



**THREE
STEPS
AHEAD**

**GO
RUN
NOW**

RUN FIT

MIND FIT

YOU FIT

NICK BISHOP

INTRODUCTION

Running has always been close to my heart...from my formative years at Primary School, and winning the Victor Ludorum at School Sports day, to Senior School and winning my first County Vest. Then in the 1970's as a member of Manchester Athletics Club.

I have never stopped running, although I had a break from the competitive Club scene until reconnecting in 2001 with Wilmslow Running Club.

People have always fascinated me...what makes them tick...how to develop potential. Some may stem from my time in business, managing teams of upwards of two hundred...much from a lifetime in sport.

I started my coaching journey in 2010, when a series of injuries sidelined me, and I have not stopped since. A huge leap of faith occurred in 2021, and my first visit to Iten (the home of Champions) in Kenya. Life affirming and life changing and now with my own team. Imani Running Team. Our motto..."Dare to believe...everything is possible".

You can read more here...[Improving Lives... Developing Talent — Nick Bishop Coaching](#). Our quest is to build Champions. Stop for a moment, and ask yourself "why not"? Too often in life, we don't aim high enough.

My visits are always a great source of information, mixing with Patrick Sang, Coach to Eliud Kipchoge, Faith Kipyegon, and many other world-class athletes.

INTRODUCTION



Over the years, I have read many books relating to running...some resonated, some were too complex, while others did not give me what I needed.

In this guide, I have tried to explain the science of running in a simpler way yet still providing the underlying rationale to create an understanding that will allow you to develop your running.

Numerous interval sessions are included to guide you.

The psychology, and also nutrition...everything that you need. Ready to start?

Never stop working to be “Your best version of YOU”.

COACH NICK

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MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Coaching athletes or coaching individuals or teams in any sport can be incredibly satisfying. I am fortunate to coach many athletes across a number of groups and clubs, and across many continents.

It's not about the ability, but being able to see athletes develop, improve, and reach their goals. Watching someone go from point "x" to point "y", brings a sense of pride and accomplishment, in both coach and athlete.



On a personal level, the bond that develops between coaches and athletes can be strong and deeply rewarding. Many coaches appreciate the trust and respect they build with their athletes and enjoy mentoring them through various stages of life.

Naturally, coaches will play a critical role in an athlete's success. Celebrating wins, whether it's a small personal best or a championship, brings a sense of achievement and satisfaction for a coach.

Sport teaches resilience, discipline, and teamwork, and coaches value their ability to instill these traits in their athletes.

Coaches enjoy the camaraderie and fun that comes with being part of a team...the shared goals, support, and sense of community that comes with working toward something collectively.

MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Coaching often pushes individuals to learn more, whether it's understanding new techniques, sports psychology, or communication skills...getting "buy in". There are many traditional sessions that are considered the blueprint for athletic success...but why not discover the key sessions that work for you and your athletes? It's never a never a one size fits all!

The chance to help others reach their full potential. Sometimes finding a nugget of potential and developing that ability in the athlete.

Finally, the excitement of competition, the energy of the day, and the thrill of the race can be very special.

Each coach has their own unique set of motivations, but these aspects collectively make coaching an enriching and highly satisfying experience for most who pursue it...never stop helping others being "their best version of themselves"!

"Coaching is about taking your athletes on a journey and being with them every step of the way...advice, mentorship, support and so much more."

RUNNING & WHAT WE CAN LEARN

The origins of running can be traced back to the early stages of human evolution. Running is a fundamental human movement that developed simply as a survival strategy and a means of simply getting around. It's fair to say that there were most likely higher levels of fitness within humans then, than now. Consider how our body shapes have changed! Before the modern world, with all of its means of transport, getting around on foot was the only way.

Running played a crucial role in the hunting and gathering lifestyle of early humans. Our ancestors would have relied on running to chase down and hunt their prey over long distances, using “persistence hunting,” a method that exhausts the prey until it can be caught. Running was essential for securing food and survival.

Some doubts are had over the truth of “persistence hunting” but when I talk all things running with my group in Kenya, it is apparent that running became a tool for both survival and for getting to school. Hunting the land for food and for getting to school and home safely...and barefoot. The feet adapting to the terrain underneath, and the most natural way of building a strong core. There are arguments that while modern running shoes have helped to protect our feet, that with the modern carbon plates, injuries are just around the corner.

Some researchers argue that humans evolved to become natural long-distance runners. They point to features such as our ability to sweat, which allows for effective regulation of body heat during longer runs, and the development of the Achilles tendons that act as springs, to enable efficient running... think of how modern shoe technology works!

RUNNING & WHAT WE CAN LEARN

As human society developed, running took on various cultural and recreational roles. Running was incorporated into religious rituals, games, and competitions in ancient civilizations. Think Greece, where the first Olympic Games included running events. Running was also used for military training and as a form of exercise. As we have evolved, modern gym equipment and many other fitness regimes have developed.

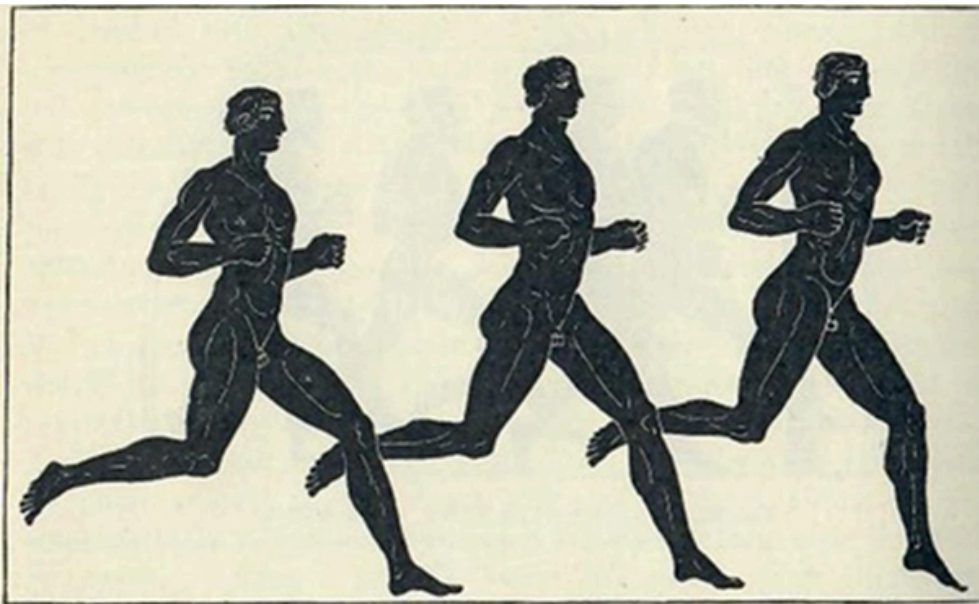
Running as a sport gained popularity throughout history. Track and field events, including both sprinting and long-distance running, have been a part of the modern Olympic Games since their revival in the late 19th century. The marathon has its origins in ancient Greece and has become one of the most iconic of running events. “Have you ever run a marathon” is an often-asked question! It’s not for everyone! I sometimes worry when people obsess about this one distance, and sometimes to the detriment of other distances. Perhaps it’s more relevant to ask if they have ever run a track mile...few will have!

In the 20th century, recreational running gained significant popularity. The jogging movement of the 1970’s, led to a surge in the number of people taking up running for health and fitness. Now we have a significant growth in running clubs and of people taking part through the parkrun movement.

Today, running is a widely practiced activity with a diverse range of motivations. People run for exercise, stress relief, competition, social groups, and charitable causes. Marathons and other races draw participants from around the world, and there is a thriving community of runners sharing their experiences through the modern world of social media.

RUNNING & WHAT WE CAN LEARN

It can be strange then to look back to running with its deep evolutionary roots, serving as a survival tool for early humans...then over time, how it has evolved into a recreational activity, a competitive sport, and a significant aspect of modern fitness and culture...in part to get away from the mass use of motorised transport...almost a full shift to our beginnings.



The question then becomes, why we run, and what are the benefits?

Humans run for a variety of reasons, and running has been a fundamental part of our evolutionary history and daily lives for thousands of years. The reasons can be varied between individuals, but the benefits are worth remembering!

Physical Fitness: Running is an excellent way to improve cardiovascular fitness, endurance, and overall physical health. It helps to strengthen the heart and lungs, burn calories, and maintain a healthy body weight. No surprise then that regular running has been associated with increased life expectancy and a reduced risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes.

RUNNING & WHAT WE CAN LEARN

Running engages various muscle groups, including your legs, core, and even upper body to some extent. It also contributes to bone density, which can help prevent osteoporosis.

It can improve lung capacity and overall respiratory health. It helps you breathe more deeply and efficiently, which can be beneficial for individuals with asthma or other respiratory conditions.

Regular runners tend to live longer, healthier lives. The combination of cardiovascular benefits, weight management, and overall improved health can contribute to a longer lifespan. There is also an immune system boost...moderate intensity running can strengthen the immune system, making you less susceptible to illness. This is the case for the vast majority, but there can be occasions at the elite level, and where athletes are so highly trained, that their extreme training regimes can leave them on a tight rope between illness and success.

Mental Health: Running can have significant mental health benefits. It releases endorphins, which are natural mood elevators, reducing stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. It can also provide a sense of accomplishment and boost self-esteem. For many years now, GP's have been prescribing parkrun to combat stress, depression etc.

Running can promote better sleep patterns, helping you fall asleep faster and enjoy deeper, more restorative sleep.

Some studies suggest that running can improve cognitive function, including memory and decision-making skills. It may also reduce the risk of cognitive decline as you age.

RUNNING & WHAT WE CAN LEARN

Weight Management: Running is an effective way to burn calories, making it a key component of weight management and weight loss programs. That said, it's important to recognise that running is for all, and should not be seen as only for those that some may deem to be of "athletic physique".

While it's agreed that weight will have a bearing on performance, it should never be seen as a barrier to participation. There are healthy weights and as athletic performance swings more to "competition level", a view on the right levels of body composition: BMI and body fat. They can both have flaws, the key being what is right for YOU.

On occasions, there are some that see performance improve with weight loss, and often in a linear way in percentage terms. Care should always be taken, particularly as weight loss becomes close to a loss in power/weight ratio.

Social Interaction: Many people enjoy running with others, which provides an opportunity for social interaction, camaraderie, and building friendships through running clubs, group runs, or organised races. Recent years has seen a huge growth in running groups, as opposed to the more standard running clubs. The latter can be seen as elitist by some beginners, yet for the vast majority, nothing could be further from the truth!

Competition, Challenge and Achievement: Running offers a wide range of competitive opportunities, from local 5k races to marathons and ultramarathons...the latter becoming one of the fastest areas of growth.

RUNNING & WHAT WE CAN LEARN

Competing allows runners to set personal goals to challenge themselves, providing a strong sense of accomplishment and satisfaction...tracking their progress over time and striving to beat their personal bests. The prospect of an upcoming race can serve as a powerful motivator, encouraging runners to train harder and stay committed to their fitness routines. Having a race to train for provides structure to a runner's routine and gives them a clear purpose, making workouts more meaningful.

Exploration: Running allows people to explore their surroundings and discover new places, whether it's in their local neighborhood, a nearby trail, or a distant destination while traveling. It's a great way to get about...Often and when still running, I would always run for an hour before breakfast while on holiday, always planning my day around what I had found! Trail running, in particular, allows individuals to connect with nature and experience the tranquility of natural settings, which may have ordinarily gone unnoticed!

It's important to note that people have different motivations for running, and what drives one person may not apply to another. Whether it's for physical health, mental well-being, competition, or pure enjoyment, running can be a versatile and rewarding activity that benefits individuals in various ways. Many people simply enjoy the sensation of running and find it to be an enjoyable and fulfilling activity.

It's essential to start slowly if you're new to running, gradually increasing your intensity and duration to avoid injury. Additionally, consult with a healthcare professional if you have any underlying health concerns or medical conditions before starting a running regimen.

Remember that the benefits of running are most pronounced when it becomes a consistent part of your lifestyle.