help individuals within this non-physical realm. Over the last decade Ronnie has been working to help physically and mentally prepare hundreds of ultra runners from around the UK, tackling races from 30 miles up to 300 miles. Ronnie personally loves to run long and he has successfully run across England (190 miles), Wales (250 miles) and Scotland (215 miles) in a non-stop format.

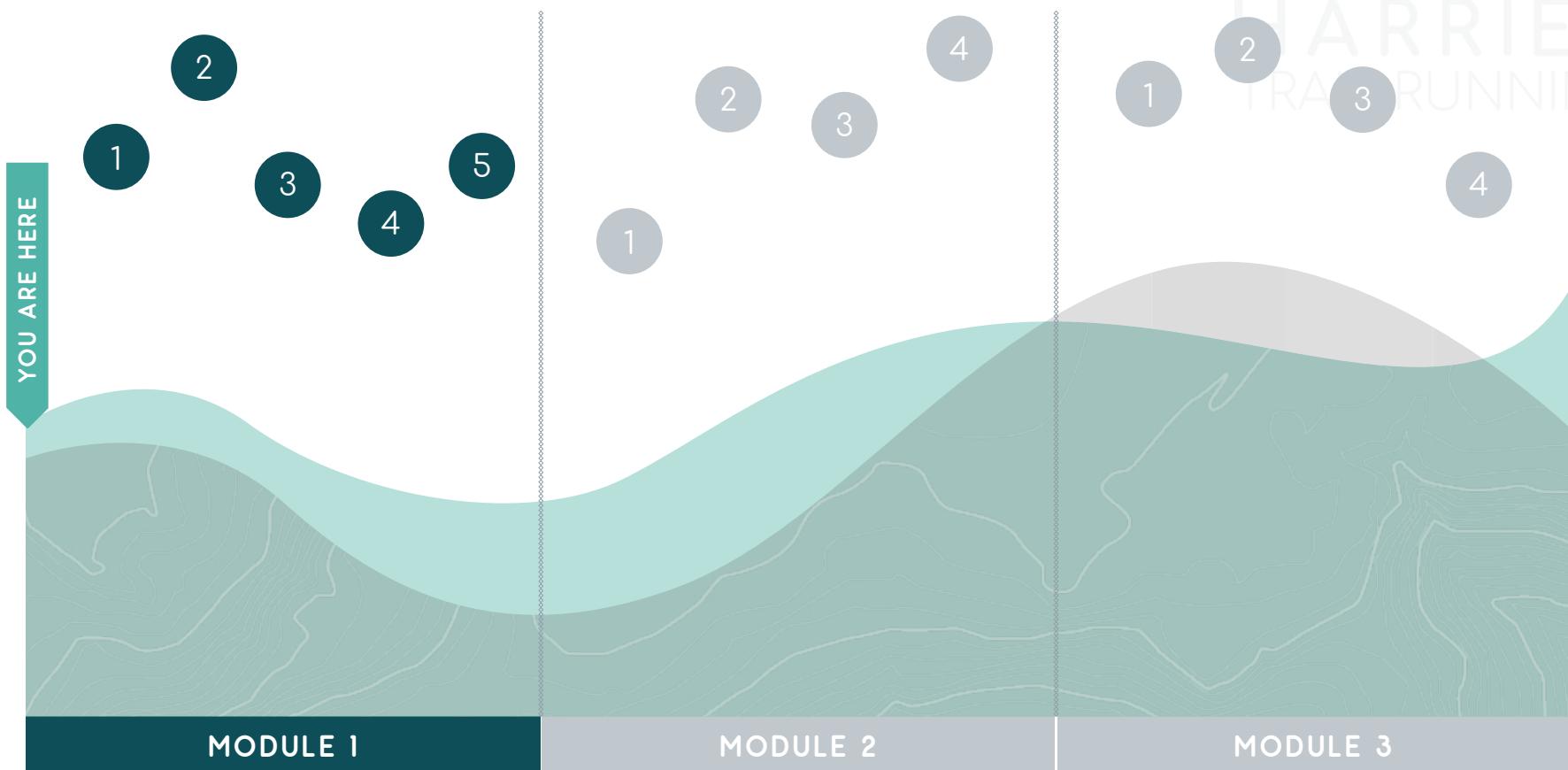


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WELCOME TO MODULE ONE

In this section we'll be covering Race Goals,
Technical Skills and Training Motivation.

YOU ARE HERE...



1. Choose a race
2. Get your checklist
3. Identify race goals
4. Give your motivation a boost
5. Course recce, night running, navigation training

1. Hydration & fuelling practice
2. Compulsory kit practice
3. Mental prep
4. Decision planning

1. Race plan and drop bag plan
2. Rules of failure
3. Taper time
4. Race reflection

CHOOSING YOUR ULTRA



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HOW TO CHOOSE AN ULTRA

WHY

Why this particular event?

WHEN

Why is the event?

Do you have sufficient time to train and taper?

SUPPORTED/ UNSUPPORTED

Do you want a support crew?

If so, does this event allow you to bring your own crew?



LOCATION

Where is the event? Is travel / accommodation easily available? Are there any travel restrictions?



TERRAIN

Is the event on mountains or technical terrain that require special skills?

CUT OFFS

Are there cut off times for the event? Will you realistically achieve these?



NAVIGATION

Is the course marked / not marked?

Will you be required to navigate?

CHOOSING YOUR ULTRA

RONNIE'S GUIDE FOR CHOOSING AN ULTRA

We hosted an online session with Ronnie where he shared some great tips and advice from his coaching and ultra running experience.

You can watch the video of the session here...



YOUR TAILORED ULTRA CHECKLIST

Everyone is different, so we've put together a few different checklist options.

If you are doing your first ultra, upping your distance or taking on a more technical mountain challenge, we've got a checklist to suit you.



CHECKLIST



SHORTER DISTANCE ULTRAS UP TO 60KM



NAME

EVENT

RACE DATE

24–30 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY: Base and Build phase training

~~~~~

- Identify race goals
- Recce the course (if possible)
- Practice using compulsory kit
- Seek advice / coaching if needed
- Walking and strength training
- Learn to use poles (if needed)
- Run a shorter 'training race' on similar terrain

### 8–12 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY: Peak phase training

~~~~~

- Reflect on build up events and training
- Practice hydration / fuelling strategy
- Decision planning
- Book race travel and accommodation

2–3 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY: Taper phase training

~~~~~

- Race Plan
- Drop Bag Plan
- Identify 'Rules of Failure'

### POST RACE

~~~~~

- Race Reflection

NOTES

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.....
.....

CHECKLIST



MID-DISTANCE ULTRAS
60-100KM



NAME

EVENT

RACE DATE

24-30 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY:

Base and Build phase training

~~~~~

- Identify race goals
- Navigation skills
- Mountain skills
- Recce the course (if possible)
- Practice using compulsory kit
- Walking and strength training
- Learn to use poles

Run a shorter 'training race'  
on similar terrain

## 8-12 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY:

Peak phase training

~~~~~

- Mountain running
- Practice hydration / fuelling strategy
- Mental preparation
- Decision planning
- Book race travel and accommodation

2-3 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY:

Taper phase training

~~~~~

- Race Plan
- Drop Bag Plan
- Identify 'Rules of Failure'

## POST RACE

~~~~~

- Race Reflection

NOTES

.....

CHECKLIST



LONGER DISTANCE ULTRAS
OVER 100KM (OR TECHNICAL TERRAIN)



NAME

EVENT

RACE DATE

24–30 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY:

Base and Build phase training

~~~~~

- Identify race goals
- Practice on technical terrain
- Night running
- Refine navigational skills
- Recce the course (if possible)
- Walking and strength training
- Seek advice / coaching (if needed)

## 8–12 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY:

Peak phase training

~~~~~

- Continue technical terrain practice
- Practice hydration using compulsory kit
- Practice hydration / fuelling strategy
- Mental preparation
- Decision planning
- Book race travel and accommodation

2–3 WEEKS UNTIL RACE DAY:

Taper phase training

~~~~~

- Race Plan
- Drop Bag Plan
- Identify 'Rules of Failure'

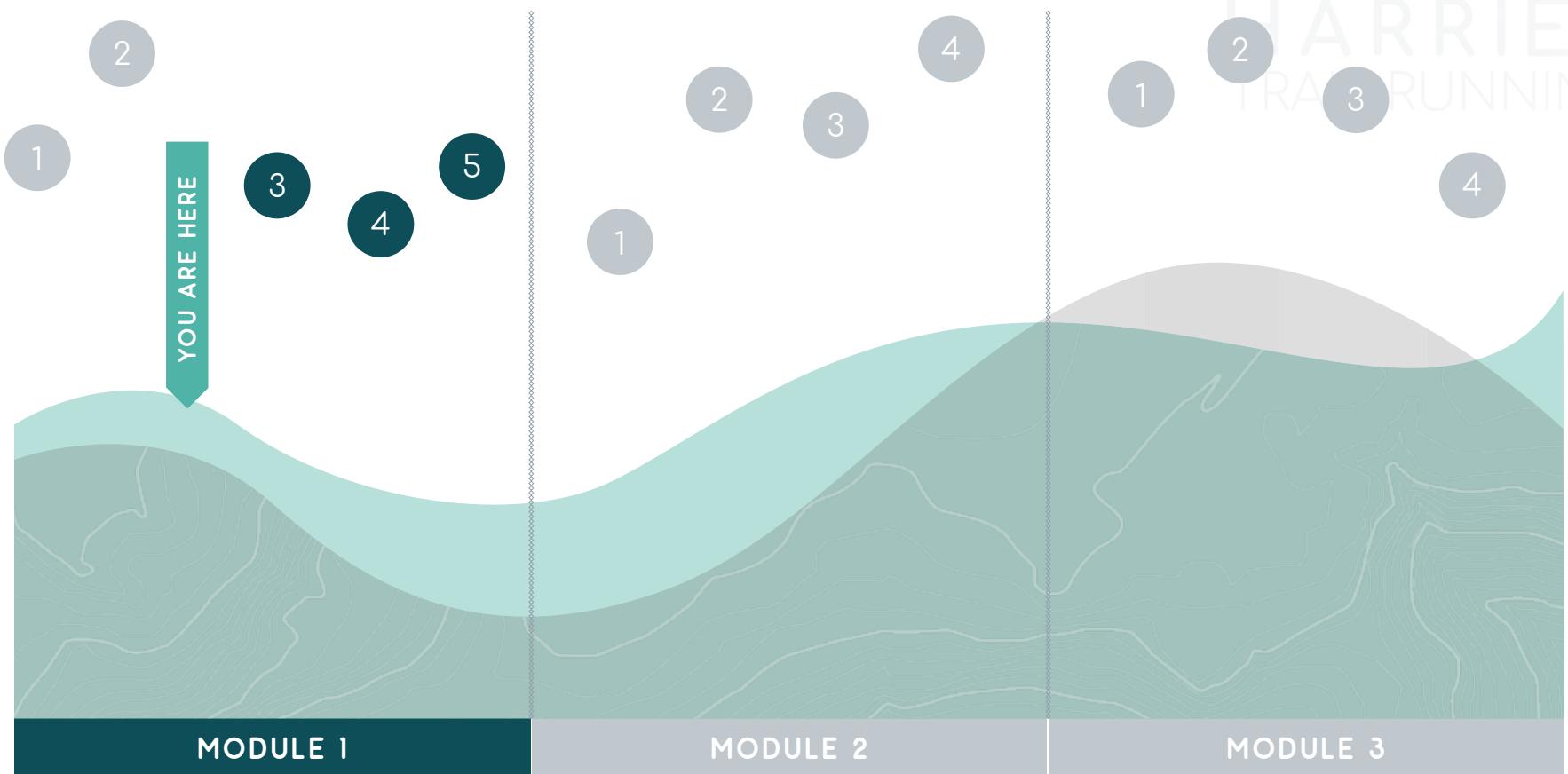
## POST RACE

~~~~~

- Race Reflection

NOTES

YOU ARE HERE...



1. Choose a race
2. Get your checklist
3. Identify race goals
4. Give your motivation a boost
5. Course recce's, night running, navigation training

1. Hydration & fuelling practice
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3. Mental prep
4. Decision planning

1. Race plan and drop bag plan
2. Rules of failure
3. Taper time
4. Race reflection

IDENTIFY RACE GOALS

In this video we chat with ultra running coach, Ronnie Staton, about how self affirmation and positive thinking can help you focus on your goal - whatever distance you're tackling.



SELF AFFIRMATION QUESTIONS FOR AN ULTRA MARATHON GOAL



PRINT THE FORM AND ANSWER OUR SELF AFFIRMATION QUESTIONS TO FOCUS ON YOUR RACE GOALS

I am capable of achieving my ultra marathon goal. Is there anything else I could feasibly do in training to further improve my chances of attaining this?

I am doing my best and that is all I can ask of myself. Could I improve my planning to avoid life getting in the way of training?

I accept sometimes things crop up, but can I mitigate this better through really scheduling my running commitments?

I am confident. How can I strengthen this confidence and belief to keep my doubts constructive and manageable?

I am healthy. My health is my priority and I can only run consistently if I am well. Am I taking my recovery seriously, do I get enough active rest, sleep and how is my nutrition and hydration?

I am motivated. I understand this may not mean I feel motivated every run, but rather overall in my preparation. Could I clarify my reasons for wanting to run an ultra marathon, what is driving me, what is my 'WHY' and could I enhance this?

I believe in MY dreams. When I have an injury, illness or setbacks what can I do to stay patient and on track as best as possible? Even if I have to postpone my ultra marathon vision, how can I make sure I respond well to adversity to achieve my goal in the end?

DAILY MOTIVATION



A collection of motivational quotes and mantras to inspire your day.
Print them off and stick them on the fridge for that mojo boost when you need it!



"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."

- Carl Jung -



"Success means having the courage, the determination, and the will to become the person you believe you were meant to be."

- George Sheehan -



"And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it."

- Roald Dahl -



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"Don't wish me happiness - I don't expect to be happy it's gotten beyond that somehow. Wish me courage and strength and a sense of humour - I will need them all."

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh -



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"Did you ever hear of a man who had striven all his life faithfully and singly towards an object and in no measure obtained it? If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated? Did ever a man try heroism, magnanimity, truth, sincerity, and find that there was no advantage in them – that it was a vain endeavour?"

- Henry David Thoreau -



MANTRAS TO INSPIRE YOUR DAY



FORGET THE PAST,
FORGET THE FUTURE,
WHAT'S IMPORTANT NOW?



DOMINATE
THIS MOMENT!



CONTROL THE
CONTROLLABLES
(AND DON'T WASTE TIME AND ENERGY
WORRYING ABOUT THINGS YOU CAN'T CONTROL)

RECCE THE COURSE

You've selected your race - now it's time to think about getting some more details on the route to see what you've let yourself in for! The best way of doing this is to physically run sections of the route as a "recce".





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HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR RECCE



READ DAN'S BLOG ABOUT HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR RECCE, OR WHAT TO DO INSTEAD IF A RECCE ISN'T POSSIBLE:

“

So, you've selected your race – now it's time to think about getting some more details on the route to see what you've let yourself in for! The best way of doing this is to physically run sections of the route as a "recce". Both mentally and physically, course recces are great preparation but it isn't always possible to dedicate the time or expense to recce the whole course. How should you approach the time you do have to spend on the course so it is most productive and helps you most on race day?

PURPOSE

Lots of people think the main reason to recce a course is so that you "know the way" in a hope that navigation will be easier if you've seen the course before. Whilst this is partially true, my experience is that it's very hard to remember any details about a route especially when you're sleep deprived and tired from running for hours (this is where your navigation strategy really counts!). For me the main benefits of course recces are the ultimate specificity of training (there's nothing more specific training wise than actually being on the course you'll be running on) and the massive mental benefits you experience from understanding the course, the key sections and how it all fits together.

If you are lucky enough to be able to spend time on the course before your event make sure you know exactly what you're trying to get out of the recce. Here are a few things to think about...



WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GET FROM THE RECCE?



NAVIGATION

Whilst it's great to see the course, it's unrealistic to think you'll remember every twist and turn from seeing it once. Try to focus and remember key junctions and triggers for difficult sections – thinking "make sure I turn left straight after this stile" or "after this big climb I need to remember to turn right at this cairn" can be a great approach.



FOR TRAINING

Make sure you plan your reccees at an appropriate time in the training block. If you go too early then you risk either over stretching yourself or not being able to take full advantage of the time you've got on the route. If you go too late then you risk still having the big miles in your legs on race day. Make sure to plan this all carefully. I find reccees work well between 3 weeks and 3 months before race day.



RACE PLAN

Recceing the route can be really useful to help you form your race plan. Understanding the hills and terrain can help you plan things like when you're going to walk, how hard you are going to push on certain sections, when you're going to use poles and other things like where you will find water out on the course.



MENTAL PREPARATION

I find it incredibly useful to be able to envisage the entire course in my mind and imagine how I'll approach each section and support point. Before a big race, I try to do a mental fly through of the route as I find that this helps vast distances feel a lot more achievable - it somehow "shrinks" the route in my mind. This can be a massive mental benefit as being able to imagine yourself doing each section helps you believe you're going to achieve your goal. The value of this confidence can't be underestimated on race day. One of my favourite sayings is "if you think you can or you think you can't you're probably right!"

NOT ABLE TO RECCE THE WHOLE ROUTE? WHICH BITS SHOULD YOU FOCUS ON?



Try to read some blogs / reports of previous races to identify which are the most difficult bits of the course from both a navigation perspective and / or a terrain perspective. Also look at maps of the route - which bits look most challenging to you?



Determine which bits of the course (if any) you'll likely be running in the dark. Recceing these sections will give you confidence that you've covered what may be the most mentally challenging bits of the course. However, you'll find that you may benefit less from any navigational advantage on the night sections (it's dark so you can't see much anyway!)



I often like to recce the middle sections of longer ultras as they are the "no man's land" of a race - you're already exhausted but you've got a very long way to go! Knowing this section can give you a big advantage as this can be the toughest section mentally to get through.

What if you just aren't able to get out on the course at all before the race or aren't able to recce the whole course? Not being able to see any (or all) of course before race day is honestly not a barrier to achieving your goals – in lots of ways it makes the adventure even more exciting if you're seeing everything for the first time.

TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY FOR A ROUTE WITHOUT EVEN SETTING FOOT ON IT:



Reading as many blogs and reports as you can and trying to put together a mental picture of the route. Look carefully at the route profile and maps to identify the most challenging sections and key milestones of the route.



Think very carefully about your navigation strategy. A big aspect of this will be whether the course is marked or self-navigation. Put these into your race plan and take account of navigation on the basis of not having seen the course in advance.



Search out similar training areas and terrain close to home – it's amazing what you can find locally. Keep in mind though you may have to do lots of running on the same hill or on the small amount of technical terrain you've found you can easily access!



If there are sections through towns then it's worth just going to have a look at these even if you can't run them – I've found city navigation to be some of the most challenging moments of races!

Ultimately, for me, getting out on the course and getting to know a new area is part of the fun of racing and challenges in beautiful places. I therefore try to plan recce's at almost the same time as entering the race itself. Getting at least one recce in can also really remind you why you're doing a race and provide renewed enthusiasm for training so you can enjoy your journey through the epic scenery as much as possible!



NIGHT RUNNING

Longer distance ultras will require you to run some of it in the dark. Don't let night running anxiety get the best of you!





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RONNIE SHARES HIS TOP TIPS FOR BOSSING THOSE SECTIONS OF THE RACE:

In my experience, night running seems to cause more anticipatory anxiety than actual problems in reality. Hence, I'd recommend trying it sooner rather than later to prevent any unnecessary worry.

Night running is perhaps a three fold concern:

- 1** The first is often the fear of running on dark trails (potentially alone) with a head torch. I know a lot of people who hate the dark (even tough looking ones), so you are not alone if you do.
- 2** The second is the worry of what it will feel like to run through the duration of the night and all the self doubt that the unknown can bring - mostly that question 'can I do it?'
- 3** And lastly is the question as to whether you should specifically practice night running for your ultra and if so how to do so best.

SAFETY FIRST!



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Let's start with the last point first, why not. Yes, you should practice! The following should help as to how. If you're going to run a distance like 100 miles, you are going to have to run some of it in the dark. Face up to that fact right away, then work to get over any fear by doing it.

Here are some tips to get you started...



Get advice on a head torch - buy a good one or you may well regret it!



Make sure to wear reflective gear - especially if you have to run the roads to hit the trail.



Find a friend or group that will join you on a night trail run (or you join a group!)



Take your phone for safety. Inform someone of where you're going to be running and how long for.



Run on a familiar trail to offer some recognition and comfort. (Don't get lost!)



Avoid wearing headphones. Better to be aware of your surroundings.



SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE!



Keep it short at first, 2-3 miles is enough to get a taster of head torch running.



If the distance progresses carry more fuel and hydration then you need so that is not a stressor.



Run easy and in control to minimise the risk of tripping, rolling an ankle.

Be ok with a slower pace than your normal.



You don't have to practice night running more than you feel is necessary. Once you're comfortable with your head torch and perhaps have even tried a body light to back up the head torch, then the gains are pretty minimal after this point, you're ready to do it for real!

The race itself is always going to be a learning curve, you're never fully ready for your first ultra as you've never done one! Trust if you can run for an hour with a head torch and don't have any issues then it's highly likely you can continue for much longer.

Top Tip! If you feel nauseous using a head torch, try a body light as it reduces sickness for some.

Fitness and your mindset are key areas to focus on in preparation. At night fuelling and hydration should be similar to the daytime but will often slow, as you've slowed! Or it's not as hot so less fluid is needed.

Get your fitness right and you should be able to cope with one night's sleep deprivation, it's just like clubbing with your mates except more painful and less fun. Not many hallucinate on 100-milers despite all the hype. It's on the second and third night you get them when you go for 200-300 milers!

Running through the entire night is a huge tax on the body (and mind) as of course not only did you not go to sleep, you ran! Because of this I would tend not to recommend it in training. A compromise would be to go once dark and run for a few hours or get out at 2am and run till dawn so you at least bag some sleep. If you do want to run all night, I'd suggest it was at least 6-8 weeks prior to the event. You tend to lose a few days training and feel terrible the next day, again just like a night on the town. Some things are better left until the event in ultras - that's why they are such an adventure.

Finally, I would just add although many ultras allow pacers these will often be from a set mileage, not necessarily from darkness. You should get comfortable with the idea of being alone at night on the trail as a worst case scenario. Please be careful if you train alone at night, if your location is not safe don't do it, just get used to the idea come the event. On the event itself you are rarely a few minutes from another runner/help. If you are genuinely fearful for your welfare on a race, speak to the race director beforehand as they will want you safe and may be able to make allowances within the rules.

BE READY

You've made it to the big day and are standing on the start line of your event. While it's only natural to feel apprehensive at the start of any ultra, how you cope with this and ultimately how you feel about the day ahead will come from your preparation, you can't fake it. When you've done all you can - you know it and when you haven't - you also know it!

A photograph of a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, wearing a red and black trail running jacket with a Harrier logo. She is smiling broadly, looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a green field and some trees.

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IN THIS HELPFUL BLOG, RONNIE SHARES TIPS FROM HIS MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TO GET YOU TO THAT FINISH LINE!

“

You've made it to the big day and are standing on the start line of your ultra. While it's only natural to feel apprehensive at the start of any ultra how you cope with this and ultimately how you feel about the day ahead will come from your preparation, you can't fake it. When you've done all you can you know it and when you haven't, you also know it! It's very rare to have perfect race preparation so doing all you can around any setbacks is the next best thing you can do.

The doubts you have on a start line only get louder once fatigue sets in and if you're finding it more difficult than you anticipated. You need to be able to pull on something positive to keep you going. It's difficult to quit when you have been so invested in your training, it's easy to quit when you've cut corners as your mind will tell you it was inevitable.

Preparation aside, only what you do on event day determines the result - it's time to shine! This is great news when things haven't gone exactly to plan in the build up, you can still make it happen. However, if you are new to this distance you can avoid making it harder by doing what is in your control to improve your chances of a finish:



Focus on your running. Your fitness level is your greatest asset. Don't get distracted by worry, kit, strava and social media. RUN!



If possible, recce the route - if you can't - let it go



Train on similar terrain if possible, especially in peak phase - if not possible do what you can to be as conditioned as possible with what you have, remember your fitness is your greatest asset, not where you are from



Have the GPX of the route on your phone/watch - know how to use it



Know the aid station distances (have a print out)



Have a draft / flexible pacing plan (know the cut-offs)



Make your footwear choice(s) a month before the event so you avoid panic buying the week of the event



Know the event itinerary and rules



Try all race kit out in training



Get any coaching / training you need



Run long with full kit in your pack before race day - know where everything is in your sleep



Practice a few head torch runs - know how to use your head torch (plus recharge / replace batts)



Have a draft nutrition fuelling strategy - Practice this in training



Have a draft fluid / electrolyte strategy - Practice this in training



If you have a crew make sure they are well briefed on your goals and race rules



Pick your crew and pacer wisely - make sure you understand one another



If you fall out with your support let it go and run, you can sort it out at the finish line



Have a mini first aid kit - including an anti-chafing stick (Glide) and your meds



Remember: Nothing new on race day!



Trust your training



Believe in yourself - that counts for more than what anyone else thinks about you



Remember your why



Enjoy the challenge. Soon enough you'll be too old to run ultras and a bit longer after that you'll be dead, so enjoy it

“



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WALKING TRAINING

Ultra 'running' actually involves quite a lot of walking! And walking uses different muscles and a different technique to running so it's really important to incorporate walking in your training.





IN THIS BLOG, DAN SHARES SOME HELPFUL TIPS FOR HOW TO INCORPORATE WALKING INTO YOUR WEEKLY TRAINING SCHEDULE

“

ULTRA ‘RUNNING’?

You've picked your ultra, signed up and now it's time to train and prepare. You're ready to put some serious running in to train for this. Let's go...

Before you start focusing on logging lots of miles running, take a step back and think about what your race plan might look like.

Do you actually plan to run the whole way?

Do you plan to run up all of the hills?

Training to run is great but will this actually fully prepare you for the challenge?

If you are anything like most ultra “runners” you'll spend a lot of time walking. Let's think through a few examples: completing 100 miles in 24hrs is viewed by lots of people as a big goal. To complete his goal you have to average just over 4 miles per hour. That is a brisk walking pace on a flat trail.

In something like the Lakeland 100 you have 40 hours to complete 105 miles (yes – it's actually 105 not 100 and those 5 miles extra do make a big difference!) – that's an average pace of just over 2.6 miles per hour. If you were an incredibly fit walker I'd say you could walk the Lakeland 100 and just finish within the cut off time – it would be stressful and hard but I think you could do it (think of Billy Bland walking the whole Bob Graham Round in around 21hrs).

WALK THE 'UPS'

The approach that nearly all ultra runners take to completing races is that they'll walk the "ups" and run the "downs" and "flats". The main difference between a faster and a slower finisher is how steep something has to be to walk up and the general pace at which they can run and walk.

The fastest competitors may only be walking 20-25% of the course but the slower competitors are likely to be walking at least 50% of the course. Using the Lakeland 100 as an example, that means the faster runners might spend 6hrs walking and the slower runners might spend up to 20hrs walking!

WHY WALKING TRAINING IS IMPORTANT

You can do all the run training in the world but unless you've trained to walk as well you could easily come unstuck and not achieve your goal / not finish the race. Walking uses different muscles and different technique to running so it's really important to incorporate walking in your weekly training.

A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN TRAINING FOR WALKING:

If you plan to walk the hills then it makes sense to train walking on the hills too.

A great way of training to walk can be on the course recce's. Big long days walking in the hills stresses the body less than trying to run all the time. It also allows you to focus more on the course and prepares your body for what you'll actually be doing in the race (are you really going to be running up that hill three-quarters of the way into the race?!).

Commutes can be a great way to get some walking training in. If you have a flat commute and find it too easy – carry a rucksack with a few books in it and it will soon become harder.



Use the chance to really practice using poles. Check out our Poles For Beginners video over on You Tube to get you started.

Leave your Strava pride at the door – it's sad to say but in the past I've been a bit put out that walking doesn't contribute to my displayed weekly mileage on Strava and also that it seems an inefficient use of my time mileage wise. I'm actually embarrassed to admit this but it's true. I'm totally over that now as I recognise the key value of walking (and training at slower paces). Try to adopt this mindset. If this concerns you, try to think of your training in terms of time rather than mileage and see how that works out.

At the end of the day, the rule of specificity states that if you want to get better at something you need to practice that thing. Ultra running is really ultra run-walking and so if you want to get better at it you need to practice both elements!

”

PRACTICE USING COMPULSORY KIT

Save a bundle on your compulsory kit with Horrier's Ultra Bundle.

From race vests to poles, hydration and essential safety items, we'll make sure you pass that kit check!



harrierrunfree.co.uk/products/ultra-bundle



PRACTICE USING POLES

If you're planning on using poles for your race, make sure to take some time to train with them. If you've never used poles before, check out our Quick Start Guide and video.



harrierrunfree.co.uk/pages/how-to-use-poles



BASE & BUILD PHASE FITNESS GOALS

Focus your training to match your fitness goals at each stage.



BASE & BUILD PHASE FITNESS GOALS



Print off our tips for a quick and easy reminder



BASE FITNESS GOALS:



Build consistency



Relatively low volume
and specificity



High intensity (short)
intervals

BUILD PHASE FITNESS GOALS:



Build volume



Increase specificity /
moderate intensity



Tempo
(short-moderate)



HARRIER
TRAIL RUNNING

SEEK ADVICE / COACHING

Need a helping hand getting your training right? Dan and Ronnie can help!

Both offer private coaching services. Have a look at their websites for more information.



DAN SUMMERS RUNNING

Dan is a Mountain Leader, Fell Leader in Running Fitness and INWA Nordic Walking Instructor. He offers courses in Night Running, Navigation and Using Poles. Dan can help you get the skills you need for your next race. You can find out more about him and the courses he offers over on his website.

dansummersrunning.co.uk



RONNIE STATON COACH

Ronnie is an ultra running coach and has been working with goals for nearly 20 years after studying for a BSc Hons Coaching, Sport & Exercise Science Degree. Over time, Ronnie has become qualified in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to better help individuals within this non-physical realm. You can find out more about Ronnie and his coaching services on his website ronniestaton.coach

BEN'S TRAIL STORY



SOUTH DOWNS WAY 100 MILE RACE

Going into the South Downs Way 100, I'd been trail and ultra running for two years, completing eight ultras in this time including three 50 milers and the rest 50 to 60k races. I chose the South Downs Way 100 specifically as firstly I live in Brighton, so it felt very much like a race on home trails and I could recce most of the route with the 80 mile point being a couple of miles from my home. I'd also walked the entirety of the South Downs Way in my teens back in 2009 with a group of friends. This time round I'd be swapping the cold baked beans from a tin for energy chews, the beers for electrolyte drinks and the sleeping at campsites for not sleeping (hopefully) at aid stations.

The camping expedition in 2009 had taken us a total of seven days so I liked the challenge of completing the 100 mile trail but in a much shorter time period (below 30 hours to meet the race cut off).

Training went well overall. It wasn't perfect but then in a training block of this length (5 months for me), it never will be. I made the decision to DNS my first race of the year, a trail marathon, due to a chest infection but looking back this was definitely the right decision given the negative knock-on effect it could have had on training for my A race of the year – the 100 miler. I established pretty consistent mileage, did some cross training with weekly swims in the sea, put much more of a focus on strength training than in previous training blocks and I got in some decent elevation and practiced hiking hills and hiking fast as I knew I'd be doing a good bit of this come race day!

It really helped to be able to train on the terrain the race would be on, having the race route on my doorstep and running the exposed, rolling and sometimes chalky paths of the South Downs. I also trained my stomach on long runs getting used to taking on food whilst running and carefully planned for (there were some spreadsheets) the different elements of the 100 mile puzzle; pacing, how I was going to get through aid stations quickly, looking after my feet (taping, lubricant, shoe/sock combos), mental strategies for dealing with lows to name but a few.

I quickly realised that a big part of running the 100 mile distance would be good admin; listening to your body, quickly reacting to issues as they arose on race day so they didn't snowball and become bigger problems but also trying to think ahead where possible so issues like chafing, dehydration or blisters didn't arise in the first place.

The biggest thing I was dreading on race day was the heat. And sure enough, come race day in June it was the hottest day of the year so far with temperatures of up to 30 degrees! Anticipating this, I had a few strategies in place to keep cool. I wore a desert hat which I did feel a bit silly with at the start and probably looked like I thought I was doing a desert marathon but it did the job. My crew, who were absolutely legendary on the day, had a box filled with ice that I wrapped in a bandana so the ice could sit on the back of my neck and keep me cool.

The daytime part of the race was tough, but the trails and views from the peaks of the Downs were stunning. We'd set off at 6am but as the heat of the day grew closer it became more difficult to put one foot in front of the other and faintness and feelings of sickness crept in. I had a low point around mile 45 where I wondered if today was going to be my day but after chilling for a bit, getting an ice pop in (thanks Centurion volunteers) and having support from my crew and pacers I was feeling much better as the evening drew in. This was one of the things that surprised me, I felt better at mile 70 than I did at mile 45. This can happen and is something I'll remember in future 100's when I have a bit of a dip.

Although I was feeling much better mentally at mile 70 than earlier in the race, my legs were starting to fatigue and so I picked up my trusty Harrier Helvellyn Carbon Z Poles from my crew and used these for the last 30 miles of the race. They're super lightweight and easy to fold out and put away which is vital for the later stages of a long race when your mind is starting to go a bit fuzzy.

After 12,000ft of climbing, some scorching weather and a long day (and night) out on the trails I was happy to get to Eastbourne Sports Park where the race finishes with a lap of the

400m track. I can safely say that I've never been so pleased to see a running track. I finished in 22 hours 35 mins. It was an amazing experience, full of highs and lows.

It's now been long enough for me to be able to romanticise the event in my mind (something as ultra runners I think we're quite good at doing) and I haven't ruled out doing another 100. Probably next year.



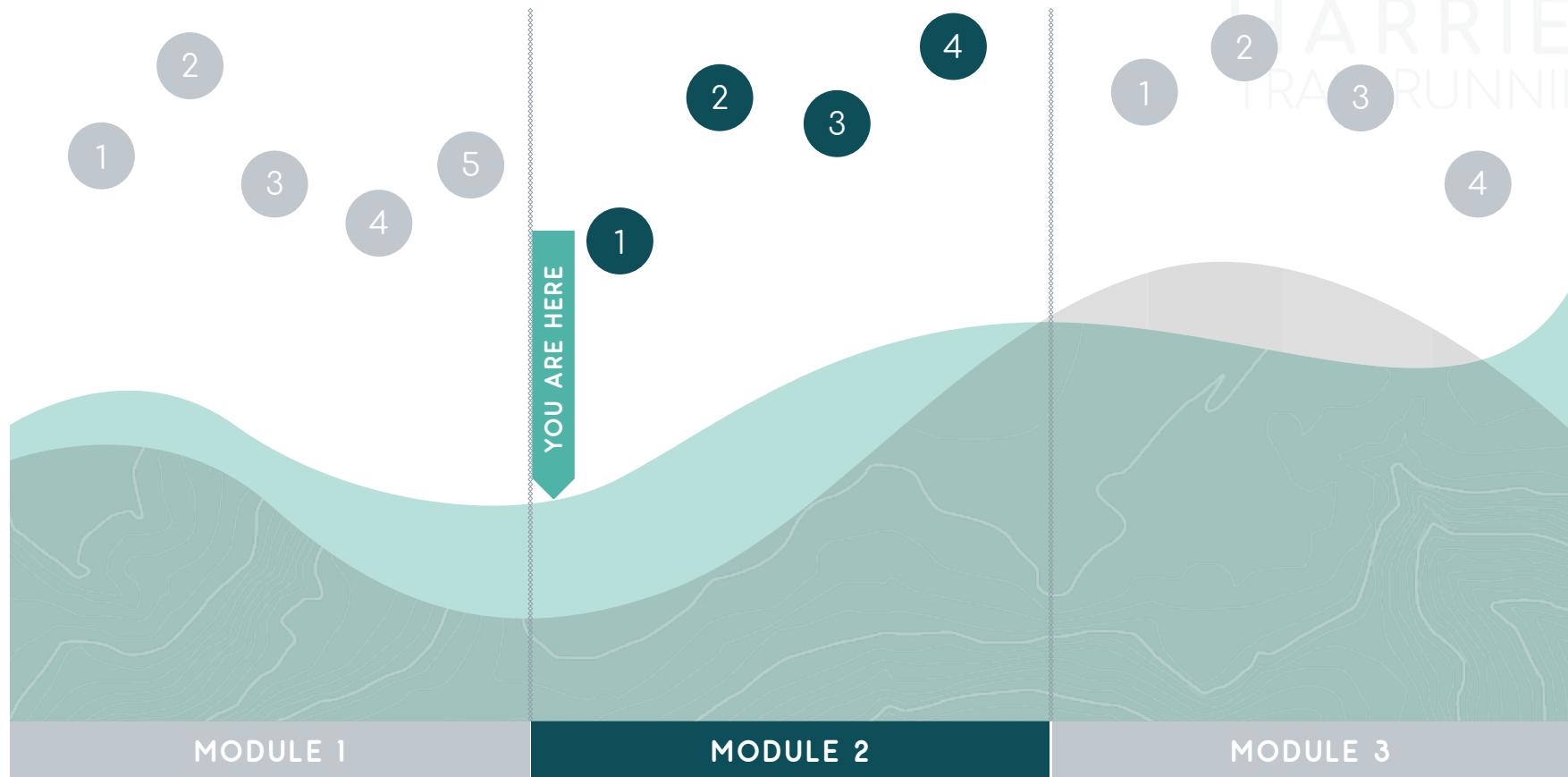


HARRIER
TRAIL RUNNING

WELCOME TO MODULE TWO

In this section we'll be covering Hydration and Fuelling, Compulsory Kit, Mental Prep and Decision Making.

YOU ARE HERE...



1. Choose a race
2. Get your checklist
3. Identify race goals
4. Give your motivation a boost
5. Course recce, night running, navigation training

1. Hydration & fuelling practice
2. Compulsory kit practice
3. Mental prep
4. Decision planning

1. Race plan and drop bag plan
2. Rules of failure
3. Taper time
4. Race reflection



HARRIER
TRAIL RUNNING

HYDRATION TIPS FOR ULTRA RUNNERS



HYDRATION & FUELING FOR ULTRA RUNNERS



Hydration can be confusing for runners at the best of times, let alone during summer or training ultras! We've tried to help simplify it with a handy guide.

FUEL

Make a list of energy-filled snacks that you like and try them out on your long runs. Some great examples are: Energy gels (we like Mountain Fuel Jellies), dates stuffed with peanut butter, sweets or flapjacks (Mountain Fuel's Feel Good Bars are a great on-the-go option too!).

You may find jellies / gels an easier option towards the end of your race. As your mileage increases, your desire to eat will go down. Your training runs are the ideal time to find out what works best for you.

MY FAVOURITE SNACKS

TOP TIP
For your longer runs, remember to include some real food like sandwiches, crisps, jacket potatoes, avocados, rice pudding, pork pies, etc. Alternate savoury and sweet to avoid taste fatigue.

HYDRATE

Make a list of energy drinks that you like and try them out on your long runs. Some great examples are: Electrolyte powders (we like Mountain Fuel Xtreme Energy Fuel), sports drinks, electrolyte tablets, flat (fat) Coke and fruit juices.

MY FAVOURITE DRINKS

TOP TIP
Mix and match your soft bottle colours. Choose a blue bottle for water and a bright colour for your energy drink.

HYDRATION & FUELING GUIDE FOR RACE DAY



Print out our helpful guides and keep them on the fridge!



START: Pop some electrolyte powder or a tablet in one of your soft bottles and keep the other for plain water.

DURING: Eat regularly! Set your watch or phone to beep and remind you to eat every 30 mins to 1 hour. Rule of thumb - aim to consume 40-50g carbs and 200 kcal per hour.

Aim to drink around 100-200ml of water every 15 minutes. You may need to drink a lot more on hot days. Adding electrolytes will help keep your energy levels up as well as replenish your salt and potassium.

REMEMBER:
NOTHING NEW
ON RACE DAY!

AFTER: Eat as soon as possible after you finish, this is one of the best ways to speed up the recovery process. Chocolate or strawberry milk will do nicely - we like Mountain Fuel's ultimate recovery fuel.

Drink - Similarly to calories, you will be dehydrated when you finish. Keep sipping water (with or without electrolytes) over the next 4-6 hours until your pee is "straw" coloured.

A photograph showing a man assisting a woman with her trail running gear. The woman, seen from the back, has blue hair and is wearing a teal visor and a dark teal jacket. She is putting on an orange hydration vest with a red waist belt. The man, wearing glasses, a teal bandana, and a dark jacket with 'EXMOOR' printed on the sleeve, holds the vest. They are outdoors in a grassy field.

YOUR COMPULSORY KIT

MAP
TRAIL RUNNIN

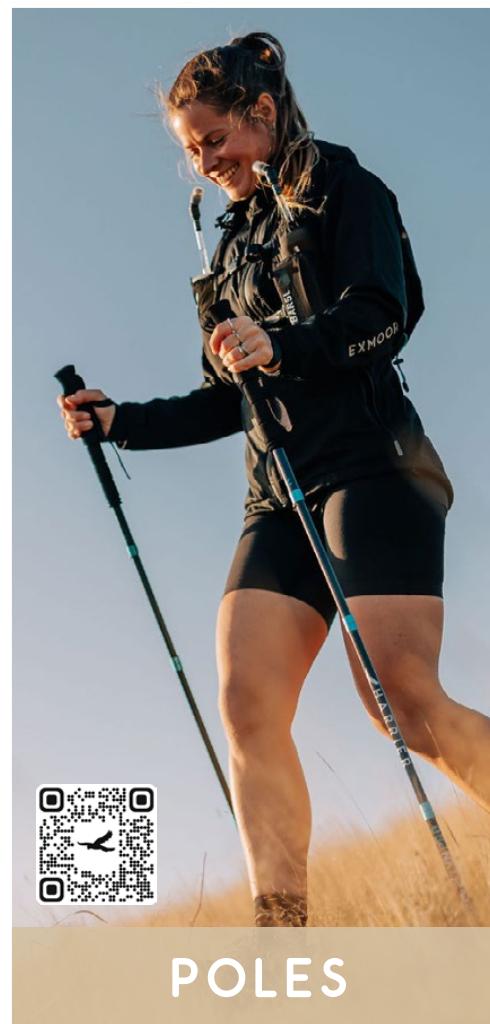


NOTHING NEW ON RACE DAY!

Make sure the kit you take to your race has been tried, tested and most of all - COMFORTABLE.



WATERPROOFS



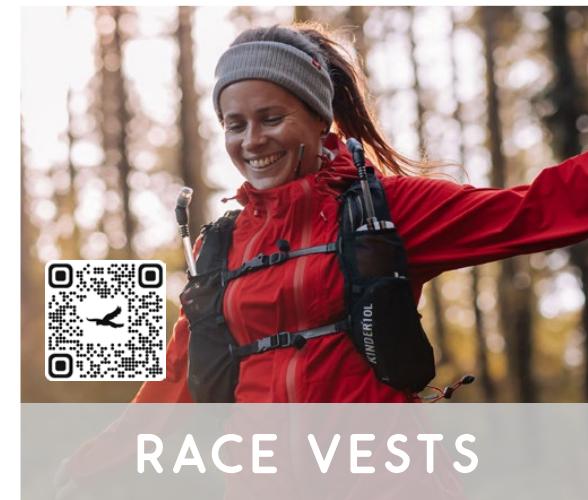
POLES



SAFETY ITEMS



HYDRATION



RACE VESTS



HARRIER
TRAIL RUNNING

MAKING DECISIONS

You may not realise it but in any race you make hundreds, if not thousands, of decisions. Whilst each decision may seem small, cumulatively they'll make or break your race.



READ DAN'S EXPERT TIPS ON HOW THINKING ABOUT DECISIONS IN ADVANCE CAN WORK TO YOUR ADVANTAGE COME RACE DAY



“

- ?
- EAT NOW OR WAIT?
- ?
- RUN OR WALK THIS HILL?
- ?
- PUSH A BIT HARDER TO STAY WITH THIS OTHER RUNNER OR LET THEM GO?
- ?
- HURDLE THAT GATE(!) OR STOP AND OPEN IT NORMALLY?
- ?
- NAVIGATE USING MY WATCH, GPS OR MAP?

Some of these decisions will be totally unexpected, (“step on that dead sheep to cross the stream or get wet feet?” – I once had to make that decision in a split second!) but a lot of them you’ll be able to devise a plan for in advance. You can do this whilst sitting on your sofa and thinking about what could happen in the race. The experience you’ve gained from training, previous races and reccies will all feed into the plans you make.

For some situations you might have A, B and C (or even more) plans – for example, when thinking about using lights for the overnight section of a race:

A

I plan to use the same battery for the entire night section (this should be based on previous experience that the battery for your head torch will last that long!)

B

If the battery dies, I've got a spare that I'll put in on the first hill I am walking up after I realise I'll need to change it

C

If I can't see to change the battery because of the dark I'll use my emergency back up head torch so I can see to change the battery

D

If my spare battery or main head torch fails, I'll use my emergency head torch to run with and slow my pace until it gets light

E

If my emergency head torch fails, I'll stop, drink, eat and stay warm using my shelter until it gets light and then crack on

Some situations will be more simple: As soon as I get to a hill that is longer than [5 minutes]/steeper than [x%] I'm going to stop running, walk and get my poles out.

If you've thought these situations through in advance then you don't actually have any decisions to make when you're cold, wet and tired and your decision making capabilities are seriously compromised, you're just implementing this strategy you've devised. This is much easier than trying to think about things for the first time!

This process can not only help you make good decisions but it also saves a huge amount of mental energy which you can apply elsewhere in your goal to run the ultra. These may sound like small wins but cumulatively planning these things in advance and thinking through all the scenarios can make a huge difference to your race. You can stay mentally strong and focussed on achieving your goal and not waste your energy on decisions you could have made in advance.

Oh, and the question I know you're all asking,
from my experience, dead sheep don't make good
stepping stones!

“

DAN SUMMERS

dansummersrunning.co.uk



PRE-MADE ROUTINE DECISIONS FOR AN ULTRA GOAL



Look at your course map and profile and think about your pre-made routine decisions.
Print off our handy PDF form to create your own list.

Thinking about potential race situations in advance means you don't actually have any decisions to make when you're cold, wet and tired and your decision making capabilities are seriously compromised.

What are some situations that might occur during your race? Write them down here and study them so you're ready come race-day. Remember that some situations might require multiple actions.

EXAMPLES OF PRE-MADE ROUTINE DECISIONS INCLUDE:

I plan to eat every 30 minutes and will set an alert on my watch to remind me.

As soon as I get to a hill that is longer than [5 minutes]/steeper than [x%] I'm going to stop running, walk and get my poles out.

I will navigate using my watch, but will have a map and compass as a back up.

I plan to use my head torch for the overnight section of the race. If the battery fails I have a backup as well as an emergency head torch if I'm unable to change the battery.

NOW, LIST SOME OF YOUR OWN:

SITUATION.....

ACTION(S).....

SITUATION.....

ACTION(S).....

SITUATION.....

ACTION(S).....

IF / THEN STRATEGIES

Ronnie explains “If / Then” strategies for ultra running with examples to help you avoid the dreaded DNF!



Over the years I've listened to countless runners calling out all the things that could go awry on their ultra. What's key is the binary language often used; "if things go well I'll finish and if they don't I won't". Although this is completely logical it is also a very unhelpful mindset for ultras where there are so many variables involved. The real problem is in the 'meaning' attached to the things going wrong, which is commonly absolute - ultimately that if something goes wrong it will consequently lead to a Did Not Finish (DNF). Which is not true.

There are three words ultra runners may want to have to hand - 'DEAL WITH IT'. They say what they mean, deal with it, then go again and if you can't deal with it (or cope with it) to keep moving, then and only then you DNF. Which I will add is not the end of the world, you learn and if the desire is still there try again on another event with the wisdom gained from your previous attempt - you're learning.

With so many things that can go wrong we can easily lose clarity and feel a vague cloud of doom over our head, or to give it a name - anxiety or worry. A great way to reduce or even eliminate worry so you may actually enjoy the ultra you've worked so hard for (yes you are allowed to enjoy it!) is to find such clarity and address the issues one by one.

If nothing can be done to fully remove the issue, then aim to mitigate the damage and then accept it as part of your race. Go to a 100 mile finish line and find me a runner that didn't have to finish with an issue - you'll struggle! I'll add the caveat that sometimes perhaps it may be better to stop but that is a personal decision weighing up the issue.



HERE ARE SOME COMMON IF / THEN EXAMPLES:



LOW SUGAR

Take action immediately to have a sugary drink or take on some food containing carbs / sugar asap. Then monitor fuel intake more closely throughout the race. Keep going.



NIGGLE / INJURY / PAIN

Assess the problem, mitigate damage. Could a change of footwear help if possible, perhaps walk for a few miles. Could using poles help, or taping. Decide on the severity of the problem as to whether you are willing to continue.



NAUSEA / SICKNESS / DIARRHOEA

Take on electrolytes and fuel as best as possible. Potentially self medicate with imodium or similar. Keep going.



BLISTERS

Deal with any hot spots / soreness upon first noticing - immediately. Potential options are air feet, applying tape or lubricant, and changing socks / shoes. Keep going.



KIT ISSUE

Can it be replaced / fixed. Can I get a hold of something I need but don't have (crew / aid stations). If not, accept it and manage without it. Keep going.



INCLEMENT WEATHER

React fast to changing weather / poor conditions by wearing waterproofs / warm layers or cooling off if heat issues. Avoid getting wet, cold or too hot before reacting. Adapt pace if needed (windy/poor visibility/heat). Assess safety and own well-being continually. Keep going if safe.



LOST

Retrace steps back to the last trail markings if possible. Use GPS or a map to locate position. Relax and get back on route. Once on route avoid pushing hard to make up for lost time, let it go. Keep going.

IF / THEN STRATEGIES FOR AN ULTRA GOAL



Print off our handy form to create your own list

~~~~~

**IF I START SUFFERING WITH LOW BLOOD SUGAR...** Then I will stop (if possible at the next check point), drink a sugary drink, eat a sugary/carbohydrate snack and 5 minutes of rest. I will then focus more on fuelling and hydration going forward.

**IF I FEEL A NIGGLE / PAIN OR HAVE AN INJURY...** Then I will assess the problem, mitigate damage. Could a change of footwear help? Or perhaps walk for a few miles? Could using poles help, or taping?

**IF I HAVE NAUSEA / SICKNESS OR DIARRHOEA...** Then I will take on electrolytes and fuel as best as possible. Potentially self-medicate with imodium or similar.

**IF I GET BLISTERS...** Then I will deal with any hot spots / soreness upon first noticing - immediately. Potential options are air feet, applying tape or lubricant, and changing socks / shoes.

**IF I HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH MY KIT...** Then I will see if it can be replaced / fixed. Can I get a hold of something I need but don't have (crew / aid stations). If not, accept it and manage without it.

**IF I HAVE TO DEAL WITH INCLEMENT WEATHER...** Then I will react fast to changing weather / poor conditions by wearing waterproofs or warm layers or cooling off if heat issues. React before necessary, adapt pace if needed. Assess safety and own well-being continually.

**IF I GET LOST...** Then I will retrace steps back to the last trail markings if possible. Use GPS or a map to locate position. Relax and get back on route. Once on route avoid pushing hard to make up for lost time, let it go.

Think about some strategies you may need during your race. Write them down here and study them so you're ready come race-day.

**IF:** .....

**THEN I WILL TAKE THIS ACTION:**

.....  
.....

**IF:** .....

**THEN I WILL TAKE THIS ACTION:**

.....  
.....

**IF:** .....

**THEN I WILL TAKE THIS ACTION:**

.....  
.....

**IF:** .....

**THEN I WILL TAKE THIS ACTION:**

# PEAK & TAPER PHASE FITNESS GOALS

If you're asking yourself questions like: 'How long should my longest run be?' or 'How many miles should I run during my taper?', then be sure to check out Ronnie's blog about Peak and Taper phase fitness goals.



“

During peak phase training there are some general principles I follow as a coach when planning my runners. It's very important to note that exactly how I apply this to the runner is very specific for each case and depends on multiple factors. If coaching is not for you and you are going to devise your own ultra / 100 mile plan or follow an 'off the shelf' plan I would encourage bearing these general principles in mind:



## PEAK PHASE (4-8 WEEK BLOCK)

**HIGH VOLUME:** Weekly cumulative miles are usually at their highest now.

**HIGH SPECIFICITY:** Do more of what you are going to be doing (Endurance).  
Moderate intensity - Ideally very high intensity work has already been completed (Vo2 Max), most struggle to elicit gains from such workouts now you're in an endurance peak block.

**TEMPOS (LONGER):** The short hard stuff can now grow into longer tempos (Speed Endurance).

**LONGEST TRAINING RUNS:** The longest individual runs are commonly done in this block.

## TAPER PHASE (1-3 WEEK BLOCK)

**LOWER VOLUME / INTENSITY:** Lower volume - lower weekly miles and shorter runs.  
Keep some intensity - don't detrain your speed, intensity is just held for less time.

**REST & MENTAL PREPARATION:** Get prepared for race day, it's nearly show time.

## SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

### WHAT % OF THE ULTRA DISTANCE SHOULD BE COVERED ON THE LONGEST TRAIL RUN?

Although this is an understandable question, it is not a good one - and as I coach I refuse to answer it, not out of arrogance but because there is no rule to apply here! Long run distance has crept over from the marathon community where a lot of importance has been put on 'the long run'. In preparing for ultras the distance of your long run is less important, it's the weekly consistency that you need to work for. As a guide many successful ultra runners rarely run over 20 miles in training to keep high quality, but it's important to note they may do events of up to 50 miles in preparation for a 100 mile.

### HOW MANY WEEKS BEFORE RACE DAY SHOULD THE LONGEST RUN BE?

No absolute rule exists here as everyone adapts / recovers differently. Also some runners seem to need to run longer closer to their event for mental preparedness, which cannot be disregarded. This said, as a guide most commonly the longest run is normally 3-4 weeks out from the event.

### WHAT TOTAL WEEKLY MILES SHOULD I PEAK AT AS A % OF THE RACE I'M TRAINING FOR?

Again, wrong question, a rule cannot be applied here as there are too many individual factors to contend with. The question to really ask is 'how much volume can I (or do I want to) feasibly run and recover from without losing quality and remaining injury free (and in a relationship/job)?' Answer that difficult question with practical trial and error and you will have arrived at your figure, good luck!

### WHAT SHOULD I DROP DOWN TO IN TAPER WEEKS AND FOR HOW MANY WEEKS?

Some runners like to really taper down starting three weeks out from an event, others do better off tapering only the week prior to the event (and race week itself of course). This is for the runner to discover. Trust your training at this phase, no silly long runs or big weeks are needed. Conversely, don't do too little, you'll feel lethargic and tired. There is no hard and fast rule to apply (again!) but most commonly I see runners do better of high frequency but low duration in the taper. In effect lots of short mostly easy activity with some intensity and lots of rest (good sleep) around this.

### WHAT ABOUT STRENGTH WORK, DO NONE OR SOME IN TAPERING?

If you are someone who does regular strength work this could be included in your taper but clearly it's no time for a PB dead lift! Most I've worked with drop it for a week or two before the event to grab more rest. If you have neglected the strength work during your training, then certainly do not begin it in the taper!



Ronnie Staton  
[ronniestaton.coach](http://ronniestaton.coach)

# PEAK & TAPER PHASE GOALS



Print off our tips for a quick reminder of your fitness goals



## PEAK PHASE GOALS:

### High volume

Weekly cumulative miles are usually at their highest now.

### High specificity / moderate intensity

Do more of what you are going to be doing (eg: Endurance). Ideally the very high intensity work has already been completed (Vo2 Max). Most struggle to elicit gains from such workouts now you're in an endurance peak block.

### Tempos (longer)

The short hard stuff can now grow into longer tempos (Speed Endurance).

### Longest training runs

The longest individual runs are commonly done in this block.

## TAPER PHASE GOALS:

### Lower volume / intensity

Lower weekly miles and shorter runs. Keep some intensity - don't de-train your speed, intensity is just held for less time

### Rest & mental preparation

Take this time to rest! Work on your plan and strategies for race day!

# EMMA'S TRAIL STORY



## THE SERPENT TRAIL 50K RACE

I started running eight years ago, I couldn't even run for a minute when I started out and running was something I never enjoyed, I even avoided doing it! But something changed as I started getting out more consistently - I got the bug and fell in love with it. I have participated in many races over the years from 5ks, 10ks, 10 milers, half marathons and marathons, on road, on trails and mixtures of the two. I continue to surprise myself and learn every day.

I turn 40 in February, so my plan was to run an ultra marathon before I hit 40. After lots of recommendations I booked the Serpent Trail 50k for July 2023. It definitely did not disappoint. It was incredible, the route

was stunning and there was so much to see. The event was so well organised and I had the best day. This is my biggest achievement to date and I loved it so much I have already booked and started training for my next ultra marathon in December.

My training for the ultra marathon went well, I am very dedicated with my training and put the time in. I have a little girl who is 4 and work full time as well. People always ask me how I fit it in - but I manage. You have to run when you can, if it means a 5am start before work or a late evening run after work, then so be it.

I believe consistency is key. You definitely get out what you put in. If you train hard, it will show on race day. I also believe nutrition plays a big part on race day especially with longer runs and this takes practice and trying different methods to see what works best for you. Working with a running coach is another great way to achieve your goals as they will set a plan tailored to your needs. All of this combined knowledge and experience helped me have a great first ultra, perform well but most of all finish strong and enjoy it.

The serpent trail 50k was one of the best running experiences ever and such a personal achievement to get across that finish line and collect my medal after all the hard work.

My favourite piece of Harrier kit on race day had to be my Harrier 5L Curbar race vest. It's a fantastic piece of kit and I highly recommend it to other runners, it won't let you down. After trying other vests from different brands and suffering chafing, movement and lack of storage, the Curbar 5L had exactly what I needed. The Harrier soft bottles come in and out easily, saving energy at fuel stations and the variety of pockets meant I had all the essentials at arms length. Most of all though, it was incredibly comfortable and I really didn't even notice that I was wearing it!

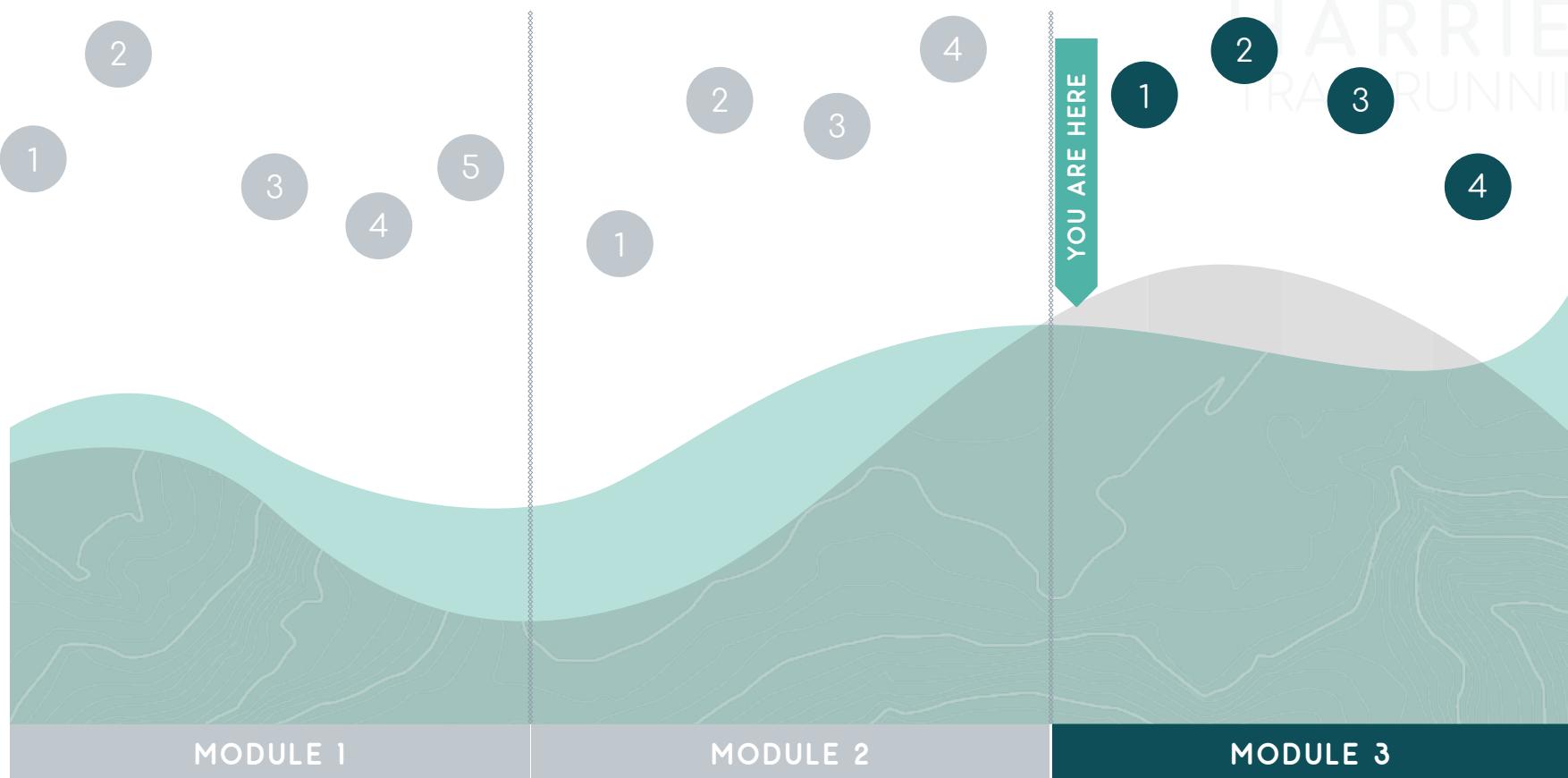


## WELCOME TO MODULE THREE

In this section we'll be covering Race Plans, Drop Bags, helping you identify your Rules of Failure, sharing Recovery Tips and talking about Race Reflection.



## YOU ARE HERE...



- 1. Choose a race
- 2. Get your checklist
- 3. Identify race goals
- 4. Give your motivation a boost
- 5. Course recce, night running, navigation training

- 1. Hydration & fuelling practice
- 2. Compulsory kit practice
- 3. Mental prep
- 4. Decision planning

- 1. Race plan and drop bag plan
- 2. Rules of failure
- 3. Recovery time
- 4. Race reflection

# RACE PLAN

Running an ultra - especially events involving crews and pacers - can quickly become a logistical nightmare even before your feet toe the start line!

Don't worry! Our comprehensive race plan has you covered.

# RACE PLAN



NAME .....

RACE DATE .....

EVENT .....

WEBSITE/EVENT INFO .....

CHECKPOINTS ARE LOCATED (MILE / KM):  
.....  
.....  
.....

DROP BAGS CAN BE ACCESSED AT (MILE / KM):  
.....  
.....  
.....

WHAT'S AVAILABLE THERE?:  
.....  
.....  
.....

WHAT I'LL NEED:  
.....  
.....  
.....

**TOP TIP**  
Pop a treat in your drop bags. Having something to look forward to can help keep you going during the tough miles!

# RACE PLAN



## PACERS

SECTION:

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NAME & MOBILE NUMBER:

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## CREW

SECTION:

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NAME & MOBILE NUMBER:

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### TOP TIP

Create a WhatsApp group for your Pacers and Crew before the race so they can easily share updates on the day.

# RACE PLAN



## THE 11<sup>TH</sup> HOUR



### TOP TIP FOR RACE DAY

Don't forget to apply lube before you start the race! Glide in key areas can help make or break your race.

#### KIT

- Register, pick up race number
- Pack drop bags (see checklist below), make sure race number is attached to each
- Pack race vest (see checklist below)
- Pin race number to race t-shirt
- Charge your watch
- Charge your mobile
- Charge spare mobile charger
- Charge GPS device (if using)
- If using GPX, check route is downloaded to your watch or GPS device
- Charge head torch

#### NUTRITION

- Fill soft bottles with drinks, put in fridge/freezer
- Prepare breakfast for race day
- Make sure you have a nutritious meal the night before (one that you've tried in training) - remember, nothing new!
- Prepare snacks for race vest
- Prepare extra snacks for drop bags

#### ADMIN

- Check travel route for morning
- Get emergency cash / coins to pack in race vest
- Make sure crew / pacers are briefed with instructions and a copy of your race plan
- Set your alarm and (try to) relax

#### NOTES

# RACE PLAN



## RACE VEST CHECKLIST



### MANDATORY KIT

Make sure to check your individual race requirements. The items listed below are just a guide.

- Mini runner first aid kit
- Emergency survival bag and whistle
- Waterproof jacket with taped seams
- Hat / tube scarf
- Map and compass
- Gloves
- Emergency top and bottom base layers in a dry bag
- Head torch and spare batteries
- Fully charged mobile phone
- Emergency calories

### ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- Soft bottles filled with water and energy drinks
- Snacks and spare snacks
- Cash / coins for emergencies
- Sunscreen
- Glide or Vaseline
- Poles
- Spare layers (not for emergencies)

### NOTES

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#### TOP TIP FOR RACE DAY

Nail your race vest packing during training. Not only will you make sure everything fits, but you'll also know where everything is!

# RACE PLAN



## DROP BAG CHECKLIST



- Spare running shoes (worn in, not new!)
  - Clean, dry socks
  - First aid kit including blister treatment and supplementary first aid, including paracetamol, anti-sickness tablets etc
  - Resupply of snacks
  - Resupply of electrolyte mix
  - Spare warm layers (in case the one in your race vest gets wet)
  - A treat to look forward to - like chocolate milk

# DROP BAG POSITION

## **CONTENTS (TICK WHEN PACKED)**

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## NOTES

# DROP BAG POSITION

## **CONTENTS (TICK WHEN PACKED)**

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Our Race Vest Flat Lay infographic is a great reference guide when packing for your race

## ULTRA MARATHON FLAT LAY 1, 2, 3

1

### START WITH YOUR RACE VEST:

Choose a vest big enough for your compulsory and optional kit.



2

### NEXT, THINK ABOUT YOUR COMPULSORY KIT:

Every event is different, so make sure you check the minimum kit requirements for your race.

The following items are a good guide to get you started.



Waterproof jacket & trousers



First aid kit, emergency survival bag & whistle



Inside a dry bag



Emergency top & bottom base layer



Hat, tube scarf & gloves



Inside another dry bag



Emergency calories



Map & compass



Head torch (plus a spare)



Fully charged phone

3

### FINALLY, ADD YOUR WATER, SNACKS & OPTIONAL KIT



Poles



Soft bottles



Water bladder



Snacks



Glide or Vaseline



Another set of layers (not for emergencies)



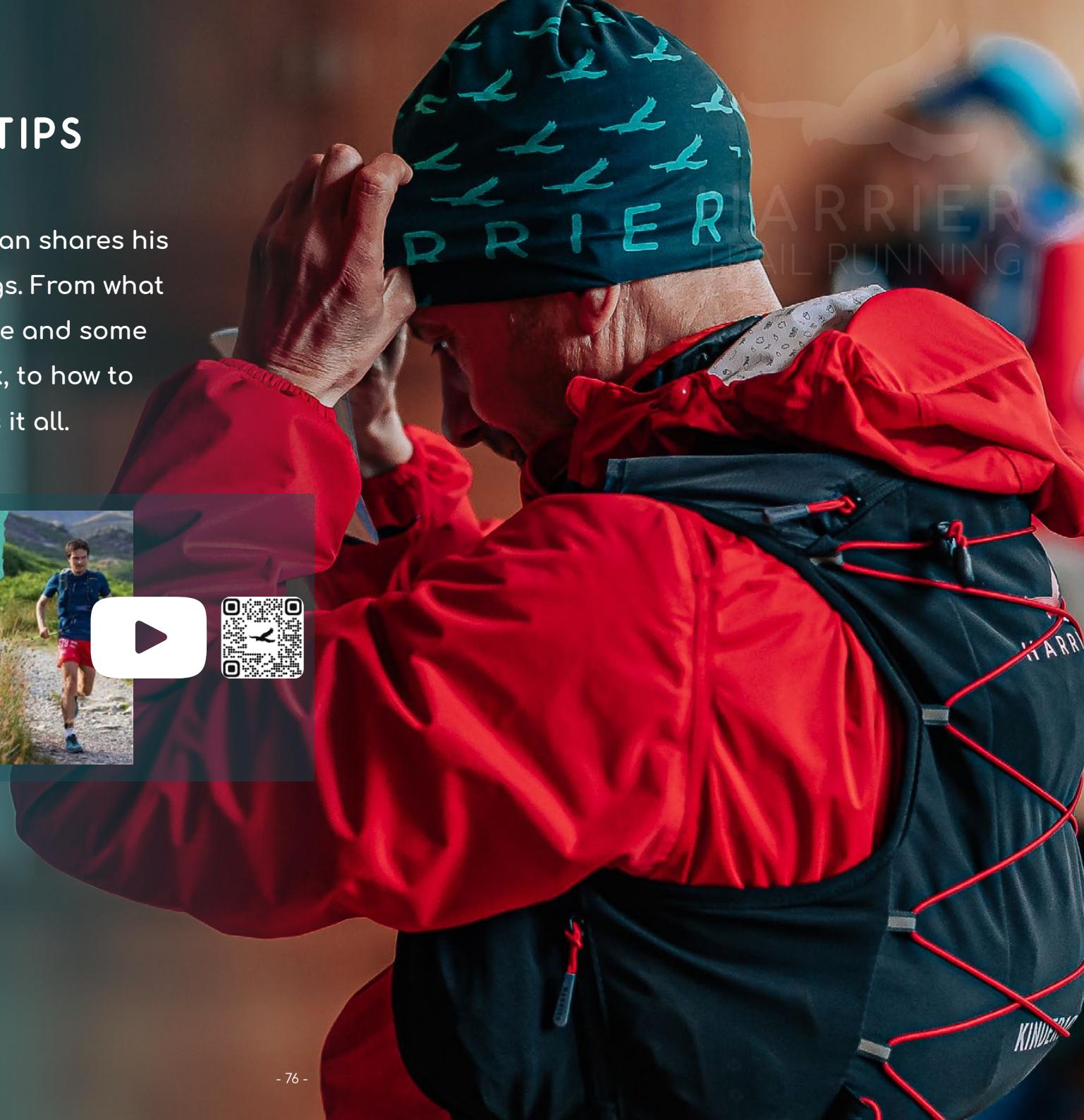
Cash or coins (just in case!)

TOP TIP:

When packing, think about what you're likely to need first or quickly. Practice during your training runs, so finding things is second nature come race day.

# DROP BAG TIPS

In this short video, Dan shares his top tips for drop bags. From what type of bag to choose and some crucial items to pack, to how to fit it all in - he covers it all.





IDENTIFY YOUR  
RULES OF FAILURE

NO ONE WANTS A DNF, BUT AS RONNIE SHARES IN THIS ARTICLE - THINKING IN ADVANCE ABOUT SITUATIONS WHERE YOU WOULD END YOUR RACE CAN BE THE EXTRA MOTIVATION YOU NEED TO PUSH THROUGH TO THE FINISH LINE!

“ This is where you set your stall out!

In essence you highlight: **WHAT TERMS DO YOU ACCEPT FAILURE ON?**

More importantly: **WHAT TERMS DO YOU NOT ACCEPT FAILURE ON?**

I coined this term in 2013 before I entered a big challenge as I needed a simple way to hold myself accountable when so many things could go wrong. It's easy to become overwhelmed with all that CAN happen on an ultra and slip into the illusion that they all mean a DNF - they don't.

We've already looked at the 'If/Then' scenarios in this pack to help, but rules of failure bring a sledgehammer to the party. They are no-nonsense and come into play after you've done all you can to mitigate issues.

Bottom line: **YOU MAY HAVE TO TAKE YOUR PROBLEMS WITH YOU TO THE FINISH LINE!**

Please understand I'm not judging anyone, I'm only discussing what I've observed. Runners can talk about challenges in absolute terms, as if a certain thing happens it will mean certain failure, not true. I can't hide my love for the real long game (100+) for exactly this topic. The further you go, the more your rules of failure are needed because literally you get so tired anything feels like the straw that broke the camel's back.

Rules are individual to you. They must be yours to live to, you need to own them and be comfortable with them. But there need not be many on the list if you're serious. And the more extreme the goal - the less there will be! As I train some very extreme runners they tend to have similar ones to myself. I won't share my exact rules here as I've found some people misinterpret them and it leaves me open to attack without full explanation.

Write your rules out - but pretty quickly you can commit them to memory as there should not be many terms you accept failure on! They can be different for every event. For example if you were on an Arctic Ultra you may have to have different rules, to prevent hypothermia and much worse - you can't just grit that out - so nuance is allowed but keep clarity!

Then every time you are about to quit, you address your rules of failure that you have previously committed to. They are so powerful!

#### EXAMPLE RULES OF FAILURE:

- 1 Broken limb / immovable limb / serious injury - just can't move fast enough / at all!
- 2 Losing consciousness, vision - especially on dangerous terrain like cliffs
- 3 Timed Out / Asked to stop by race officials - respect the rules
- 4 Hyperthermia - need help fast

Ok, so to conclude let's pull this together. You're 70 miles in on your 100 miler and you feel sick and a bit weak but you are not excessively dizzy and you're fully aware, just having a really rough time. You want to quit to end your suffering! But right before you do you pull out your rules of failure. Wait, feeling sick is not there! You don't accept failing because you felt sick - carry on. Now, you've made it to 80 miles, that blister under your foot is making you want to throw a pity party, you are literally weeping and wishing you never entered this thing. 20 more miles feels impossible, you just can't tolerate the pain anymore, you're about to quit then pull out your rules of failure. Wait, blister is not on the list, it's not bad enough to qualify as a serious injury (they can be but you know yours isn't!) and you can move, it just hurts - carry on. Pain isn't on your list. Discomfort isn't on your list. Being wet isn't on your list. Being cold isn't on your list (you can be cold without hyperthermia). Getting lost isn't on your list. You get my point - CARRY ON!!!

Like I said this is just an example. Your rules need to be yours! You need to be willing to commit to them, they are not for anyone else to put on you. If you don't commit to your rules of failure they are a complete waste of time. If you do commit, you'll very likely achieve your impossible.





# MY RULES OF FAILURE

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Write your rules out - but pretty quickly you can commit them to memory as there should not be many terms you accept failure on! They can be different for every event. For example if you were on an Arctic Ultra you may have to have different rules, to prevent hypothermia and much worse - you can't just grit that out - so nuance is allowed but keep clarity!

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- Hyperthermia - need help fast

## NOW, LIST SOME OF YOUR OWN:

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HIGHER  
FAIR RACING

## RECOVERY TIME

You've done it! You've finished your race and collected your medal (or buckle!) - well done!

What's next?





HARRIER  
TRAIL RUNNING

## DAN SHARES HIS EXPERT TIPS ON HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR RECOVERY

“

It's easy to think of running an ultra as something purely physical. Taking this approach, "recovery" from an ultra is all about giving your muscles, bones and tendons (plus other bodily parts which have taken a real battering on your run) time to recover. Of course this is an important element of recovery but I always try to take a holistic approach to recovery and how you feel mentally rather than physically is probably the best guide to how recovered you are. Being guided by your "desire" to exercise again after a race is a great indication of whether or not you should be exercising!

Having said all of this, there are a few guidelines which I think it is important to recognise when thinking about recovery. I've set my thoughts on these out and split them into time periods from the moment you cross the finish line through to "long term".





## IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FINISH



### EAT:

Your body will have a huge calorie deficit from running for so long. Getting fuel on board is one of the best ways to speed up the recovery process. A blend of carbohydrates and proteins (often suggested in a 3:1 or 4:1 ratio) is ideal but really just eat anything you feel like. If you don't know what you are going to be offered at the end of the race then put something like some chocolate milk in your bag for the end.



### DRINK:

Similarly to calories, you're likely to be dehydrated when you finish. Drink water and if you feel electrolytes work for you then also feel free to add some electrolytes to it. Keep sipping (rather than downing!) your water over the next 4-6hrs or at least until you have been for a pee that's "straw" coloured which should confirm you're well on the way to being rehydrated.



### SLEEP:

The body mends mostly when we're sleeping. Try to sleep as much as you can and as early as you can after a race. This may not be practical if you have other commitments but prioritising this will make you feel better all around. If you are trying to sleep but can't try not to worry about it – I know that I sleep terribly for the first few nights after a big effort as my hormones are all totally out of whack – don't worry about this, just relax and treat the time in bed as time when you're resting.



### RELAX/CELEBRATE!

You've done it! Months of training, planning and mental energy went into this so you should spend time with that positive glow around the end result! If it went to plan, enjoy the feeling of a successful run; if it didn't quite go to plan you still need to celebrate the successful elements and the fact that you tried and took on this massive challenge which is more than 99% of people are willing to do!

One point that is important to remember here is that even if you don't finish your race, you'll still have put in a big effort and it's important to recognise that you'll still need to follow these guidelines for recovery and looking after yourself.

When something hasn't gone to plan, it's so tempting to not give yourself the love and recovery time that you need. Do your best to avoid this!

## WEEK FOLLOWING THE RACE

The previous elements: 'Eat; Drink; and Sleep' all continue to apply in the week following a race. Now is not the time to be restricting calories (please also note that getting sufficient fuel as an ultra runner is always critical and can lead to some serious health problems if you don't) - it is the time to be eating lots of nutrient dense foods that you enjoy and treating yourself as well! Continue to focus on the sleep and generally minimising stresses in your life as far as you can. Try not to organise lots of things (work or social commitments) if you can, in the week following an ultra run.

In addition to these points, as long as you do not have any injuries from the race, you can and should start to get about and move.

Initially this should be very light low intensity exercise such as walking or a very gentle swim. I tend to wait about 3 or 4 days after a race before I do any form of exercise. Start off slowly with around 15 or 20 minutes of light exercise and slowly increase this through the week. Take regular rest days and if you feel tired or you don't feel like exercising then just stop! During this time some light mobility, stretching or foam rolling can also be useful. I tend to totally avoid running in the week following a big race.

If you have sustained an injury during the race, now is the time to get in touch with a physio/doctor/other medical practitioner to work out the next steps to help you recover.

## 1-4 WEEKS FOLLOWING THE RACE

If your recovery is going well and you have the desire, now is the time to start to think about reintroducing some light easy running – take regular rest days after you do start running and build it up from a low level of around 20-30 minutes. The objectives of these runs are not to make you fitter, rather to gradually get your body used to running again. During this time I would be wary about doing anything more intense than aerobic “Zone 2” running (running at a speed which you can easily talk at). You also need to be led in this time by how you are feeling and how much desire you have to get out running again. If you don’t have the desire then it’s a good indication that you’re not mentally or physically recovered. If this is the case, just continue to focus on rest, eating, hydration and minimising life stresses as far as you can.

## LONGER TERM

One of the key things in running is to take a step back from your training plans and objectives to make sure you give yourself sufficient down time between races and across years. Lots of elite runners will take anywhere from a few weeks to a month away from running each year. If you just bounce from race to race and are always aiming for the next thing this can have serious implications for you which ultimately can force you to stop running through injury, illness or over training. To help with this you could consider getting a coach – this is someone that can tell you what you need to hear not what you want to hear and is able to take a step back and give you objective advice about how to train whilst also looking after yourself. I have now had a coach for over four years and it is the best investment in my running I’ve ever made – the training plans are great but the advice and objective approach that a coach can give you is where there is real value!

“

DAN SUMMERS  
[dansummersrunning.co.uk](http://dansummersrunning.co.uk)

# RACE REFLECTION

Crossing that finish line isn't  
the end of the journey.



## RONNIE SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON RACE REFLECTION AND HOW THIS CAN HELP YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT

“

I've witnessed runners completing hundreds of events collectively. Everyone reflects differently and although I don't believe there is a one size fits all approach, not keeping at least some form of brief note after an ultra can be a mistake, I feel. Ask any ultra runner if they have ever made the same avoidable mistake twice!

In particular, after a massive goal to miss out on the reflection phase can lead to a lack of fulfilment along with a loss of direction in my experience as both coach and runner. For clarity I am writing here about your huge ultra goals, the ones you really have to work hard for and test you, for many that is their first 100 mile but your Everest may be a 50k and that is cool too.

I avoid issuing runners a template of questions to answer after an event, that to me seems too rigid and risks becoming a perfunctory task. Instead I simply ask, how'd it go? And let them tell me! From there I can steer better to make sure we arrive at some helpful outcomes or positive reflections, whilst acknowledging and planning to prevent the negatives occurring again.

It's actually a very fast and enjoyable process, most hit me right with such outcomes without any probing as they had to think it through to write to me! Personally, I may also share my thoughts with my crew to see if my race reflections seem anyway in line with my attitude and behaviour they witnessed. I'll also ask them what I/we could have done better for next time.



HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTED HELPFUL WAYS TO REFLECT AFTER A BIG GOAL, SUCCEED OR FAIL:



### THE RESULT:

Face it head on, what was the result? Did you finish or DNF (Did Not Finish)? What was your time or why do you think you couldn't finish? You may not know the answers exactly.

Potentially if of interest to you, where did you rank? Keep it factual. The following reflections will almost certainly influence how you feel about the result, but at this stage I like to ask, was the result fair? Was it what you felt you deserved?



### BETTER LIFE STUFF:

Not the result you wanted? Forget the result for a second. Did your training / running enhance your life? Did it improve your wellbeing? Did you grow as a runner and a person? Did you meet some cool people and visit great places? Did you have an adventure? Did you improve your health or fitness? Tell me how you can fail if you answered yes to one or more of these.



### THE PRACTICAL (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER):

**LOGISTICS** - When and how did you travel to the event and return home. Was this ideal, or were you rushing to registration after a late train, wish you'd gone the day before?!

**ACCOMMODATION** - Did this work well. Close to the train station and the start venue? Close to amenities. Above a nightclub?!

Remember; many ultra runners return to events if they DNF so the above information can take a lot of planning out of a future trip! Or just help with the foundations of another event.

**KIT** - Full kit list (include the clothes you were wearing) and a note if you would change anything. This is where you will benefit from previous notes, if you wrote out your kit list before the event - you already have it to hand to reflect upon. I suggest writing in brackets next to the items if anything needs to be mentioned or add an item if necessary.

Thought provokers; What kit was ideal? What can you change? What did you forget? Which trainers did you wear, any good? Wished you wore sunglasses? The new pair of shorts chafe?

**DROP BAG** - Again if you previously wrote out your list prior to the event then you have your list to reflect upon! In brackets next to the items make notes such as (never used) or (worked well). Clearly weather affects drop bag use to a degree (clothes/maybe footwear) but it doesn't change everything.

Notes on the use of your drop bag will help you to nail its contents down to what you really use and need.

**CREW** - Any changes you would make to crew setup?

**THE STRATEGY** - How well did you execute your plan (if you had one!) / what happened

**SLEEP** - When did you sleep? On the bigger 150M - 300M races sleep will become necessary. For most 100 milers it won't be needed. A note at which point you slept and for how long is very helpful for the next journey. How did you feel and would you refine this strategy?

**FUELLING** - What did you eat overall? Did you keep food coming in throughout the duration of the event? Would you change things? Feel nauseous at any point or low energy?

**HYDRATION** (Electrolytes) - How did you manage fluids and salt intake? Any refinements?

**NAVIGATION** - Did you use GPX, maps a guidebook or just follow waymarkers? Did it work, did you get lost often, could you improve things?



HARRIER  
TRAIL RUNNING

### THE RACE CONDITIONS:-

- Weather
- CP stock (the event itself)
- Alone or with others
- Trail well marked or not
- Terrain / Underfoot Conditions / Remoteness

### YOUR CONDITIONING:

- Did you feel in good shape and well prepared?
- Did you feel you correctly trained?
- Did you become injured during the event?
- Did you have any other issues?
- Did your feet hold up, any blisters / hot spots?
- Did you hallucinate?
- Did you cope with sleep deprivation well?
- Did your mindset hold up?



### THE RESULT REASONING:

Now you have your result and have laid out all what happened good and bad, can you understand what happened? Revisit the earlier questions on the result, was it fair or deserved?! There is no right answer, but good to know. You may reframe the question to 'did I do my best'? That is all you had! Then you go off and improve your best!

It is rarely clean cut but it helps to at least try to pinpoint the reasons for your success/failure. This is where you can improve from. This may include going back further than the event itself to look at your training and preparations too of course.



## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- Did you enjoy the format of the event and want to do similar or the same again?
- What did you like / dislike about the event?
- Would you return to this very event?
- Have your aspirations / event direction been jolted or encouraged (or both) from this experience?
- Do you feel inspired?
- Do you need to change or book / plan in a few more events (short & long term)?



## HOW DO I GET BETTER?

No better way to conclude the reflection phase than with this question. Jot it all down and then make an action plan to bring it all to fruition - then get to work!

,

Ronnie Staton  
[ronniestaton.coach](http://ronniestaton.coach)



For more on race reflection, check out our trail session video with Ronnie over on YouTube

# JOSH'S TRAIL STORY



## ULTRA TRAIL SNOWDONIA 50K RACE

Coming into the UTS race I had never done an ultra race before. Crazy to choose arguably one of the hardest 50k races in the UK for my first one but, why not?! Having only started running in lockdown (because running wasn't a thing beforehand, I don't think?), I randomly got up one morning and thought I'd go out for a run because I was bored. From that moment on, I was hooked. It was then my brother in law said for me to enter the Chester 10k in 2022 - this was my first ever race.

I quickly realised I don't like road running as I feel you have to go fast. I've done the odd 10k and half marathon but they aren't fun for me. So, I started running around my local mountain and enjoyed it.

Soon I started looking at mountain races and then it quickly became clear that the UTMB is the pinnacle for trail runners.

I entered my first ever mountain race and it happened to be 25k around Snowdon. I went really well and finished 20th and this was without any experience around nutrition or having poles to climb with. My legs hurt in the last 5k and I slowed down. I then researched more about the UTMB and found that Snowdonia is the only UK event for it. So, I decided to sign up for the UTS 50k.

I booked this event in October 2022 and started planning for how I'd tackle it. I knew I'd need to try and run a marathon beforehand as the longest I'd ever run was 20 miles. I had one race left in 2022 and it was the Conwy half marathon.

This is where disaster struck and I tore my knee ligament. I couldn't run for 8 weeks! I then had to start from scratch again, taking it easy, not pushing uphill, not pushing downhill. Being extra cautious on every run, I started to enjoy being out for longer and not realising I was actually getting some good mileage in.

The back end of January 2023 I did my first marathon as I went for a casual run with a friend. From then, I tried to do at least 40-60 miles a week with an average of 1800m elevation. This is when I bought the Helvellyn Pro Poles as I knew I'd need poles to help after a previous race around Snowdon! I did that every week until April and slowed down to taper before the race.

During all my training, I used the Kinder 10L vest. Learning to run with the weight of the mandatory kit was vital to know. But also being able to get gels and bars out of the pockets of the best in quick fashion was also part of the training.

During the race I opted for the soft bottle straw so I wasn't having to look down to the bottle for a drink - that helped a lot.

The race itself was absolutely brutal. I was so confident I'd finish in my goal time of 9 hours. But through all that training I did with the distance and elevation, one thing I didn't factor would be the 30 degree heat!

I started strong knowing that the heat would be worse at midday so made a strong push up to the first checkpoint. I fuelled well. But the next leg was where I almost gave in. Four miles climbing 1000m is a struggle at the best of times, but with the sun baking you, it's worse. I drank all my water within two miles and from then on, it was a battle.

I quickly realised I wasn't going to finish in 9 hours and I figured out at the last checkpoint I would make it in within the cut off by walking the final 5 miles. That 5 miles was a long walk where all I thought about was what I could have done differently or better. As I crossed the finish line, I was overjoyed that I had just finished my first ever ultra in 12 hours 43 minutes.

After that weekend and I got home, I felt I had unfinished business and I knew I could better my 50k time, so I booked a 50k called the Serpent Trail where I finished it in 5 hours and 42 minutes.

I've since booked the UTS 100k for 2024 and I'll also be doing my first 50 mile race around Snowdon in September 2023. Like I said, me and Snowdonia have unfinished business!



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