

RaceTimes®

SPORTS ENDURANCE MAGAZINE

JUNE/JULY 2020 ISSUE

VIRTUAL RACING

Fitness
motivation
you can
count on!

KEEP FOCUS



with your own
SELF "MANTRA"

Summer Sweat
EDITION

FUEL YOUR BODY

with
energy
increasing
foods



TOP 10
FITTEST
U.S.
CITIES



EDITOR'S NOTE

We've experienced a lot of change these last few weeks. Summer events are being canceled and it is looking more and more likely that autumn will follow suit, as we try to grapple with a global pandemic. It can be disappointing and frustrating when something that you've been preparing for doesn't come to pass. This is especially true when you spend months training your mind and body for an event that will no longer take place. It's okay to acknowledge those feelings, and it's valid to feel that way. You put a lot of effort into something! You wanted that moment of triumph when you pass the finish line and now you won't get to experience it. Don't shove those feelings aside, but don't wallow in them either. Recognize it and then move on. There will always be another race. Be sure to take care of your mental health before anything else.

Our company has allowed us to work from home since early March. While there are some perks to this (I can eat whenever I want!) there are also some downsides (i.e. snacking all day). My gym closed their doors mid-March, so I had to transition to online videos with guided instructions in the comfort of my living room.

I've tried to keep to healthy eating, but some days I eat ice cream for breakfast. What can I say, I'm human. I know we are all tired of hearing about this new normal, but hopefully you have been able to adapt your schedule accordingly. Here are a couple of tricks that I personally have found to be helpful during this time. I hope they can be beneficial to you as well.

Co-Editor of RaceTimes
Ashley Baker

WORK
FROM
HOME

1 Check the news once a day. I was obsessively checking the news every hour to see the latest developments, but it only made me feel more paranoid. Checking once a day keeps me up-to-date on all the biggest news stories, without overwhelming me with everything else that is going on.

2 Go for walks, when possible. Walks give you a chance to take in your surroundings, while putting minimal stress on your body. I can't tell you the amount of times I've left my apartment frustrated about something, only to come back feeling refreshed.

3 Find your new schedule. Before all of this, I would spend an average of 10 hours commuting to work each week. Now I have time to eat a full breakfast in the morning. As previously stated, I am also making time for short walks in the afternoon. Figure out what schedule works best for you.

4 Do your best, but understand that your best can look different on a day-to-day basis. Your effort will not be the same each day and that's okay. Staying focused and trying to put in 100% will keep you motivated.



in this issue:

1.

Running events are canceled, now what?

Virtual running events are here to save the day! You can still train, participate in races, and be recognized for your achievements by running in your own neighborhood. Learn how one runner is staying healthy and scratching that itch to compete despite event cancellations and social distancing.

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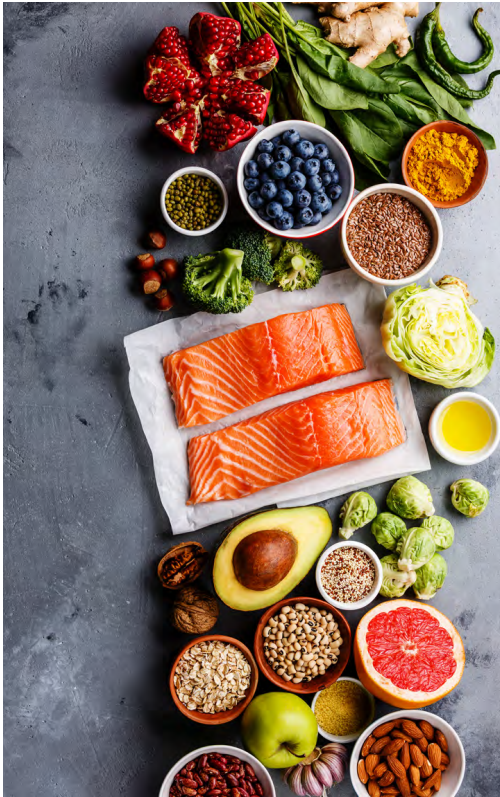
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Keeping at it!

virtual racing during COVID-19

by: Allison Backer

Always consult a doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

As the COVID-19 crisis presses on, it has been difficult to watch the events unfold. Like most, I am concerned for those who have suffered and continue to worry about the health and safety of my family.

During these times, it is also quite challenging to stay on track with fitness and nutrition goals. I will admit to relying a little too much on coffee and wine, and have been tempted by treats with the extra time on my hands! Overall, I have done my best to take care of myself the last (never ending) 8 weeks. Here are a few simple things I am doing to keep my mental and physical health in check:

Adequate sleep. I am sticking with my usual early bedtime routine, plus laying down to take a "power" nap for 20-40 minutes on most days of the week. I find the extra rest allows me to tune out the bad news and clears my head - even if only for a little while.

I am focusing on drinking plenty of water, loading up on immune boosting foods and taking my Vitamin D3 supplement as prescribed.

Sticking to an exercise routine. I continue to bike and run, but swimming is out until the gym and/or beaches begin opening again. I am normally highly motivated to exercise. Lately, I am struggling with mustering up the energy to get out for a run.



I was training for a local marathon prior to the lockdown. Racing is my passion! But now, I am unsure of what I am even training for? Although it has been disappointing to see races get canceled or pushed back with the hopes of carrying on at a later date - they of course can wait. Adherence with social distancing guidelines, in order to stop the spread of infection, is most important.

So, I have been trying to think of creative ways to push myself out the door, get in speed training sessions, and find some friendly competition (at a safe distance) along the way.

I came across a virtual race series that I want to give a try! The races 100% support great causes - that is something to feel good about!

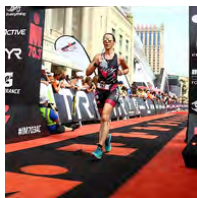
How It Works: **ITS YOUR RACE** is setting up virtual races for non-profits and charities for FREE! The charity also gets to keep 100% of the registration donation. So if the entry fee is \$10, the charity keeps that entire \$10. It's an amazing program that can help non-profits all over the U.S. raise money, while encouraging people to get out and exercise.

Who wants to join me in signing up for a race? Samaritan's Purse (a non-profit that helps with disaster relief all over the world) has a virtual race in every state NOW until June 14th.

You can [learn more](#) or [register here](#).

Best of luck!

About the Author



Allison Backer is a Registered Dietitian with New York state. She received her nutrition degree and completed her internship at Long Island University in 2006. Allison has worked as a Dietitian for over the past 12 years in various clinical settings. Allison resides on Long Island, New York. She enjoys spending time with her husband, daughter and dog. She is an avid fitness enthusiast. She trains for endurance competitions, including marathons and triathlons. Visit her website <https://abackerrdn.wixsite.com/mysite> for more training tips, nutrition advice and healthy recipes.



**View Allison's
recipes on the
next page!**



"Go the Distance" Energy Balls

Ingredients

2 cups quick oats
1/2 cup cacao nibs
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup shredded unsweetened coconut
1/4 cup chia seeds
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup natural nut butter of choice
2 tsp vanilla extract
4 tbsp unsweetened almond milk (feel free to use a milk or milk alternative of choice).
1/4 tsp sea salt

You will get your hands a little messy with this one!

1. In a large mixing bowl, stir together oatmeal, cacao nibs, dried cranberries, shredded coconut, chia seeds and salt. 2. Add in vanilla extract, honey, nut butter and almond milk. 3. Now, get your hands in and work all of the ingredients together! 4. Refrigerate mixture for 30 minutes and then roll contents into hearty sized balls. Store in an air-tight container or sealed glass jar.

Keep refrigerated. Stays fresh for up to 5 days. Enjoy!

Makes 20 Servings. 155 calories; 6.9 g fat; 4.3 g fiber; 3.64 g protein; 20 g carbohydrates



Egg and Bean Power Protein Scramble

Ingredients

4 whole eggs
4 egg whites
1/2 cup black beans
1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk
4 tbsp salsa
1 diced avocado
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tbsp olive oil

Caution Wear your oven mitts – cast iron skillet (including the handle) get very hot! Warm up stove: set oven to broil at 500 degrees. In a cast iron skillet, begin to brown onions in olive oil on medium to high heat. While onions are cooking: whisk eggs, egg whites, garlic powder and almond milk in a bowl. As onions start to appear brown and translucent, add egg mixture into skillet. Cook eggs scrambled style on medium to high heat. When eggs are cooked throughout, take the skillet off of the burner. Top skillet contents with salsa, avocado and shredded cheese. Place cast iron skillet into the oven on broil for 3 minutes. Enjoy these scrambled eggs on your favorite slice of whole grain toast!

Makes 4 Servings. 297 calories; 20.8 g fat; 13.8 g carbohydrates; 5.5 g fiber; 16.6 g protein



Ab Exercises for a Stronger Core

A strong core is the secret to a better pace. It helps with posture, balance, and overall control when running. When the core is strong, it prevents any energy from being wasted. Try these exercises by performing 3 sets of each rep, with a 30-second rest in between each set to increase your core strength. These core workouts are great for your lower and upper abdominal muscles.

Always consult a doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



1 Double Crunch 10-12 reps



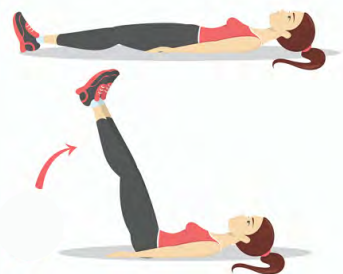
Lay down on your back with your legs out straight. Place your fingertips behind your head, with your elbows level with your ears. Simultaneously bend your legs and crunch forward by lifting your shoulders off the ground, until your elbows meet your knees. Slowly return to start position. Repeat.

2 Leg lift/Crunch Combo 10-12 reps



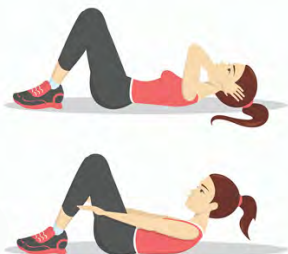
Lay down on your back with your legs out straight, and your arms at your sides. You will simultaneously lift straight legs up off the ground, while reaching forward with your arms and crunch. Return to starting position. Repeat.

3 Leg Lift 10-12 reps



Lay flat on your back with your legs out straight. Lift straight legs until they are at a 90-degree angle, then slowly lower them back to the ground. Keep your lower back flat on the floor and your core engaged. Repeat.

4 Crunches 10-12 reps



Lay on the ground, knees bent, and feet flat on the floor. Put your arms straight out in front of you on both sides of your legs. Engage your core, bring your shoulders off the ground and crunch forward. Return to starting position. Repeat. For additional support, put your hands behind your head.

5 Reverse Crunch 10-12 reps



Lay down on the ground with knees bent and your feet in the air at a 90-degree angle. Using your core and glutes, lift your lower back up and off the ground before slowly lowering it again to the start position. Repeat

6 Plank 2 minutes



Stack your hands directly under your shoulders. Your legs will be straight out behind you. Balance on the balls of your feet, with toes flat on the ground. Keep your back straight and your butt in line with the spine. Engage your core by drawing your navel in and hold.

A muscular man with short brown hair is crouching on a sandy beach. He is wearing dark sunglasses, black earbuds, and a black smartwatch on his left wrist. He is shirtless, showing his well-defined muscles, and wearing dark blue athletic shorts and white sneakers with grey laces. He is looking off to the side with a focused expression. The background shows the ocean and a clear blue sky.

4

PERKS OF BEACH RUNNING



Always consult a doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

Running along an idyllic beach makes for a terrific workout, but did you also know it can lower your risk of injuries? Here's four perks of running in the sand and tips for staying safe out there!

LOWERS IMPACT

Running on sand puts less stress on joints, such as your hips, knees, and ankles, which can help decrease impact-associated injuries. Running on soft, dry sand farther away from the water's edge can be even more beneficial. With every foot strike, there's about four times less impact force on soft sand compared to grass.

STRENGTHENS UNDERWORKED AREAS

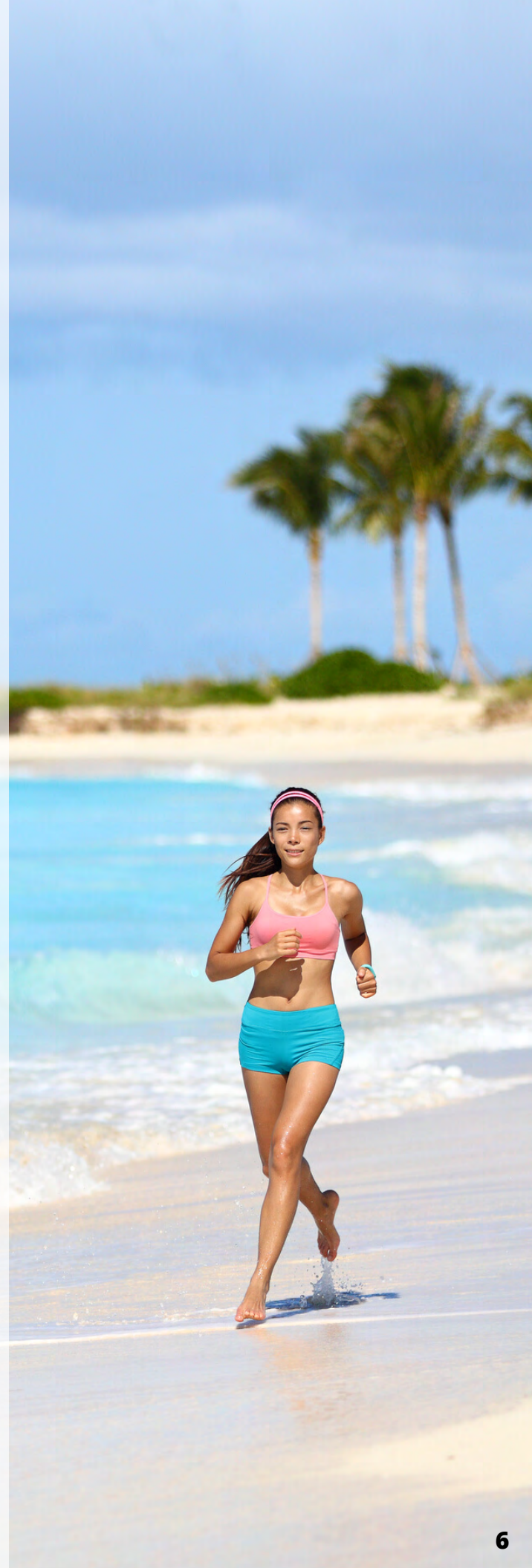
If you've ever run in the sand you will probably recall a burning sensation in your calves with each stride. The unstable surface of sand forces you to work the smaller muscles in your lower body, especially your feet and ankles. Switching up your routine and transitioning to sand keeps your body guessing and builds muscles that aren't as heavily worked when running on pavement.

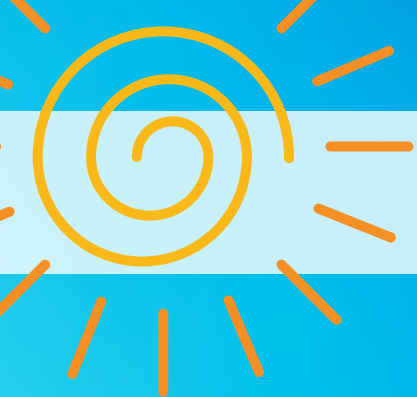
BURNS MORE CALORIES

Who doesn't want to burn as many calories as possible during a workout? The unstable surface of the sand requires extra effort and muscle engagement, which means a higher calorie burn. Studies show that sand requires about one and a half times more energy than running on a hard surface.

CHANGE OF SCENERY

Same road. Same view. Same old thing. You should continue challenging yourself by running various routes that have different inclines, surfaces and distances. Even if you don't have direct access to a beach, sometimes nearby parks will have sand adjacent to a lake or pond that you can run on. If you live near the ocean, even better, you have the benefit of exercising while enjoying the scenic views. Taking a beach vacation? There's something special about running on the beach while traveling, probably because it's a rare treat for land-locked visitors.





KEEP IN MIND

While your chances of impact-related injuries decrease when running in sand, the chances of other injuries, such as a sprained ankle, can rise. The constant shifting on the uneven surface of the sand is to blame. The good news is as long as you exercise caution and work to stay balanced, it will result in an even better workout.

As mentioned earlier, you're working harder when you run on sand, therefore it's advised to start out slow. Ease into a new training routine and always warm up your calves, hamstrings and glutes.

If you're on vacation, shoot for a much shorter distance than you're accustomed to at home. If you plan to train regularly on the beach, give yourself about a two-week adjustment period before increasing distance and intensity.

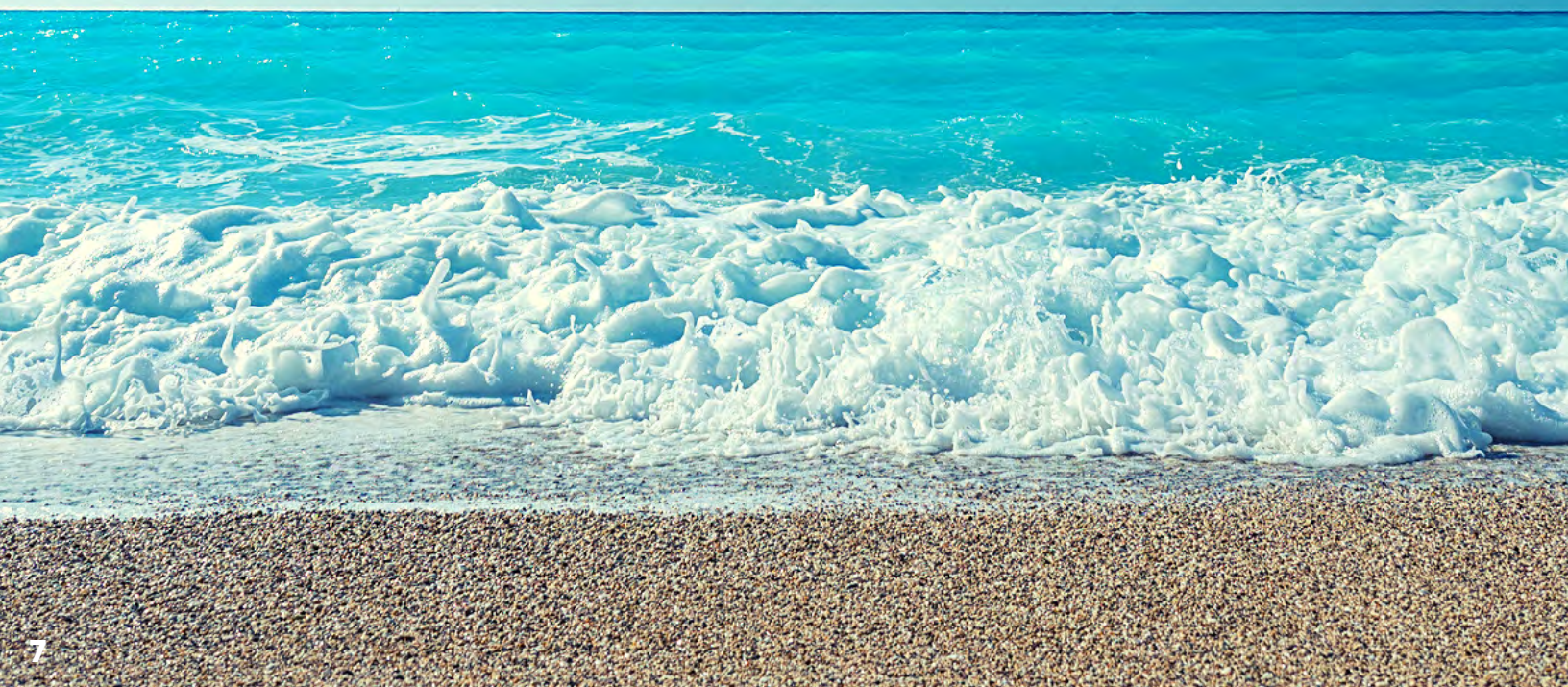
Wear a hat, sunglasses, and a water-resistant, sweat-wicking shirt. Always apply sunscreen on exposed skin! The sun reflects off the water, which puts you at a higher risk for sunburn.

SHOES OR NO SHOES?

Choosing to wear shoes can depend on personal preference or where you're actually running. For example, if you run near the shore, you may prefer shoes to protect your feet from broken shells and other debris.

Keeping your shoes on decreases your chances of foot or ankle injuries. Shoes stabilize your ankles, and provide heel and arch support for your feet.

A downside of wearing shoes is getting sand and potentially water in them. Set aside a pair of shoes that are strictly for running at the beach. You'll thank us later.





Watermelon Feta Salad

Ingredients:

- 8-10 cups seedless watermelon
- 1 cup of blueberries (or fruit of choice)
- 1/4 cup of feta cheese
- 2 Tbsp. of roughly chopped mint leaves
- 4 Tbsp. of lime juice

Directions:

1. Combine the fruit, mint, and cheese in a large bowl.
2. Drizzle lime juice over salad and toss to coat.
3. Enjoy!

*Makes 4 Servings.

Mix it up!

Get creative with the dressing! Use honey, olive oil, or even plain sugar for some extra flavor!



The *10 Fittest Cities* In the U.S.

What makes a city fit? The American College of Sports Medicine's 2019 American Fitness Index researched and ranked the 100 largest cities in the United States and used various indicators to assess a city's overall fitness. The index takes into account individual and community health factors, including how often residents exercise and their access to parks, farmers markets, and recreation centers.

Here's the scoop on the top 10 U.S. cities that made the list and what makes them so fit.

10

Portland, Oregon

12% of its residents walk or bike to work. Portland also ranked #2 for bike score (which calculates bikeability using bike lanes, hills, connectivity, and bicycle mode share).

8

Irvine, California

One thing is for sure, the residents of Irvine care about their health. 83% of residents have exercised in the past 30 days, and 25% of those residents met the guidelines for aerobic activity set by the Centers for Disease Control.

6

Washington D.C.

Our nation's capital made the list! The city boasts easily accessible farmers markets and ranks #1 for its residents eating three plus vegetables per day. The city also ranked #1 for the percentage of its residents that walk or bike to work (17.7%).

4

San Francisco, CA

A good way to get in daily exercise is to walk to work! San Francisco ranks #3 for walk score and #4 for use of public transportation. The city also ranks #1 for parks within a 10-minute walk.

2

Seattle, WA

No surprise here! Seattle ranks #3 for personal health rank & score and #9 for community/environment rank and score. The city also made the list for bike score, coming in at #6.

9

Denver, Colorado

The city clocks in at #9 with some pretty amazing statistics. Denver has the fifth-lowest rate of heart disease, and the 10th lowest rate of high blood pressure in the nation.

7

St. Paul, Minnesota

Can you smell that fresh air? St. Paul made the top 10 list for cities with the best air quality. The city also ranks #8 for the lowest rates of high blood pressure.

5

Madison, WI

You know what they say, an apple per day keeps the doctor away. Madison ranks #1 for its residents eating at least two fruits per day, and is #3 for accessibility to farmers markets.

3

Minneapolis, MN

If you love biking, you might want to consider moving here. The city is ranked #1 for bikeability. Minneapolis also made the list for parks within a 10-minute walk and having the third lowest rate for blood pressure in the country.

1

Arlington, VA

The city ranks #1 for any exercise, aerobic and strengthening activities, personal health rank and score, and community/environment rank and score. It's no wonder Arlington is the fittest city in the U.S., with its residents putting a huge emphasis on personal health.

The Benefits of Swimming

Is a summer vacation even complete without a trip to the beach or pool? Learn the surprising health benefits this summertime activity can have.

1

IT'S A GREAT FULL BODY WORKOUT.

You must use all of your muscles when you are swimming, whether it's a breaststroke or a butterfly stroke. Even a doggy paddle is utilizing muscles from all over your body to keep you afloat. The water has the bonus of being used as a form of resistance, so 30 minutes in the pool is equal to 45 minutes of working out on dry land.

2

EASY ON THE JOINTS.

Water supports your weight, causing not as much pressure on your joints. If you are coming off of an injury, swimming in the pool or doing other water-based exercises is a great way to get back in shape without compromising your injury.

3

HELPS CONTROL BREATHING

There is a positive correlation between swimming and increased lung function. This is caused by the natural pressure that swimmers' diaphragms face in the water. The diaphragm, like most muscles when consistently exposed to a stressor, is forced to improve its function, allowing for greater control over your breathing.

4

RELAXING

Chill out, it's summertime! Taking a few laps around the pool can be very relaxing. Swimming three times a week has been proven to help alleviate anxiety and depression, improve sleep patterns, and overall decrease stress levels.

Going swimming? Don't forget:

- **Sunscreen** - Most dermatologists recommend a minimum SPF 30, as it blocks out 97% of the sun's UV rays. You will want to reapply every 2 hours.
- **Hat or swim cap** - Don't forget to protect your scalp! The sun's harmful rays can cause the skin on your scalp to blister if left unprotected.
- **Snacks** - If you are swimming all day, you will want some healthy snacks to replenish your energy supply.
- **Drinking water** - Being out in the sun can dehydrate you, fast! Pack some water for you to sip on when thirsty.

MOTIVATIONAL MANTRA AND MENTAL TOUGHNESS

By Terri Rejimbai, RRCA certified coach

We've all heard the saying that "Running is 90% mental and 10% physical." It's no secret that in addition to strong legs and lungs, you need a strong mind to achieve your running goals. "Your mind can be your weapon or your weakness," says Lenny Wiersma, Ph.D., professor of sports psychology at California State University, Fullerton.

Attention and concentration can wane over the miles causing the pace to slack and opportunity for negative thoughts to seep in. According to Stephen Walker, Ph.D., a sports psychologist in Boulder, a well-chosen mantra can keep you calm and on target. "Repeating choice words whenever you need to focus helps direct your mind away from negative thoughts and towards a positive experience."

A mantra is a word or sound repeated to aid concentration. In spiritual practices like yoga or meditation, it refers to intention. Mantra – man (mind) & tra (transport/vehicle).

An effective mantra addresses what you want to feel, not the adversity you're trying to overcome, says Robert J. Bell, Ph.D., a certified consultant for the Association for Applied Sports Psychology. A good one diverts your mind from unpleasant thoughts to ones that help you transcend it. It is believed that only positive intentions and actions will fill your mind and eliminate negativity.

So, what makes a good mantra? One that is short, positive, instructive, and full of action words. The key is creating one that resonates with you; otherwise, it will not draw the right response from inside of you. It's been said that "where the mind goes, the body follows." If you're distracted during a race or workout, the body will lose awareness and your pace will drop. A good mantra will keep you focused.

Recently, I had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Stephen Walker, a sports psychologist. He has worked with many elite athletes for over 36 years, including 2-time Olympian Kara Goucher. Dr. Walker contributed to Goucher's book, *Strong: A Runner's Guide to Boosting Confidence and Becoming the Best Version of You*, in which she discusses how she conquered self-doubt, and shares proven tools for improving running performance while building confidence.

Mantras, listed second out of eight confidence techniques, helped Goucher shut out negative chatter and focus on the present.



"Everyone here is better than me. Look at them, they've beat you before. I'm not ready for this. Something's off. And then there's you," are thoughts that Kara Goucher has had during a race. I'm sure we all have said these kinds of statements to ourselves. Talking yourself out of the competition before the race even starts – Self Defeating!

To train optimistic behavior, Dr. Walker had Goucher keep a confidence journal. The purpose of the journal was to train her mind to seek out one to two positive aspects that went well in her workouts or races, even if they were bad. From her journal entries, she was able to pick meaningful words that she could use when negative thoughts would creep into her mind. Positive self-talk reinforces confidence.

Mantras harness thoughts through instruments of thinking - framed statements that help to direct your focus on the present. They sync your body and mind to create focus and confidence to perform. Mantras keep you "centered". It's this fixated point of concentration that engages the parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS) to slow the heart rate, increase glandular activity, relax the GI tract, and help conserve energy. Like transcendental meditation, they have a vibration quality, a rhythm that soothes the mind, and helps to narrow your concentration to eliminate distractions.

Learning to focus your mind requires time, patience, and practice. Your thoughts will wander, regardless of how much you rehearse or how mentally tough you are. It's impossible to maintain full concentration in longer races, and your mind will look for opportunities for a reprieve. That's when having a mantra can sweep in and guide you back to the task at hand.

It's your "mission statement" and it serves a specific purpose that is deeply personal to you. It's possible that we could have the same mantra; however, its underlying meaning to each of us could be entirely different. That's what



makes it incredibly personal and individual. For instance, one of Goucher's mantras was "I Belong". Repeating this mantra helped her cope with the anxiety, self-doubt, and negativity about racing. As you can see from her previous quotes above, "I Belong" mantra is present tense and diverts her attention away from her competitors' abilities and reinforces trust in herself to perform.

A mantra must deeply resonate with you. Not all mantras are created equal. Each one serves a different motive, such as managing discomfort or anxiety, remaining calm, or keeping mental focus. Some examples could be: "This is My Race", "I'm Fearless", "Fighter", or "Endure". Each one is different and elicits a different response. You may even use several different mantras within one race to

help you stay engaged in the present. It should inspire or excite you. If it no longer does, then it's time to develop a new one. Plan your attack on distractions, keep your mantras simple and in the present tense. You want your mantras to ignite an emotional spark within you, and remember:

Stay Focused. Positive. Present.

Happy Running!

Always consult a doctor before starting any exercise routine.

About the Author: Terri Rejimbai is a competitive Masters athlete. Terri is a RRCA certified running coach and is available for consulting or coaching services. Contact Terri at tarejimbai@gmail.com or Instagram [@bayshorerunner](https://www.instagram.com/bayshorerunner).

BENEFITS OF SPEED SESSIONS

By James Williams

3 ways to improve your ultra-running pace when you have limited time.

Lately I've been asking myself about my own training: How can I make the most of my training time available? Can I actually improve my performance? How can I keep myself motivated to train hard, with no clear end goal in mind? What are some aspects of my training that usually get neglected?

One of the things I'm focusing more on at the moment is improving my speed. I'm doing a lot more shorter, faster sessions than I've done in a long time. I'm finding it's a great use of my time and is very effective at improving my performance. I've seen almost immediate results!

Here are the benefits of speed training and how to incorporate it into your training regiment.

Always consult a doctor before starting any exercise routine.





"Life is not always a matter of holding good cards, but sometimes, playing a bad hand well."

- JACK LONDON

YOUR SLOW AND MEDIUM PACES SHOULD IMPROVE

Many top athletes, including ultra-running legend Ian Sharman, say that one of the keys to improvement is to increase your slow and medium pace. This is because most of the running that you do for longer events will be at a slower pace. By doing speed workouts, your body becomes used to training at a higher pace. It also has a positive knock-on effect on your slower paces.

THEY ARE AN EFFECTIVE USE OF YOUR TIME

If you don't have as much time to train as usual, then these sessions can be a very efficient way of improving fitness. You can squeeze in a lot more high quality training into a shorter space of

time. As an ultra-runner, you still need to do the longer distances, but if you only have 20 - 60 minutes for a run, then these are a good option.

YOUR FORM SHOULD IMPROVE

Speaking of efficiency, working on your speed should improve your running form and running efficiency. This is partly because running at a higher speed forces your body to run in a different way compared to when you are running at a very slow pace. Even if you don't know you are doing it, your form will probably improve as a result of doing these faster workouts.

THEY KEEP YOUR TRAINING INTERESTING

Ultra-runners have a tendency to churn out week-after-week of long, slow workouts. Which is important! Your races will require you to run for a long time and quite slowly, which results in training that can be repetitive and boring. Mixing your training up with one to three harder, shorter sessions during the week can give you a different psychological stimulus. This will keep you more motivated over a long run.

WHAT SPECIFIC SPEED WORKOUTS CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR ULTRA-RUNNING?

So, it's clear that there are a lot of benefits for running at a faster pace in training. Now you need some ideas for how to actually do them. There are hundreds of varieties of workouts you can do, and you can make up your own too. Here are some training sessions that I've been doing recently.

3-MINUTE REPEATS

This is a session that is a favorite of 100-mile world-record holder, Zach Bitter and it's very simple! After a good warm up, you do repetitions of three minutes at very hard intensity. They should be at around your 5K pace. After each rep, you will have a very easy recovery of about two minutes. This can be a very easy jog or even a walk. It doesn't matter how slow

you go for these. Repeat this between 6 - 10 times. Your aim is to get to the same distance for each rep, from the first to the last. Consistency is key, rather than fading off for the last reps.

YASSO 800'S

Yasso 800's were originally designed for marathon training, however, I've found that they are great for ultra-running too. This is a similar session to the 3-minute repeats, but based on distance, rather than time. Because of that, it can be easier to run them on a track, but I often do them around a loop in my park just as easily. After a warm up, you do 10 repetitions of 800 meters. Keeping an even pace from the first to the last rep. Just like the 3-minute repeats, consistency is key. Have 400 meters of rest between each rep, walking or very easy jogging will do.

PYRAMID SESSIONS

This is the most complicated, but the most fun of the three sessions. A pyramid session includes starting at a low distance, and then increasing it with each rep. After you get to a certain distance, you reverse down the same reps as you did when you were increasing them. For example, you'd start with a good warm up. Then your first rep of hard work might be a 200 meter effort. You'd have a good rest, possibly 2 minutes of very easy jogging. Then you'd do 300 meters. Another rest, then another rep of 400 meters. You can do as many reps as you like, until you get to a desired distance.

I usually go up to 800 meters. Then I do another rep at 800 meters, and reduce the reps each time. So I'll do 800 meters hard, rest, 700 meters hard, rest, 600 meters hard, rest, until I get to my last rep of 200 meters, back where I started. The objective of these sessions is to do the second rep in the same time as the first. For example, both reps of 200 meters should be the same. Even though one is at the start

of your workout and the other is at the end. This is a difficult workout to get right, but it can be a lot of fun. The variety in the session makes you stay on your toes and keeps you motivated.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN DOING SPEED WORK?

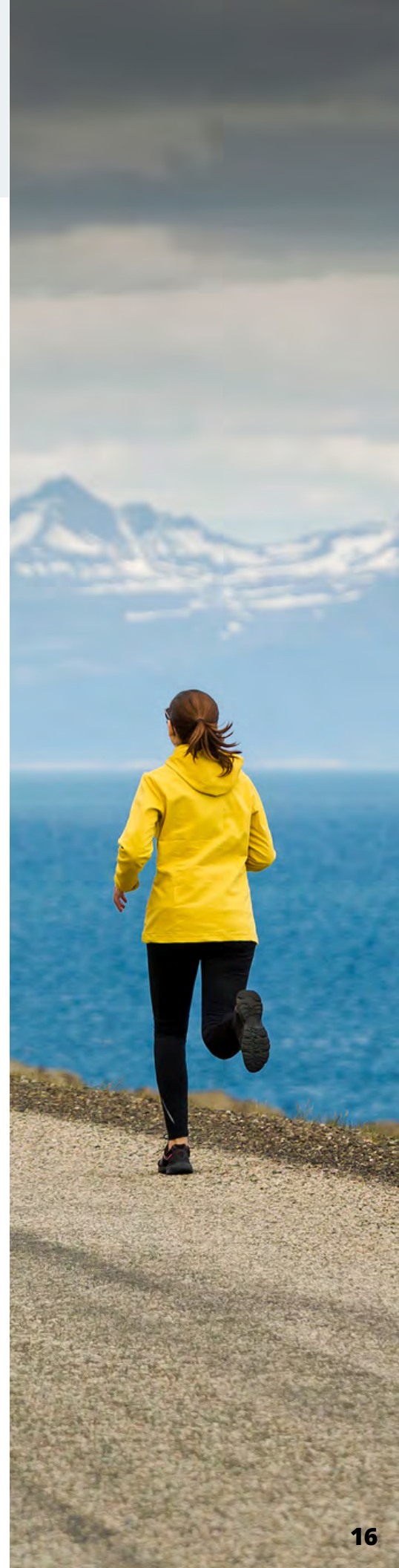
As with anything new that you're introducing to your training plan, there are a number of things to think about.

PUT EVERYONE'S HEALTH AND SAFETY FIRST

Now, more than ever, we need to prioritize our health, most importantly, the health of others around us. Please make sure that you are allowed to go outside in your location, and that you choose a location where you can do all of the things that we're being advised to do at the moment. That includes practicing social distancing, which is especially important if you're doing a session where you will be breathing heavier. Remember to move at a pace that keeps at least six feet of distance between you and strangers. If you can't safely go outside, it's time to think about what workouts you can do at home.

DON'T DO TOO MUCH TOO SOON

Just like with building up running distance or introducing weight training, you need to ease into speed training over time. Don't suddenly go from doing no speed-focused training at all, to doing three or more workouts per week. When first starting, I'd advise to only do one or two workouts a week, but make sure that you leave enough days in between to recover. When starting, that means at least two easy days. You can still do some exercise on those days, but make sure it is very easy. Once you've done a few months of this type of training, you can increase the amount you do. Which leads me to the next point...



DON'T DO TOO MUCH IN A SPECIFIC TIME PERIOD

Once you've gotten used to speed training, you may want to increase the amount you do. Which is absolutely fine and what you should be doing to see improvements. The big danger with this type of higher intensity training is that you end up trying to do too much of it.

These sessions should push you much harder than your average run. Your body needs time to recover from them. That means that you can't do too many workouts in a week. Even the most successful athletes rarely do more than three hard sessions a week, with usually at least one day of rest in between.

The 80/20 principle is a good way to measure how much hard training you should be doing. This is where 80% of your training should be done at an easy, comfortable level, with the remaining 20% at a higher intensity.

The other thing to be careful of is doing too many of these workouts in a complete ultra-running training cycle. This is because you want the majority of your training to be specific for your event. These sessions aren't that specific for ultra-runners as they are run at a much higher pace than in a race. They should be used few and far between.

DON'T PUSH THROUGH SESSIONS REGARDLESS OF OTHER FACTORS

Most of us ultra-runners love sticking to a plan and we hate changing direction from that plan. Especially if it means missing a session or doing less distance in a session. When thinking about harder training sessions, however, it's even more important than usual to listen to your body. If you have a small injury or are generally not feeling well, then it's wise to skip the session. If not that, at least reduce the volume of work that you're going to do.

Again, because of the high intense nature of these workouts, trying to push through a small injury is more likely to lead to a bigger problem later.

I learned this the hard way in a workout I did in August 2019. I pushed through the final few kilometers of a particularly tough session. I could feel that I had developed a small injury, which was getting worse as the session went on. I didn't listen to my body, pushed through the session... and ended up injured for more than three months. I had to pull out of two main races and my fitness dropped significantly. Stopping a session early is rarely a bad decision. You can always make it up on another day.

If you get injured from pushing too hard, that could end up being a poor decision that lasts for weeks or months afterwards. You can actually end up missing races, or not performing as well as you should have.

Focusing on improving your speed, even as an ultra-runner, has lots of benefits. Luckily, there are some easy ways to do it! Just remember these three things.

BENEFITS OF FOCUSING ON SPEED

It can improve your top pace, but more importantly for ultra-runners, your average and easy pace. It also improves your running form and efficiency. It can be used when you have limited time, and will keep training sessions fresh and interesting.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF SESSIONS

There are many types of sessions you can do, including Yasso 800's, 3-minute repeats and pyramid sessions. Try them out and see what you enjoy. Make adaptations to the sessions when necessary. Creating your own sessions is half the fun!

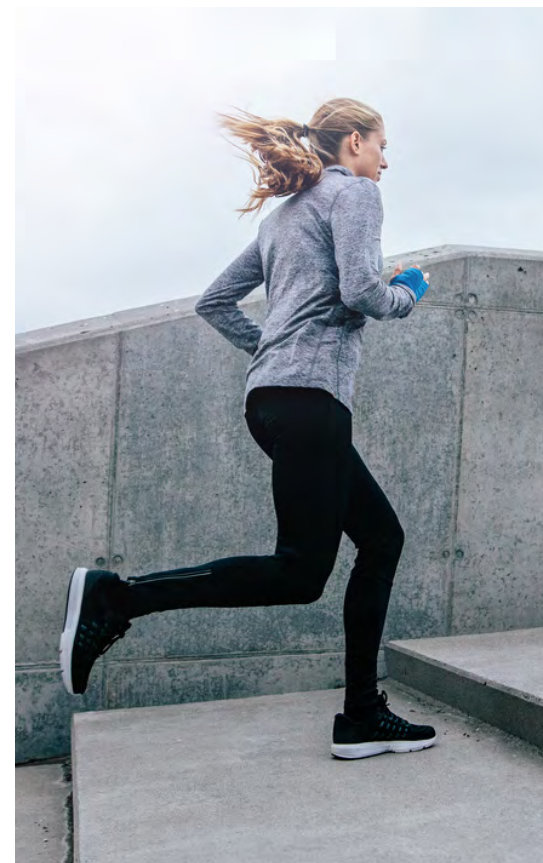
THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

As with any type of training, there are some other things to consider. First, ensure that everyone's health and safety is prioritized, not just your own, but also those around you. Second, don't do too much too soon in a short amount of time. Your body needs more rest than usual from these sessions.

With all these things in mind, you'll have an effective and efficient way to improve your speed and stay in shape.

About the Author: James Williams is a father of two, husband, and runner with race victories at 100 miles, 100km, marathons, half-marathons, 10k's and 5k's. Most recently, he attempted to break a world-record by running more than 800 miles in 9 days from the bottom of the UK to the top. He writes informative articles to help other runners improve their own performances and achieve their dreams on:

www.JamesRunsFar.com.



ENERGY INCREASING FOODS

BY: JULIA BARBER

At some point or another everyone starts to feel sluggish or run-down. Do you find yourself sleeping until the last possible minute some days? Or maybe you just don't have the same energy to get things done throughout the day that you once did. Lack of energy is common, but it can begin to negatively affect your daily activities and ability to be productive.

While adequate sleep plays a huge role in your energy levels, so do the foods you eat. The quantity and quality of the foods you choose to consume are important. Calories are energy for your body. Not consuming enough calories can cause feelings of exhaustion. It is also difficult to get all of the vitamins and minerals your body needs if you are low on calories. Not getting enough important nutrients like Vitamin D and iron can lead to fatigue. Everyone's daily calorie intake is different and depends on factors such as your height, weight, age, and activity level.

The quality and types of foods you choose are important because some foods contain nutrients that can increase your energy levels.

Alternately, there are also foods that can contribute to your low energy levels. Simple carbohydrates and added sugars have been known to spike blood sugar levels and lead to a "crashing" effect. If you're looking to add in some energy boosting foods to your diet, you want to make sure you're including complex carbs, healthy fats, and quality proteins. Here are some foods that can raise your energy levels and help fight fatigue.



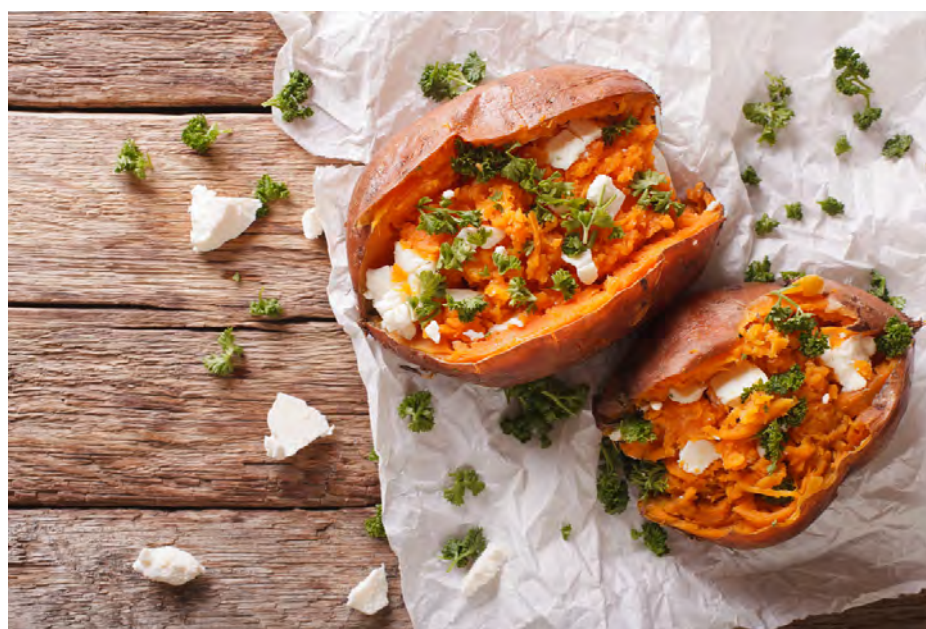
OATMEAL

Oatmeal is a complex carbohydrate that is full of nutrients and fiber. Oatmeal is digested slower so it provides energy evenly instead of all at once. A bowl of oatmeal in the morning can keep you full and energized until lunch time. Oatmeal is easy to prepare and even sold premade if you're short on time.



SWEET POTATOES

Like oatmeal, sweet potatoes contain a good amount of fiber and complex carbs, which provides you with a steady supply of energy. They also contain manganese, which can help in the breakdown of nutrients and energy production. Sweet potatoes are a great side dish to have in bulk for the week. You can pair them with your eggs in the morning or with a lean protein for lunch or dinner.



EGGS

Eggs are a great source of protein, which can provide you with steady energy as it does not cause spikes in blood sugar when digested. Eggs contain leucine, an amino acid that increases energy. They also contain antioxidants and other nutrients that people tend to not consume enough of. Eggs can be scrambled with fiber-rich veggies in the morning for a breakfast scramble, hard boiled for a quick snack, or prepared a variety of other different ways.





SEEDS

Seeds such as chia seeds and flaxseeds are high in plant-based omega-3 fatty acids. Fatty acids are an important source of stored energy and help your cells properly function. Low levels of omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to inflammation and fatigue. Seeds are also rich in fiber and protein. Chia seeds can be added whole or ground to smoothies, yogurt, oatmeal, and salads. You can also add chia seeds to a liquid like coconut milk with a sweetener of your choice for Chia Pudding.



SALMON

Salmon is a fatty fish that contains protein, vitamin B6, niacin, and riboflavin, all of which help convert the food you eat into energy. A serving of salmon provides you with the recommended amount of omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 pairs with folic acid to produce blood cells and helps iron perform better in the body. Optimal levels of iron in the blood can reduce fatigue and increase energy. You can pair grilled salmon with fresh veggies, brown rice, or sweet potatoes for a balanced, energy boosting meal.



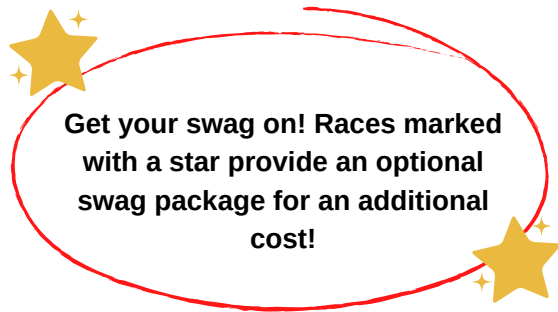
There are a wide variety of foods that can help boost your energy levels. Fiber and protein are important to incorporate for slower releases of energy. Many of these foods also contain vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which have been shown to aid in the production of energy within our cells. Next time you find yourself feeling sluggish and run down, try incorporating some of these energy boosting foods into your diet.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

What you put in your body is the most important piece to achieving your goals. That's why trainer, nutrition coach, and chef Jillian Tedesco started fit-flavors to help others succeed. See how they can help you at fit-flavors.com

FEATURED **VIRTUAL** EVENTS

Register for an event and then run at your location of choice during the specified time period.

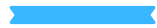


Featured Event: The Good Samaritan National Virtual Race Series

May 5 - June 14, 2020

Boone, NC

Details: This virtual race series benefits Samaritan's Purse, an evangelical Christian humanitarian aid organization that provides aid to people in physical need as a key part of its Christian missionary work. They're hosting an event in each state to see which one will bring the most participation and donations to Samaritan's Purse! Sign up in your state of choice and be sure to share your achievement with your friends, and encourage them to register and compete against your finish time!



Featured Event: Northwest Arkansas FCA 5K & Prayer Walk

May 15 - June 14, 2020

Lowell, AR

Details: The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is touching millions of lives...one heart at a time. Since 1954, FCA has been challenging coaches and athletes on the professional, college, high school, junior high and youth levels to use the powerful platform of sport to reach every coach and every athlete with the transforming power of Jesus Christ. FCA focuses on serving local communities around the globe by engaging, equipping, and empowering coaches and athletes to unite, inspire, and change the world through the gospel.

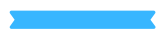


Featured Event: Junior Achievement of Northern Nevada

May 22 - June 30, 2020

Reno, NV

Details: Junior Achievement is a non-profit organization that brings the real world to students through hands-on curriculum delivered by a trained classroom volunteer. Their programs inspire and prepare young people around the world for success in a global economy by teaching them the key concepts of workforce readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.



Featured Event: The Sunrise Rotary Club of San Mateo Virtual Color 5K Race

May 25 - June 7, 2020

San Mateo, CA

Details: This Virtual Color 5K takes the place of the traditional postponed race. Show your brilliant colors while running and send a photo to them to show your support. Proceeds will support Peninsula Family Service, the San Mateo/Foster City School District and the Sunrise Rotary Club. The club provides services to others, promotes integrity, advances world understanding, goodwill and peace, through fellowship of businesses, professionals, and community leaders.

**Featured Event: Tri-Cities Area Habitat for Humanity Virtual Race**

May 29 - June 7, 2020

Grand Haven, MI

Details: This virtual 5K is benefiting the Tri-State Habitat for Humanity. The COVID-19 epidemic and economic repercussions have affected many in their community. Race registrations will assist Tri-Cities Area Habitat for Humanity in the mission to build decent, affordable housing and provide critical home repairs to low income homeowners.

**Featured Event: American Cancer Society Survivor Day 5K**

May 30- June 7, 2020

Culver City, CA

Details: The American Cancer Society's mission is to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer. 100% of your race entry fee goes to the American Cancer Society.

**Featured Event: Young Life 5K**

May 30 - June 21, 2020

Colorado Springs, CO

Details: The mission of Young Life is to introduce adolescents to the gospel of Jesus and help them grow in their faith. They serve those of all socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and ability. Caring adult leaders befriend students and walk with them through all of the valleys and mountains of teenage life. They currently serve high school and middle school students, while discipling college-age students and volunteer adults in leadership positions.

**Featured Event: ATLAS Ministries Virtual Race**

June 1-15, 2020

Zeeland, MI

Details: At ATLAS, they are helping set people free to live the life that was intended for them. They do not believe that a single crisis or many, whether financial, relational or otherwise has to entrap a person or their future. These cycles can be broken. They provide life skills coaching, financial counseling and resource referrals free of charge. They will journey with you and provide guidance and encouragement that will restore dignity, confidence and give hope to individuals ready to build a bright future.

**Featured Event: Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Virtual Race**

June 1-18, 2020

New York, NY

Details: Led by human rights activist and lawyer Kerry Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights has advocated for a more just and peaceful world since 1968. They work alongside local activists to ensure lasting positive change in governments and corporations. Their team includes leading attorneys, advocates, entrepreneurs, and writers united by a commitment to social justice. Whether in the United States or abroad, their programs have pursued strategic litigation on key human rights issues, educated millions of students in human rights advocacy, and fostered a social good approach to business and investment.

**Featured Event: Stability First Rally In the Valley**

June 1-30, 2020

Martinsville, IN

Details: Stability First is a non-profit organization established to address multiple issues associated with the alleviation of poverty. This includes providing transitional housing, as well as a circle of services geared toward assisting low income families in increasing their financial stability and self-sufficiency. Proceeds from this 5K will directly help fund the isolation unit used to help safely transition new residents into the Magdalene House.

For a full listing of our events go to: itsyourrace.com

**Featured Event: [RunWalkBark4Dreams 2020 Sunshine Foundation Virtual Run](#)**

June 6-21, 2020

Richboro, PA

Details: This 5K benefits the Sunshine Foundation, a non-profit who answers the dreams of chronically ill, physically challenged, and abused children ages three to eighteen, whose families cannot fulfill their requests due to the financial strain that their child's illness may cause.

**Featured Event: [Nu Gamma Omega HBCU Virtual 5K](#)**

June 8-19, 2020

Baton Rouge, LA

Details: Nu Gamma Omega Chapter fosters fundraising efforts that promote philanthropically, community service, scholarship, programs for Baton Rouge and surrounding parish communities. They have served the Greater Baton Rouge area for 35 years. Help them raise funds by either entering the 5K or the 1 mile kid's run. Proceeds and donations raised from the virtual race will go towards the HBCU and health initiatives.

**Featured Event: [Frontier Horizon Virtual Race](#)**

June 12-22, 2020

Virginia Beach, VA

Details: Frontier Horizon was established to meet the basic needs of orphans and destitute people around the world. Their present mission is the improvement of the health, education and general welfare of orphan children in Ukraine, Colombia, and Nicaragua. Help them accomplish that by signing up for this virtual 5K race!

**Featured Event: [Run For Clean Air Virtual 5K/10K](#)**

June 13-28, 2020

Falls Church, VA

Details: The Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) over the past 38 years has grown into the nation's leading resource for grassroots environmental activism; a ground-breaking, progressive organization with a vision for clean, safe, green neighborhoods and communities. Run for Clean Air is one way CHEJ is educating the public about this problem and raising funds to support our No More Sacrifice Zones Campaign. This is a national campaign with the goal of changing both policy and industrial practice around how much pollution industry can put into the air.

Featured Event: [The Jason Motte Foundation 5K](#)

June 19-28, 2020

St. Louis, MO

Details: The mission of the Jason Motte Foundation is to provide comfort and care where there is a need for those affected, either directly or indirectly, by cancers of all kinds. The Jason Motte Foundation uses funds raised to continue projects such as updating treatment centers and providing trips to Spring Training for pediatric oncology patients

Featured Event: [South Wake FCA Virtual Race](#)

July 11-18, 2020

Holly Springs, NC

Details: Their mission is to lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and his church. They pursue their vision and mission through the strategy of "to and through the coach." They seek ministry first to coaches hearts, marriages and families. Then, when ready, they minister through coaches to their fellow coaches, teams and athlete leaders.



NEXT ISSUE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

COMING SOON



Full of content for the endurance sports industry, *RaceTimes* is a digital magazine that delivers featured articles, awareness of brands and products, and announcements of upcoming events and races. Published six times a year, *RaceTimes* targets a demographic of up to 700,000 athletes and race organizers.

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