

# **E-BULLETIN**

## **29 APRIL 2020**



# **VIRTUAL RELAYS**



# **THE REAL MCCOY?**

## Chairman Chat

### Phil Reay

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*Phil joined the club in 2010 and from 2016-18 was the Men's Team captain. Outside of running he works in Marketing, Sales and Business development roles. Phil enjoys long distance running and has completed over 59 marathons, including the ultramarathon Marathon des Sables in 2016.*

[chairman@readingroadrunners.org](mailto:chairman@readingroadrunners.org)

There's a moment in every race when things get a little bit tougher. The stage of the race enters a new phase physically and mentally. It's a phase when the beginning is becoming a memory yet the finish line feels far away. It's normal to have a wobble, to struggle or have a little bit of self-doubt. In these challenging parts of a race, I manage by doing the right things in the moment I'm in – keep a consistent steady pace, stay healthily fuelled, harness the support from runners and spectators around me – and by doing so knowing that eventually I'll overcome the challenge. I don't think about getting to the finish line, I let the finish line come to me.

Our fabulous volunteers are consistently delivering events that are keeping us connected. Whether you've taken part or are virtually supporting, the encouragement and togetherness has been the backbone on which managing through this difficult period is built upon.

Thank you to Men's Team Captain, **Jamie Smith**, for managing the TVXC virtual races. With over 800 participants it was no easy task to manage, track and produce the results. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing the results from over 100 of our members come in via our social media channels. There's more on the event in this ebulletin. The next virtual event from our captains is the timed mile, so please look out for details of that and I look forward to seeing the results and camaraderie of the team. If you've an idea for a virtual team event then please contact our captains Jamie and Sam at [teamcaptains@readingroadrunners.org](mailto:teamcaptains@readingroadrunners.org)

Many thanks to our coaches who continue to stay connected with members offering tips, advice and virtual coaching. **Katie Gumbrell** will be hosting a virtual strength and circuits training on Wednesdays at 7pm, and **Peter Higgs** is hosting a 'Pack of Cards' exercise session at 11am on Sunday. Please contact [coach@readingroadrunners.org](mailto:coach@readingroadrunners.org) for more information.

Who likes Curry? Who likes Karaoke? Well our wonderful Social Secretary, **Liz Johnson** has another event for you this Saturday – virtual Curry-oke. Please see the Facebook event page or contact Liz at [socialsec@readingroadrunners.org](mailto:socialsec@readingroadrunners.org) for more details. Thanks also to Liz, Sam and **Emma Caswell** for their energy and work on the bingo night last Saturday. The kindness and generosity of our members really is very humbling. It says a lot about all of us, that in these uncertain times where many of us are having difficult moments we still find the heart to help others. We've so far managed to raise well over £2,500 for our club charity, Parenting Special Children. Incredible.

I've a feeling of belonging and a pride in being a member of Reading Roadrunners that strengthens every week. Together as one team of 587 members, let's continue to unite against Covid-19, to be kind to each other, to follow the government instructions and to do the right things in the moment we're in.

Phil

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## Editor's Note

**Ben Fasham**

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Dear all,

I hope you're all well and not too chilly in this current weather we're having to endure. I'm sure we'll be back to complaining about running in the heat soon enough.

As ever our members have been as productive in their writing activities as in their running, so we've another healthy crop of articles for you. There's a double helping of advice from **Coach Alexa**, while Ultra Running legend **Kathy Tytler** looks over her years taking part in Compton 40. Katie Gumbrell has some thoughts on race cancellations, while we hear from long-distance member **Belinda Tull** on how the Lockdown has been going in South Africa. On top of **Mark Apsey's** weekly recipe, we've **Sam** and **Jamie** reporting on the Virtual TVXC Relay – so you can see, it's been another busy week in Green Vest Land!

And there's plenty more to come – Jamie has news below of a Virtual Mile Time Trial (please do email me for more details if you're not on Facebook), and meanwhile, here's a word from the Social Secretary...

## Curry-oke Night – Saturday May 2nd

**Liz Johnson**

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Yep, that's right, this Saturday we bring you Zoom Curry-oke! 🥳 "Huzzah!", I hear your cry....

From 7pm, join us for a bit of a sing along whilst we eat our curries (unfortunately you have to provide this yourself) and have a giggle.

If you'd like to attend, please let me know so we have a rough idea of who to expect. You don't have to sing if you don't want to - you can join and just sit back and enjoy the 'show' 🥳 The Zoom link to use can be found on the club Facebook page, but please contact me or Sam for more details if you are not a Facebook member.

The link below is to a pretty good karaoke YouTube channel, Sing King, which may give you some ideas for songs. During the night, everyone else will mute whilst the performer uses something like Sing King to entertain us all.

It will probably sound terrible 🤔 but that's not the point. It will be a chance for some fun on the night that should have been our Spring Do!

There is no cost to take part but as always, a small donation to Parenting Special Children is very welcome.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/singkingkaraoke?fbclid=IwAR3ZTJc0n4xll5x42lvXTkEmOgTHV6BvqVjBgggvu7iFbbEW4bmNIka1mRO>

Liz

[socialsec@readingroadrunners.org](mailto:socialsec@readingroadrunners.org)

## Women's Captain's Report

Sam Whalley

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*Sam joined the club in 2015 just after her first marathon. She has 3 teenagers, 2 dogs and one husband; she works part-time as a secondary school teacher. She is a huge fan of XC running, doesn't mind swimming and is a fair-weather cyclist. When not running, she will quite often be baking.*

[teamcaptains@readingroadrunners.org](mailto:teamcaptains@readingroadrunners.org)

This week it has mostly been about the Thames Valley inter-club relays. Chairman Phil was keen for some local competition, and following the hype of the national road relays a couple of weeks ago, Jamie and I wanted to create an event that would motivate even more of our members to take part.

I sent out the invitation to clubs, explaining how it would work, but Jamie did absolutely everything else, which was no mean feat given over 800 participants, some questionable entries, and clubs taking a while to collect their data. He did a great job, and feedback from the other clubs was fantastic. Well done to Jamie, especially, and to everyone who took part.

Bringing home the women's team, which was six to score, were **Nikki Gray** (19:23), **Katherine Sargeant** (19:31), **Sarah McDade** (19:53), **Jane Copland** (20:08), **Mel Shaw** (20:35), and **Hannah Green** (20:36). The women's team was first - amazing - and Nikki Gray was third overall!

There were four needed to score in each of the ten-year age categories. The first four FV40s were **Noora Eresmaa** (23:16), **Naomi Gardner** (23:22), **Caroline Jackson** (23:33), and **Angela Burley** (24:21). The FV40 team was sixth out of the 14 teams - well done!

The first four FV50s were Katherine Sargeant, **Lorna McLeod** (23:51), **Tracy Jenkins** (25:35), and **Catherine Leather** (25:58). The FV50 team was third - fantastic!

Scoring for the FV60s were **Gill Gillard** (25:18), **Angelique Haswell** (27:42), **Heather Bowley** (28:42), and **Maureen Sweeney** (32:31). The FV60 team was second, which is brilliant, and proof that it is always worth having a go! The female vets team, with all age groups combined, was sixth.

As well as the relays this week, Catherine Leather has run her own version of the missed Boston marathon, and (yes, we are a running club but I felt it worth mentioning that) **Juliet Fenwick** cycled 100 miles on her static bike in the garage, raising over £400. This only took her 6 hours and 58 minutes too - wow! Having spent ten minutes on a static bike last week, which felt like an hour, I am even more impressed by this. Thank goodness we can still exercise outside!

Next up we will have the Roger Bannister Anniversary Mile - serious and fun options - and a 'something for everyone' relay. Details to follow.

## Thames Valley Virtual Relays Report

### Jamie Smith – Mens' Captain

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#### Reading Roadrunners dominate!

In what was an amazing 5 days' participation, 109 club members took part in this virtual 5km challenge. This was more than any of the other clubs that took part – the next closest was Maidenhead AC with 101 members taking part. I hope that everyone found this to be a fun event, that it got you excited and challenged everyone to go out with some added motivation.

The obvious reason for putting on these virtual events is so that we can provide something exciting and to break up the monotony of training/running which it really could become. Hopefully by holding this challenge we can encourage a few more members to turn out in the TVXC over the winter and any of the other club competitions that we take part in.

In total 810 runners took part from 13 of the 14 clubs, the only club not taking part being Bracknell Forest Runners who hosted a Dawn to dusk relay on the same day. It has also been great to see how other clubs have followed our lead and copied the events we have put on. This turnout of 810 is more than double the normal average attendance at a TVXC cross-country league fixture, and this without Bracknell Forest Runners taking part.

As a club we not only had the most runners taking part but we also dominated the results, as shown below. I think the one that all the clubs were looking to win was the mixed 12 (made up of 6 females and 6 males) which I was happy to see us win! Our 109 participants were made up of 50 female and 59 male club members.

Male fastest 6 - 1st (worth noting **Jack Gregory** fastest overall)

Female fastest 6 - 1st

Combined fastest 6 male & female - 1st

M vet 40 - 1st

W vet 40 - 6th

M vet 50 - 1st

W vet 50 - 3rd

W vet 60 - 1st

M fastest 6 vets (across vets age groups) - 1st

W fastest 6 vets (across vets age groups) - 6<sup>th</sup>

There was so many PB's, best runs for a long time and returns from injury to list so well done to everyone!

One thing to take note of is that top 12 male combined time was 3:21:13 in this competition, which was very similar to our 3:21:05 in the Virtual national road relays. Showing the incredible strength to the club depth currently, we had four new runners making the top 12 this time around.

I think we should all as a club be incredibly proud of these results, and to have so many club members get out and do their best in the name of our club.

To finish I just wanted to share some of the feedback we have received back from the other clubs who took part, and the positive impact we as a club are having on the local clubs as well:



“Windle Valley Runners loved the Virtual 5km and thank you to all involved in organising and to the other clubs for taking part! Looking forward to lining up with the multi-coloured club shirts soon (and the cake) but thank you again and stay safe in the meantime.”

“On behalf on Sandhurst Joggers, thank you so much for organising this event.

We think the amount of runners taking part is fantastic, and it was our objective to get as many of our runners involved as possible - creating something positive during the lock-down.

Hopefully, we can do this again.”

“Thank you, Jamie, and the Reading Roadrunners team, this was an excellent event and such great participation by all clubs, the Handy Cross team loved it! Looking forward to the real thing - summer or winter! :-)”

“Thank you, Jamie and the RR Team, for organising this great event and collating results. MAC really enjoyed it and really created a team spirit and got loads of members out to take part. I am just working on the non xc runners now to come and join us at xc! 😊”

“Thank you so much for all the time and hard work you put into this, Datchet Dashers had a whale of a time! It was brilliant seeing them proudly rocking their club kit on social media for the event. Looking forward to the next one!”

So, we have now run from Dawn till Dusk, and run multiple 5kms. We have listened and next week we run a virtual timed mile effort – with an additional category of fastest fancy dress. This was also chosen for next week as the 6<sup>th</sup> May is the anniversary of Sir Roger Bannister running the first sub 4-minute mile.

I am wondering if the pantomime horse that I saw someone running in yesterday while out on my run was a club member getting some secret practice in!

Stay safe!

Let's go Green Vests – Jamie

## Post-run stretching plan

Alexa Duckworth-Briggs

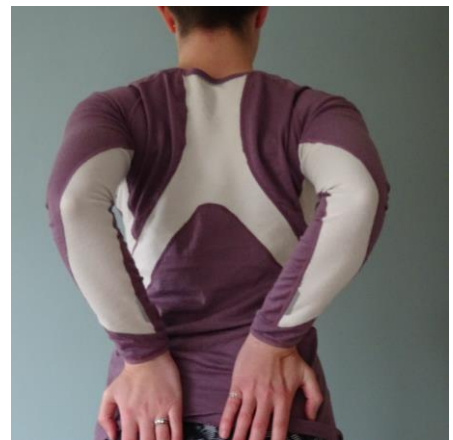
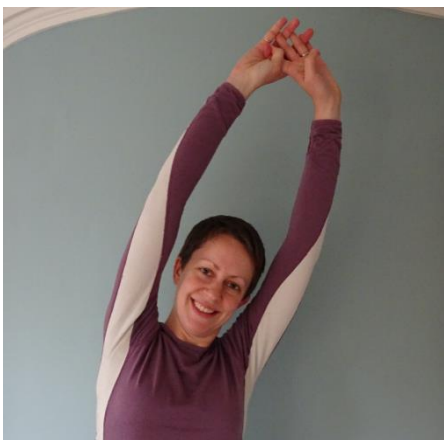
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### Tips

- Hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds
- Don't "bounce" in the stretch, hold still
- Remember to do both sides!

### Upper Body

- Arms up stretch, banana bending over to each side
- Side to side arm swing including a hold either side, keeping the arms nice and loose
- Hands on your lower back, pulling your elbows closer together behind you to stretch the chest



### Standing on one leg

- Heel to bum quad stretch, tuck tail bone under so you feel the stretch all the way up to across the hip, keeping the knees together (*left, middle*)
- Shin (just above the ankle) rests above opposite knee, squat with standing leg, flex the ankle so the toes move towards the shin and push top knee away to stretch glutes... (*right*)



### Standing stretches

- Lunge forwards and tuck tail bone under and shift your weight forwards to stretch the hip flexors across the front of the hip
- Short step forwards, front leg straight, hinge forward at hips to stretch hamstrings. Keep the foot flat on the floor
- Long step sideways, lunge to one side to stretch inner thigh



### Leaning on a wall

- Calf stretch with back leg straight
- Calf stretch with back knee slightly bent
- Curl toes of back leg up the back of the other heel, then stretch the calf by shifting weight forwards and bending both knees. This is easier to do with soft soled shoes on (like trainers or running shoes)



### And to finish...

- Roll down slowly one vertebra at a time to touch your toes, let the arms and head go floppy. Roll back up slowly and with control, re-stacking your spine.



## The Compton 40 – A Brief History

Kathy Tytler

After two consecutive years of completing the Compton 40 in 11 hours 02 minutes – slow but consistent! - Lucy, the race director, kindly suggested that I might like to start early, especially as the race time limit is now 10 hours. So it was a 7 o'clock start for me, Pat and a local runner all wanting to run 40 miles. Well, it was about 10 or 15 minutes past by the time we'd registered, fixed our numbers and found the gate to the playing field was locked. So we set off up the road.

Compton 40 is one of my favourite races. I have run in a variety of conditions and my performance has varied over the years. The first year I ran at Compton I did the 20 mile "Fun Run". This "Fun Run" tag has now been dropped for the lesser distance. It was rumoured that some people found this ironic description just "Not Funny!" As I have now completed several 40s I still secretly refer to the 20 mile runners as Fun Runners. In the early days the race was run over a different course. Our 20 miles turned into about 26 miles as we blindly followed the wrong group of runners and ended up by Lord Wantage's monument.

The next year four of us - Diane and David Stares, Merv Silk and I - had our first venture into ultra running and entered the 40 mile race and I was hooked. We ran on a cold, wet and windy day which followed a week of hot weather. At a checkpoint in the later stages of the race we saw a runner dressed in vest and shorts showing signs of hypothermia and being very argumentative as the checkpoint marshals attempted to stop him from running. A good lesson there, if you travel away to run always take kit to cope with every weather condition.

The Compton 40 has now settled on a very convenient figure of eight course which allows runners to choose between distances right up to 19 and a half miles. It takes a degree of mental toughness to set off for another 20 miles when everyone around is heading for home, a hot meal and warm shower. It has also been held on Easter Saturday for a number of years. Not only does the date of Easter change each year, but the conditions can change a lot in spring. We have run in blistering heat and cold snow. We have run before the clocks go forward, which has meant finishing in the dark for me on a couple of occasions.



The year I won this the race ... I'll just repeat this, **The year I won this race**, the weather was particularly bad. Now running has given me years of pleasure but not much in terms of prize-winning glory so I hope you will forgive me if I dwell on this particular event. In 1998 I was first female (overall, not just first female of a certain age). My triumph must owe something to the weather conditions, for the first 20 miles it was raining, possibly heavy and persistent rain, so at 19 and a half miles most runners decided they had had enough, but not me. I'd started a 40 mile race, so I'll finish! The weather deteriorated to even heavier and more persistent rain at times accompanied by wind and diagonal hailstones. The second 20 miles is very exposed in places, there is little shelter up there on The Berkshire Downs. Survival was my main ambition as I plodded on alone. My only human contact was those stalwarts at the checkpoints, who were joined by a few runners who were seeking shelter and a lift back. As I ran into West Ilsley, I had never seen this place look so dark and depressing, but this was where a series of miracles started. I heard footsteps behind and I was caught up by a young lad who slowed to run with me through the village. He told me how great it was that I was running Compton 40 and how it was his ambition to run this race when he was old enough. I don't know who you are, but you must be in your 20s now, so I hope that you are running this race and I

would like you to know how much your company lifted my spirits that day. Then, briefly, the sun came out, there was a rainbow and the raindrops on the bushes alongside the track sparkled like liquid diamonds. I was alone now, but I was singing with joy.

The third miracle occurred when I reached the checkpoint at East Ilsley. The marshal told me that I was the first woman to reach the checkpoint. It dawned on me that I was winning! I just had to make it to the end to get the prize. It was amazing how quickly this information energized me. I felt like I was sprinting through the mud to the finish. My time was 8 hours 46 minutes 03 seconds.

The next year the race was won by Hilary Walker in a much faster time, however my name is there on the winners' trophy. In 2000 I ran my best time ever 7 hours 42 minutes 04 seconds, achieving my personal target of sub 8 hours.

There was no race in 2001 due to foot and mouth. In 2002 I had my first dark finish in 10 hours 29 minutes. The clocks had not yet gone forward, so we had an hour less light. I was not last when I left East Ilsley, there was a group of four runners behind me, but I was on my own. The long bridleways did not cause me too much trouble. The light was fading and the trees and bushes alongside began to take on the shape of animals and monsters, but I am used to that from night running and walking. It was the bit of woodland before the road to the school that caused me problems. Paths lead to dead ends – I should have taken the road route like those who had been behind me.

When I did not arrive at the finish at my expected time a marshal set off down the bridleway to find me. He met a group of scouts and asked them if they had seen a woman running. They said No, but looked at him with suspicion. He realised that he did appear a bit dodgy, and didn't know whether their "No" meant they hadn't seen me or were trying to protect me from this dangerous looking man who was searching for me along the dark footpaths.

In the following years my times continued to deteriorate. In 2010 it was very wet and muddy underfoot. That was the year that I rolled down the bank to the bridge across Ginge Brook, doing a good impression of covering a chocolate swiss roll. 2011 was very hot. I had run/ walked the Welly Boot the week before and suffered badly from blisters. My feet were OK at Compton, but my time was slow again.

This year I had planned to put some effort into my training, but had at least 3 weeks off running with a flu bug and although I had felt much better for 2 weeks, I was unsure as to whether I had 40 miles of running in me. I admit to thinking that I could always stop after the 20 mile "Fun Run", but I didn't need to. I had a very pleasant run, in cool drizzly weather. I didn't feel too much pain, I didn't feel too tired, I was comfortable throughout. I enjoyed the route and was very pleased with my time.

Next Year: I will train well! PB?

#### **My Compton 40 results: "The Older I Get the Better I Was" or "Is There Room for Improvement?"**

<b>1997</b>	<b>8.40</b>	My First Compton 40	<b>2006</b>	<b>9.49.22</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>8.46.03</b>	First Female!	<b>2009</b>	<b>10.52.37</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>7.42.04</b>	Best Time	<b>2010</b>	<b>11.02.21</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>10.29.00</b>		<b>2011</b>	<b>11.02</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>8.40.35</b>		<b>2012</b>	<b>9.45</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>9.00.12</b>			

## On race cancellations

Katie Gumbrell



Here is a selection of the Reading Half Marathon medals we have in our house. They span over 20 years, relationship endings, relationship beginnings, foot and mouth, snow cancellations, injuries, recoveries, PBs and bereavements.

They represent countless miles of training, tears, elation, resolutions and hard work. They're a token to remember what we did to get them.

I'm most proud of my 2018 medal: the year the race wasn't held because overnight snow made the course and travel unsafe, leaving the race untenable. But that was the year I'd worked the hardest. I'd double-trained: once with my fantastic athletes and once with my sister, pushing her in her wheelchair.

Yes we ran the course eventually and yes, we finished the Maidenhead Half Marathon later that year, but the medal doesn't represent that. It represents the hard work, not the achievement.

I know you're disappointed that your race has been cancelled or postponed. I know that you understand why. I also know that the work you put in to get there has changed you for the better and, as your coach, I am so, so proud.



## Lockdown in South Africa

Belinda Tull

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After returning from a 3 day trip to the UK mid-March to renew our tourist visas for here in South Africa, we were forced into 2 weeks of self-isolation by the South African Government as we had flown into South Africa from a 'high risk' country (the UK & USA). This meant staying at home - no going to the shops or anywhere where we would come into contact with other people. Luckily our kind neighbours offered to do any shopping we needed. They also made us a trifle and bought us some Protea flowers (the national flowers of South Africa) and passed them over the garden fence.

This 2-week period was followed by 5 weeks of Lockdown in South Africa. As of today (27<sup>th</sup> April 2020) there have been 87 deaths from the Corona Virus in South Africa compared to nearly 21,00 in the UK (which is a much smaller country). Despite the far fewer cases here in South Africa the lockdown restrictions are far harsher than in the UK. Exercise is banned. People can't even walk their dogs. The police and army are patrolling the streets to make sure

people adhere to these rules. All non-essential shops are closed. There is no on-line shopping. The only shops that are open are supermarkets and chemists. Parks and beaches are closed. Churches, restaurants and hotels are all closed. No alcohol or cigarette sales are permitted. These restrictions are the strictest in the world, probably because the National Health Service here in South Africa isn't as good as the NHS in the UK. Also South Africa has black townships where HIV is common and people's immune systems are low. People live in very cramped conditions in these areas. If the Corona Virus hits the Townships the number of cases would escalate rapidly and the National Health System here in South Africa wouldn't be able to cope. Alcohol is banned as they want to keep the number of alcohol related hospital cases to a minimum (road accidents, accidents at home, violence, etc). Cigarettes are banned as they affect people respiratory system. I can't really understand why exercise is banned though.

Before lockdown we enjoyed Monday and Wednesday cycling with our local mountain biking group in the surrounding mountains and forests. This was always followed by a social coffee. Tuesday mornings usually meant a local run through the Wilderness National Park and on the beach both very close to our house here. Thursday meant meeting up with George Trail Runners for a run in the foothills of the Outeniqua Mountains. Friday after our local Cross fit class we would enjoy a 3km swim in the lake in front of our house. Saturday would be a group run with our local running club followed by coffee. Happy days!



In lockdown here in South Africa, Graham and I have taken to running around our house for exercise. 180 laps gives us 10km. With steep steps at the front and back of our small holiday home, you can't run more than 5 meters without turning 90 degrees or having steps to negotiate. It is therefore difficult to run – it is more a jog/walk. I listen to audiobooks or podcast to avoid the monotony of so many laps. We also do a daily



Cross Fit class at home with a workout sent to us from our Cross fit instructor who is sending it to everybody in the class via the Telegram App. She sends a video to demonstrate the exercises. We can all keep in touch on this App and are motivating each other. As we can't buy anything other than essential food so we can't just go out and buy or order on line a turbo trainer or treadmill.

We have survived over a month of this daily routine. It has probably been made worse as we had 2 weeks of self-isolation before starting these very strict lockdown regulations.



I am pleased for my tutoring work at this time. I am tutoring 3 students in the UK via Skype in Mathematics. Two are GCSE students and one is A Level. I am glad to see them as I have not seen any of our friends since our return to South Africa 6 weeks ago and am missing seeing people. I am filling my time by getting ahead on my Maths lessons preparation. I have also 'met up' with some friends via Zoom and reconnected with my UK book club via Zoom and am reading again.

I am desperate to break free and go for a run or cycle. A glass of wine in the evening would be nice too! I am very jealous of the freedom you have in the UK. Being able to go for a run or cycle. Being able to buy wine/beer and on-line shopping. I think the lockdown in the UK is more sustainable. I feel the lockdown here is too harsh and people are here are down, at a low ebb and struggling with living in these harsh lockdown conditions.



## Mobility, Strength, and Balance challenges

### Alexa Duckworth-Briggs

These challenges will test out your mobility, strength and balance - giving you some ideas of what to work on to help support and improve your running!

#### Mobility Challenges

You can measure the distances on all these challenges to track progress!

Using the corner of a wall or doorframe drop into a lunge with your knee on the floor and back leg going behind the wall/through the door. Make sure you flatten your lower back against the wall. If you feel a stretch across the front of the hip here or your front leg can't get to vertical then you need to work on hip mobility!



Stand barefoot with your toes just touching the wall. Bend that knee forwards until it also touches the wall. If that's easy move the foot back an inch and try again. If you can't get the knee to the wall at all you definitely need to work on ankle mobility!

Standing up, reach one arm behind you over the top of your shoulder and the other arm behind you under that arm pit, reach and try to interlink or touch fingers of opposite hands behind your back. Try on both sides! Your fingers should at least be able to touch, ideally be able to interlink, if not work on shoulder mobility.



## Strength Challenges



Sit on a chair, lift one foot off the ground and don't let either arm or hand touch anything. Stand up! Try on the other side too. If you can't stand up or you are wobbly as you try you need to work on leg strength, especially in the glutes.

Plank; your forearms and toes are on the ground and you hover your whole self off the ground whilst engaging your stomach and glutes to maintain a straight line from top of the head to heels. If you can't hold this for 30 seconds you need to work on core strength!





## Balance Challenges

Aim to practice all of these and get to 30 seconds with your eyes closed to improve.



Start by standing on one leg - this should be stable and easy to hold for over a minute (left)

To add to the challenge, then try to spell out your name with your other leg (right)



Then try standing on one leg with your eyes closed! (left)

Also try a small single leg knee bend, keeping the knee driving forwards (not inwards or outwards) and keeping the hands on the hips to check the pelvis stays level and doesn't dip to the side. (right)





## Apsey's Recipes

Mark Apsey

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*Mark is a self-employed chef specialising in high-end dinner parties, and a former Head Chef at L'Ortolan Restaurant in Shinfield – so not only is he one of Berkshire's top runners, but also one of its best culinarians. In a semi-regular series for the E-bulletin, Mark brings us a delicious, healthy recipe. Do let us know if you've tried any of them, and enjoyed them!*

Greetings fellow Roadrunners and budding cooks.

The weather has changed, and with it, I'm sure a number of us will have changed our runs, our meals and even just want something quick and easy to tuck into as soon as you are through the door.

This week it's the turn of something simple, an Italian favourite of mine. Carbonara, but not that typically English thing that is so often done terribly and resembles scrambled eggs. What is that anyway? Carbonara is a dish that any cook can turn around in under 10 minutes.

I will also share my pasta recipe, this is something you're definitely not obliged to make for this, off the shelf pastas are just as good, but a handmade linguine or tagliatelle is actually simpler to make than you may think.

This recipe serves 2 hungry runners.

### For the pasta, if you're making

250g '00' Pasta flour (or plain flour if you can't get Italian flour)

160g Whole egg (about 3 large eggs, if you find yourself a few grams short, you can add a splash of water rather than cracking a whole new egg)

That's it, don't put salt in your dough, put that in the cooking water. It creates a weakness in the pasta.

Mix all the flour and egg together until bound and then continue to kneed until you have an elastic dough. This takes about 15 minutes by hand, or 8 minutes on a machine. If you don't kneed enough you'll struggle to roll it thinly. Roll the pasta into a ball, and then flatten with the palm of your hand into a sort of puck shape. Wrap with cling film and rest in the fridge for around an hour, or up to a day (after this it will begin to oxidise, that's fine, your pasta will just look slightly speckled. This is harmless though). Once your dough is rested, either using a pasta roller or rolling pin, roll the pasta out to long sheets dusting lightly with flour. On a roller, the second thinnest setting should do, if using a rolling pin, as thin as you can make it, you may need to do it in two or three batches and let it have micro rests periodically through rolling. Once you have rolled the pasta out, dust well on both sides with flour and cut into 15-20 lengths. Fold this in half lightly without pressing down so no seams are formed, and then again; this will aid cutting. Cut into thin strands for linguine, and finger thickness strands for tagliatelle. If you're going to

be using them later, my top tip would be to blanch them in boiling water for a couple of seconds, then out into a bowl of cold water or under a running tap to refresh. This just helps to aid them not sticking together after going to all that effort to roll them out by hand. Alternatively you can use shop brought dried pasta.

#### For the carbonara

This can all be done whilst waiting to boil for water and cook your pasta.

100g pancetta lardons (or smoked streaky bacon cut into small cubes)

5g cracked black pepper, or freshly milled pepper

10g olive oil

1 onion - diced

2 cloves garlic - finely chopped

2 egg yolk

50g grated Parmesan (ideally the fresh stuff, not that horrific dried stuff that doesn't go in the fridge). I use a vegan one on the account of the fact I can't eat milk.

On a medium heat, fry the bacon and pepper in the olive oil until the bacon has turned crispy. Keep the fat, this is critical (and good for helping sustain those long runs). Add the diced onion and garlic and turn the heat down, cook until soft, then remove from the heat entirely. By now the pasta water should have come to the boil. Ensure it is seasoned well, if using your own fresh pasta this will cook for just 2-3 minutes, if you're using store-bought pasta follow the packet instructions. Whilst the pasta is cooking, place the Parmesan on top of the bacon mix in preparation, with the egg yolks on top like a little nest to protect them from any heat. When your pasta is cooked, don't just pour it through a colander - the pasta water is critical, it forms your sauce. Simply remove the pasta with tongs straight into your bacon mix, then ladle around 50-60ml of pasta water in, mix it all up and serve immediately. Don't worry about the eggs being raw, the heat of the pasta will cook them. Grate some Parmesan over the top if you like.

Happy cooking

(sorry there are no images this week everyone, but I would love to see what you manage to make, back to a baking recipe next week)

