



**THE MIDLAND MASTER ATHLETE
WELCOME TO NEWSLETTER 279 – April 2024**



Cover Star: Dave Williams in Torun

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the April 2024 Edition of the MMAC Newsletter. Out of the blocks and straight into the pick of phase of our Chair and then we have a hidden Agenda for our AGM. Part 1 is our track and field section where we revisit our own Midland Vets track and field league and round up all things European. We steam down the back straight with our annual Road Race and Run Walks Section as Part 2 features the ever popular Colin Simpson Memorial Handicap as well as the Midlands 5k and 10k walk reports. We dig down in the dirt in Part 3 with our Annual XC Report and British and Irish XC International before we come round the top bend and into the home straight with some speed play from top coach John Danahay and some marathon tips from Team England Masters Penny Barber. Our fine treasurer Martin Wilkinson is on the money to take us through the finishing line.

Matthew Long



CHAIR'S NOTES

Hi, I hope you are well and looking forward to a summer season of athletics. You will have seen our AGM is scheduled for the 30th April, where we will be electing the committee for 2024/25. We have also updated the constitution to reflect the greater use of email and social media for communication and how the membership process works with Open Track.

We have a small group of dedicated people on the committee, but we could do with additional help. Just a reminder of the committee roles below, some we have people prepared to stand but if you are also interested in helping in one of the roles please get in contact.

Chair	Vice Chairman	Secretary	Membership Secretary
Treasurer	Shop Manager	Walking Secretary	Handicapper
T&F Secretary	Asst. T&F Secretary	Road & CC. Secretary	
Officials Secretary	Media website	Records Co-ordinator	
Newsletter Editor	Asst. Editor		
Team/Managers:	Cross Country, International, Inter-area T&F, Vets League		
Welfare Officers:	Male & female		

At the moment we have in Martin Wilkinson and myself, two people who are doing multiple jobs on the committee. Martin has been treasurer now for 10 years and while he says he will continue this year, it would help if someone is prepared to be his assistant and if someone is prepared to take over the shop management. That is receiving the orders and despatching club vests or tracksuits and then deciding when new kit needs to be purchased.

Besides being Chairman for 5 years I have been the membership secretary since 2015. That role requires asking new members for passport details to validate date of birth and nationality. Providing information to team managers, paying England Athletics for our 1st claim members, and dealing with problems that people have renewing or using Open Track. Treasurer and Membership Secretary are two key roles for the club to function and would benefit from succession plans to ensure the club can continue if we become incapacitated. I got involved in 2015 after retiring and wanted to help the organisation, I am sure there may be other people who may be in the same position. Just contact me if you are interested in helping – grahamlamb@gmail.com

I hope to see many of you at our MMAC Championships at Nuneaton on 23th June. A good chance for people to prepare for the British Masters in July at Derby and for those looking to go to Gothenburg in August for the World Masters Championship. Entries for the MMAC championships, I expect to have opened by when the newsletter is published.



Graham Lamb

AGM AGENDA



MIDLAND MASTERS ATHLETIC CLUB 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 30 April 2024 7.30 pm

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM 2023
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's report
5. Presentation of accounts and Treasurer's report
6. Secretary's report
7. Constitution
8. Election of President
9. Election of officers for 2024/2025
10. Fixtures for 2024/2025
11. Date of next meeting TBA (April 2025)

Current committee:

President: Wendy Kane

President elect: Paula Williams

Chair: Graham Lamb

Vice Chairman: Rita Brownlie

Secretary: Jill Lamb

Membership Secretary: Graham Lamb

Treasurer: Martin Wilkinson

Minutes Sec: Vacant

Walking Secretary: Carolyn Derbyshire

Handicapper: Irene Nicolls

T&F Secretary: Elaine Mee

Asst. T&F Secretary: Dean Richardson

Road & CC Secretary: Matt Long

Officials Secretary: Wendy Kane

Media website: Sue Kneill-Boxley

Records Co-ordinator: Irene Nicolls

Committee Members: Irene Nicolls, Marcia
Smedley

Newsletter Editor: Matt Long

Asst. Editor: Vacant

Delegates:

MCAA: Rita Brownlie

EMAA: Irene Nicolls, Graham Lamb

BMAF: Graham Lamb

Team/Managers:

CC International: Mick Smedley

Inter-area T&F: Elaine Mee

MVT&FL: Jon Tibke

Welfare Officers: Jill Lamb, Vacant

PART 1: TRACK AND FIELD

Midland Vets Track and Field League

I hope this finds you fit, well and in training. It's a short reflection on last season's track and field league and the crucial provisional dates for this year's matches. There were great performances of several varieties in last season's matches: outstanding victories, competitive battles, PBs, attempts at new events and as always, a good selection of 'do anything for a team point' effort. And all within a supportive team spirit, even though many of us have only ever met at these events.

That spirit is the key team aspect for us, I think. We can never field enough athletes to compete with the big clubs so we should be realistic about the league table, plus our women athletes are always having to cope with the fact that many MMAC women compete for their first claim club in the league. Given the very individual nature of athletics events I don't think our limited overall team competitiveness should bother us - the league is still a great opportunity.

It was a shame that we did not have enough participants and officials to enter September's cup final, especially as a small but determined team had such a good day at Nuneaton for the 2022 Cup Final, but let's see how things pan out this year.

Providing officials remains a challenge (as it is across our sport) and I'm pleased to say that Darren Lockwood, who joined us last season in the throws department, has stepped forward to assist. We'll still have Helen, my long-suffering wife and I'm hoping we will be able to list the huge officiating experience and racewalk expertise of the Cloughs on our team sheets again. With a bit of officiating done by me as well this season we'll be somewhere near the requirements. Should anyone else be interested, there is funding available to cover official training.

Don't forget that your MMAC membership will be due for renewal!

Ok, some dates (and the first one will be upon us sooner than we think) Please note that these are PROPOSED dates, which were considered at the league AGM. Obviously, clubs have to offer to host and the best we can do in that regard is to co-host with a club with the necessary approved facilities. So, no venues just yet but here's the dates:

Wednesday 8th May- Worcester
Wednesday 12th June- Stratford upon Avon
Wednesday 3rd July- Worcester
Wednesday 31st July- Redditch
Cup Final- 1st September- Nuneaton

As you can see, August has been avoided this year due to the World Masters (all two weeks of it) and British Masters Championships.

John Tibke (Team Manager)

European Indoor Masters – Torun, Poland



Sharon Hutchings (centre above) reports finishing 11th in the F50 shot with 9m15cm and performed well in the javelin to place 14th and 16th the hammer.



Carolyn Derbyshire took a marvellous bronze in the W45 5000m race walk with a season's best of 28:04 and was delighted to have equalled her time from 6 years ago. She placed 4th, just missing a podium spot in the 3km indoors too.

John Moreland took a superb M65 discus Gold with a throw of 51.74m, some 7 metres ahead of silver, and notably some 3 metres ahead of the winner of the M60 group. He was a fine 5th in the weight throw I was 5th and 6th in the hammer (see below).



Dave Williams too a brilliant M55 Marathon Bronze (right)

Our very own President elect Paula Williams (below left) went to the lengths of keeping her own mini diary of the week which reads as follows:

Day 1: Got through 60m heats and semis and in the evening won gold in shot put. Distance wasn't great 12.49m, silver was 12.40m. I was already heavily strapped on my right leg because my Achilles was complaining.

Day 2: 60m finals. Re-strapped and trapped No push out of blocks as weak on the right leg. Managed to hop to a bronze. 8.31s

Day 3: Rest

Day 4: Tried to get done hurdles training in. Achilles screaming - re-strapped and taped. Javelin on one foot managed bronze. 35.26m. 1st- 35.68m, 2nd - 35.42m

Day 5 - Ran it over 2 hurdles and then removed myself from the start line. DNS



PART TWO: ROAD AND RACE WALKING

Colin Simpson Memorial 5-mile Handicap

We gathered on a beautiful Sunday in February for the 5-mile handicap in memory of Colin Simpson, founder member of MMAC. Colin's son, Roger was competing and his daughter, Lyn helping her mother Margaret Simpson and ex-president, Irene Nicholls with the results.

The sun shone on a damp and muddy course running around Babbs Mill Park, Kingshurst, Solihull. The event was hosted by Centurion Runners as part of their Grand Prix series. A total of 72 runners took part in the main race around the lake and gravel tracks negotiating the odd gate and dog walker hazard. Organisation by Centurion RC was superb as was their new race headquarters. A total of 19 finished for the handicap championship. The handicap was based on each runner best 5m time in 2023.



Margaret Simpson presents the trophy.

Sergio Torija, M35, Sphinx AC not only came first in the main race but also first in the handicap with an impressive time of 27:43. Second in the handicap was Kate Evans, F55 Spa Striders with a time of 45:09 and third, Paul Cornock, M60 Centurion beating his handicap time of 57 mins by 35 seconds. Of the four MMAC members running I was pleased to be 5th in the handicap and overall 1st MMAC member and therefore awarded the rather impressive Colin Simpson Memorial trophy and a nice bottle of wine. A big thank you to Centurion Running Club.

Martin Wilkinson



Roger Simpson finishing in 8th position.



The three results officials: Margaret Simpson, Lyn Unsworth (Simpson) and Irene Nicholls

MMAC COLIN SIMPSON MEMORIAL 5 MILE HANDICAP RACE											
held at Kingshurst, Birmingham on Sunday 4th February 2024											
Race No.	MM	Name	Club	Age	5M Best time 2023	H/Cap	Race Posn	Actual Time	H/Cap Time	H/C Posn	
286		Jarek	Madej	Centurion A	M35	41.00	18.00	4	38.10	20.10	1
288		Kate	Evans	Spa Striders	W55	46.12	23.12	13	45.09	21.97	2
280		Paul	Cornock	Centurion	M60	57.00	34.00	18	56.35	22.35	3
274		Sergio	Torija	Sphinx AC	M35	28.03	5.03	1	27.43	22.40	4
273	MM	Martin	Wilkinson	MMAC	M60	40.00	17.00	5	39.40	22.40	5
275		Alan	Marshall	Knowle & D	M50	48.52	25.52	15	48.43	22.91	6
287		Spencer	Davies	Northbrook	M50	35.34	12.34	3	35.31	22.97	7
282	MM	Roger	Simpson	MMAC	M70	45.00	22.00	14	45.14	23.14	8
284	MM	Eric	Robathan	Centurion A	M60	42.24	19.24	12	42.50	23.26	9
278		Christopher	Cleaver	Centurioan	M35	34.00	11.00	2	34.30	23.30	10
276		Siobhan	Cotter	Knowle & D	W55	40.05	17.05	8	40.35	23.30	11
285		Cath	Fenn	Northbrook	W50	40.20	17.20	10	41.21	24.01	12
279		Andrew	Popplewell	Massey Fer	M60	38.30	15.30	6	39.42	24.12	13
272		Graham	Edwards	Knowle & D	M55	39.00	16.00	9	40.38	24.38	14
283	MM	Jeanette	Robathan	Centurion A	W60	40.00	17.00	11	41.44	24.44	15
281		John	Curtin	Centurion A	M70	48.50	25.50	16	51.54	26.04	16
277		Andy	Matthews	Centurion A	M55	37.00	14.00	7	40.16	26.16	17
271		Pauline	Dable	Kennilwort	W75	47.15	24.15	17	52.15	28.00	18
270		Thomas	Dable	Kennilwort	M75	53.50	30.50	19	70.03	39.53	19
The Colin Simpson Memorial Trophy was awarded to											
1st MMAC Handicap winner Martin Wilkinson											

Midlands 5k and 10k walks – Stourport on Severn 24.3.24

It was a lovely spring day (Sunday March 24th) although a little bit windy for the Midlands 5k and 10k walks held at the cycle track at Stourport Sports Club. Despite the event being open to any senior athlete – it only attracted masters athletes. The men's 10k competition saw 7 athletes commence the race. Unfortunately, one athlete didn't finish, and one athlete was disqualified. The women's race saw 4 athletes commence with one being disqualified. As a championship race – it was run under 'A' rules meaning that both the straightening of the leg and contact was required.

The 1k lap course was far from flat (something preferred by racewalkers – well at least the author!) a slight incline and when tackling the downhill – you had the wind to contend with. Never mind – everyone was in the same situation and battled away with the scenario faced.

The two races started together with Mark Williams and Matthew Henney leading the races for a good few laps whilst also having a valuable catch up! It wasn't long before Mark took on the race, going on to take the win in a fantastic time of 57.21. Wendy led the women's race from the start, trying to keep up with Mark and Matthew but not succeeding. She took the women's title in a time of 30.46.

Awards were presented by Midlands Race Walking President – Lynn Bellfield and our sincere thanks go to all the officials who made the event possible. Thanks to you all.

10k Men's Race

1	Mark Williams	Birchfield Harriers	57.21
2	Matthew Henney	Bromsgrove and Redditch	61.31
3	Peter Boszko	Birchfield Harriers	66.32
4	John Constandinou	Birchfield Harriers	71.02
5	Colin Vesty	Leicester Walking Club	74.22
Team Winners:		Birchfield Harriers	

5k Women's Race

1	Wendy Kane	Nuneaton Harriers	30.46
2	Julie Bellfield	Halesowen AC	32.28
3	Lynn Bellfield	Halesowen AC	35.14
Team Winners:		Halesowen AC	



Wendy Kane

PART THREE: MMAC CROSS COUNTRY RESULTS

Our very own championships took place on Saturday 27th January at Leamington Spa. Here are the runners and riders who took part.

MMAC X-Country Championships 2024			
Women's results			
Name	Surname	Position	Race Position
W35			
Gemma	Steel	1	1
Emily	Smith	2	8
Zara	Hadfield	3	23
Katherine	Spencer	4	28

MMAC X-Country Championships 2024			
Men's results			
Name	Surname	Position	Race Position
M35			
Lee	Gratton	1	9
Joe	Smith	2	30
Ross	Connor	3	80
Clark	Roberts	4	110

Sarah	Taylor	5	74
Nattalie	Ward	6	134
W40			
Juliet	Potter	1	6
Lisa	Kendrick	2	63
Susan	Street Hall	3	73
W45			
Jessie	Sanzo	1	18
Caroline	Warrington	2	43
Faye	Stanyard	3	45
	Wilkinson-		
Sophie	Hargate	4	66
Paige	Zhang-Green	5	168
W50			
Michelle	Clarke	1	62
Sally	Walker	2	68
Louise	Andrews	3	76
W55			
Kate	Ramsey	1	47
Sue	Kneill-Boxley	2	88
Sue	Chicken	3	132
W60			
Jude	Glynn	1	106
Kate	Williams	2	126
Penelope	Barber	3	139
Carol	Blower	4	149
W65			
Linda	New	1	97
Maureen	Dargavel	2	121
Anne	Kelsall	3	161
W70			
Christine	Kilkenny	1	118
W75			
Angela	Copson	1	145

Martin	Gittins	5	248
M40			
Ben	Gamble	1	35
Leigh	Marshall	2	55
Darren	Perry	3	76
Gurmit	Singh	4	85
James	Wright	5	156
Waising	Yip	6	218
	Ortiz		
Jose	Gonzalez	7	228
M45			
Alastair	Watson	1	8
James	Hunter	2	60
Mark	Couldwell	3	62
Jason	Williams	4	109
Gary	Worrall	5	112
Ian	Hunter	6	132
Ben	Evans	7	150
David	Battersby	8	195
Chris	Hurst	9	198
M50			
Garry	Palmer	1	131
Sean	Rose	2	135
Mark	Williamson	3	165
David	Norman	4	196
M55			
Tim	Hartley	1	46
David	Lewis	2	155
Paul	Newton	3	166
Darren	Hands	4	169
M60			
Anthony	Marshall	1	112
Peter	Wright	2	167
Darren	Riley	3	189
Keith	Ward	4	282
M65			
Mark	Whitmore	1	186
Kevin	Spare	2	204
Steve	Hillman	3	222
Martin	Ludford	4	258
Alistair	Kirkwood	5	273

British & Irish 5 Nations Masters cross country International 2023

It was the turn of the Scottish team to host this very popular competition, held in Glasgow. The course was at Tollcross park which has been used before and is always well received and viewed as a testing course (but not too testing). Once again conditions were perfect with plenty of sunshine and not too much mud. Coaches were laid on to take everyone to the course. Each of the nations were provided with a tent in order to hand out numbers and kit on the Saturday morning. The competition on the day was truly amazing with each and every athlete giving their all. A lovely touch was the Scottish piper on the start line to send each team off.

The main team hotel was the Crowne Plaza which filled up quickly and was able to hold the evening banquet. The evening tickets were set at a reasonable price and the food was good. There didn't seem to be any hitches with results, and everything ran smoothly.

The England team performances..... We managed to win two of the three main trophies, including the overall trophy which we lost in 2022. The men won with 41 points and the women lost out by 3 points to the Irish masters athletics association.

Women

W35	England	3rd
W40	England	2nd
W45	England	2nd
W50	England	1st
W55	England	2nd
W60	England	1st
W65	England	3rd
W70	England	3 rd

Angela Copson once again won the over 75 gold.

Men

M35	England	1st
M40	England	2nd
M45	England	1st
M50	England	2nd
M55	England	2nd
M60	England	1st
M65	England	2nd
M70	England	1st
M75	England	1st

The reserves race was better contested this year which was good to see. Thank you to our Scottish hosts for a wonderful weekend which I think was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

EMAA inter area cross country challenge.

This year this event is being held in conjunction with the BMAF cross country championships at Corwen, north Wales on Saturday 16th March. I have been in discussion regarding the England team trial race for this year. Discussions are still ongoing but good progress has

been made.

Kim Matthews
EMAA Cross Country Secretary

PART FOUR: COACHING

‘A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR’

The Concept of ‘Microdosing’ is unpicked by New Levels Coach Matt Long

‘Microdosing’ is a term which has entered sports science discourses with more prevalence over the last five years or so but what does it actually mean and what are the implications for our social practice as runners?

Microdosing

The original derivation of the term ‘microdosing’ is medical rather than strictly sports scientific. It alluded to the action of the administration of very small quantities of a drug in order to benefit, with the conviction that whilst undesirable side effects could be minimized. The title of this article, ‘A Spoonful of Sugar’ is the famous Julie Andrews song from the iconic 1964 ‘Mary Poppins’ movie and was actually inspired by the development of the vaccine for polio, so one can see the medical connotations of the practice of the microdose very clearly.

In a sporting context, the work of Dr Matt Cuthbert (see his 2023 paper ‘Microdosing: A Conceptual Framework for use as Programming Strategy for Resistance Training in Team Sports’ in the Strength and Conditioning Journal) has been instrumental in us developing an understanding of how microdosing can be training approach which involves systematically dividing the total training volume in a microcycle into much smaller but more frequent training sessions. In this context, to further the medical analogy, the avoidance of ‘undesirable side effects’ would be the benefit of residual training effects without too much overload and fatigue.

Strength and Conditioning

The podcast with Blagrove and Lewis Moses, reignited the debate as to when and how to effect S and C work and listeners will have noted there clearly is no definitive right or wrong answer. Some athletes are in danger of not allowing their bodies to recover from a hard session the day previously if they routinely effect challenging S and C work on so called ‘easy days’. Others have alternatively reported that this works for them because they simply have more time as they may not be running at all or if they are it will be a lighter session rather than an intensive session that they have had the day previously. On the on the other hand, there are athletes who understandably stick religiously to the mantra of keeping ‘hard days hard and easy days easy’. So, these athletes would typically effect S and C work on the day of a hard session be it aerobic intervals or hill repetitions and so on.

The above being said, some runners who lead very busy lives tend to lean towards a practice akin to the notion of 'microdosing'. This is basically doing a little but often and some of the athletes whom I work with report doing 10-15 mins calisthenics, 'bums and tums' core work or say glute work on a daily basis. They tend to report that doing things in 'bite sized chunks' makes things simply seem less daunting and more manageable. It also takes away the stress of having to decide when to do they S and C work and as its in bite size chunks, it is less important because a little even on a recovery day is not likely to unduly inhibit the training adaptation processes during recovery.

Microdosing Beyond S and C

The above being said it would be a mistake to limit debates around your potential use of the practice of microdosing purely to your S and C work. The microdosing of flexibility and co-ordination may be an example where a 10 minute online Pilates video undertaken 3 times a week may be more useful for you than a weekly 90 minute session in person at the gym.

In terms of running, many endurance athletes I work with report that with all the miles they are chasing it's sometimes hard to get the pure 'speed work' in, so I tell them to introduce short 10s alactic strides as part of their RAMP warm up or say near the end of an easy shakeout run to maintain leg turnover- that's microdosing. Another example would be athletes who tell me they haven't got the time or inclination to do a dedicated hill session within their microcycle of work. So, what we do is to make sure they have a small block of hill repetitions in the middle of say a threshold session on the flat. So, by microdosing they are getting at least two rather than just one training stimulus- in this case a session of both aerobic and strength endurance. I often joke that this is akin to the '2 for 1 offer' that one can find in the annual January sales!

So, the above leaves us with some questions for self-reflection:

1. What do I understand by the notion of 'microdosing'?
2. How could microdosing help me in the specific context of my S and C work?
3. Where are the opportunities for me to microdose in other parts of my training including running itself?

Matt Long is one of 16 New Levels Coaches based at Loughborough University working under Coaching Ambassador Paula Radcliffe and founder Lewis Moses. Matt has Team Staffed for England or GB on 19 occasions. He is currently coaching two world champions and during his career has worked with four athletes who have won European titles.

SPEED PLAY

By coach John Danahay

Fartlek can be around a set course, or for a fixed length of time, or entirely as you feel. It can be in the town or countryside or a mixture of the two. It can even be around a track. Use landmarks and the topography, up hills, down hills, straights, gates, styles, lamp posts etc. to start and stop your efforts, and only use your watch to determine how long the session is in total.

Generally a fartlek is a solo session, but it doesn't have to be. If you run with someone fairly evenly matched you can take it in turns surprising each other with a sudden surge or sprint. Fartlek can be an easy workout with just some short faster strides at random, maybe even

walking breaks, or an extremely hard workout of repeated intensive efforts including hills if they are on your route or a mixture of as many different types of running as you can fit in your allotted time. You will never do exactly the same work-out twice and this 'freedom' can really help you to get something done when mentally you don't feel like training hard.

Overall a more intensive fartlek workout is likely to include about 50% of the session or run time spent in 'effort'. Watch the overall effort though. Fartlek is addictive and you can quickly develop a taste for pushing yourself harder and harder and just like a structured intensive training session you may over-train if you do them too hard too frequently.

WHEN SHOULD YOU INCORPORATE FARTLEK RUNS INTO A STRUCTURED TRAINING PROGRAMME?

I would recommend starting with lower intensity fartlek weekly early in the base training period and increasing the intensity gradually towards the pre-competition period. Then move to using fartleks every 2-3 weeks instead of a conventional repetition or interval session to give you a mental break.

EXAMPLES OF FARTLEK FOR SPECIFIC EVENT TRAINING:

Cross country:

A fartlek on the grass playing fields or a park works really well in the winter months as a weekend session when you haven't got a cross-country race and want a workout that allows you a bit of breathing space from that competitive training pressure. If possible, use a local cross country course and aim for a similar overall workout time to your typical cross country race distance with similar warm-up and cool-down too. Try for a mix of short and longer duration effort and recovery times. A course with hills will help build specific leg and cardiovascular strength. A few shorter faster efforts in a winter or spring cross country fartlek are great for maintaining some leg speed ready for the track season too.

Middle and Long Distance Track events:

Although not true fartlek in the sense that you control it yourself, pre-season coach controlled fartlek on playing fields or track involves the coach (or a friend) controlling your efforts with their whistle based on their experience of your training needs. Seb Coe's father Peter was a fan of this form of preparation. The extra value of this is that you have to run hard when you least expect it, or when you really don't want to. This can deliver excellent tactical race preparation but will also be an extremely hard session physically so should be used sparingly and not later than 10 days before a target race.

Road racing:

Training on winter evenings in a town or city can be a bit of a slog and there is a tendency to convert workouts to steady runs just to get them done. Sections of pavement between road junctions, traffic and street lights and other street furniture can act as random start and stop points.

Depending on the event you are aiming for, a fartlek can be over a similar running time to a shorter race like 5k or 10k, but even a long Sunday run can include some fartlek if you missed a workout the day before. This could include a focus on longer efforts for races like the half marathon or shorter more intensive efforts for the 5k and 10k events. But don't forget that fartlek nearly always counts as a workout, not as an easy or recovery run. The key is that you run how you feel on the day rather than to a present session plan.

Ultra-trail and mountain race training:

Beyond the aerobic capacity benefits from the shorter fartlek workouts highlighted above, off-road ultra-distance race training will also benefit from changes in pace and from breaking up really long training runs into shorter sections. These might not include high-intensity efforts, but random variation between hiking, jogging, and running paces at random will improve your all round conditioning and help the time to pass more quickly. And doing fartlek with someone else on longer training runs can also really improve your mental strength in coping with race situations where your competitors make a sudden move.

Strava segment fartlek:

Armed with a rough knowledge of where local segments are, this can give you some motivation to run really hard and beat some of the local CRs all in one run. Choosing a route with a number of segments and easy or steady running between them, hit each segment as hard as you can, and see if you can move higher up that leader-board. Again, this counts as a really hard session and shouldn't be used close to a race. If it all sounds a bit planned don't forget you can vary your pace, miss a segment out or even just run hard for a favourite stretch of road or trail and create a new segment for others!

EXAMPLE URBAN FARTLEK SESSION:

Although a fartlek should be an individual random effort workout here is an example:

Start with easy 'warm-up' running for 15 minutes, accelerate between 2 lamp posts, jog 1 lamp post, go hard again for 3 lamp posts, slow to easy running for a few minutes, at the bottom of a hill increase effort to 5k race effort up the hill for approx. 30 seconds, jog down again and repeat, then steady run for approx. 5 minutes on the flat, accelerate up to 5k race effort for 2 minutes, slow down and jog back to start of the 2 minute effort and repeat, steady run back to the hill and run up hard again for approx. 1 minute, run back to where you started progressively increasing the pace to full out effort just before the end, finish with easy 10 minutes 'cool-down' running.

This 'workout' will have worked through a full range of paces and energy systems as well as resistance work on the hills.

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MARATHON TIPS

By Team England master's runner Penny Barber

This resource started as a few tips for a friend hoping to do her first marathon in 2020 and has grown as more points cross our minds. It was the accompaniment to a training plan referred to – you're welcome to the spreadsheet template if you'd like it. It's pitched at marathon first timers or maybe up to your first five.

I am acutely aware that MMAC readers include very experienced marathoners. That said, I think everyone who has read this has found something useful - "Oh, now, I always forget about that" or "I hadn't thought of that" are common remarks. Do please send me your further tips to improve the resource.

I know I've only actually done 2 marathons (there are marathon coaches who haven't done any though...), but I have spent many LSRs (long Saturday/Sunday runs) with experienced marathoners. I've listened, researched - and consulted a couple of Internationals. I am a LiRF, have some professional experience in sport and exercise activation and have wielded a stopwatch to support a coach when injured. I would not call myself a coach. My reflections are very much runner to runner!

The provenance of the spreadsheet plan is that I put it together from 2 different books - one on marathon running generally and one on marathons for older runners (by which they mean over 40!). I adapted it to my existing training pattern. I then asked an expert elite marathoner to review it - he took a bit out! I haven't included dynamic warm up stretching or post run stretching in the plan, it's just assumed people do this. There should be some strength & conditioning in it – do some every week. I used it in 2016 & 2019. A training partner 11 years my junior, faster but similar mileage & training pattern, used the plan in 2020. Sadly, the race was Covid-cancelled just as she got to taper. The plan worked for her - she'd tell me her shifts as she got them, and we'd move stuff around to fit. The hardest bit with her was stopping her doing a bit extra. She used it again for Manchester 2022 and 2023 and it worked well for her.

Three people had the plan and these tips for London in Oct 2021. I think only one followed the plan more or less, but all 3 reported finding some of the tips useful. People much younger than me are still made of some elastic, so will be able to get away with much more than I could risk.

These suggestions are a starting point. Do your own research – don't necessarily take any notice of me.

My top tips for what they are worth are as follows. Apologies if any of this is patronising. I've only been running 13 years, which is not as long as many people!

- It's a VERY long way. It needs much respect.
- Use the two months or more before starting your marathon training to increase your base weekly mileage and work out how many times you can train a week. You have got to have a plan that your other commitments and your head can both cope with. No point planning 8 runs if you can only face 5 a week. You have got to have an achievable plan that you can pretty much complete and be proud of. Guilt and any other negativity are a complete waste of emotional energy.

- One long run a week only. I know some people are fans of the mid-week long run, but I think that's now generally considered old fashioned & unnecessary. Huge weekly mileage is generally out of fashion - the plans I've done are probably considered a bit high. Very impressive times have been achieved with much lower mileage, so change down with confidence. I start from a base of 45 miles to 50 miles a week spread over 6 runs with a weekly long run of 12 to 15 miles, a speed session and a tempo run.
- Follow the 10% rule to avoid injury - no more than 10% increase a week in mileage, or duration. I have a rolling weekly mileage column on the spreadsheet for plan and actual.
- Get something you can comfortably carry water with for any summer training. You will need it for the long runs. Some people hide bottles in hedges etc. in advance rather than carrying them – this depends on your route!
- Water is usually provided in the race – it's worth checking if the number and placing of water points work for you. Most runners don't carry water in the race, finding that what's provided works for them. NB there is an environmental trend to be required to carry your own cup or your own water, especially in trail races. Do check and practice.
- Think about what you want to carry in the race and how. You probably can't fit all the fuel and emergency items (ibuprofen in my case) you might need in zipped pockets and down bras. Borrow belts etc. from friends to try before you buy if you don't already have something. Top tip if carrying gels down your bra or near other soft flesh – put them in plastic bag with bit of tissue wrapped round the bottom of the gel – they have sharp corners. Lateral flow test disposal bags or mini tissue packs are perfect.
- On ibuprofen, yes I know the advice is not to use it before or during races and please note I am not qualified to give medical advice. If you are tempted to ignore some advice, I suggest you practice whatever it is you are thinking of, so the possible effects are known and considered.
- Practice your nutrition from your very first long run. You don't actually have many long runs to experiment with. So, practice breakfast - content and timing, any immediate pre-race snack, and gels or other fuel during the run. Take the gels or other fuel pretty much as you would in the race, even though most of us wouldn't bother during the standard weekly long run. It is vital that your body is happy. If you have a sensitive stomach generally, try a gel at home or work when you are near a favourite toilet...
- I think every 50 minutes seems to be the consensus for gels - you are said to run out of glycogen at 70 minutes and it takes 20 minutes for it to reach you. If you get a buzz from your gel or other fuel you've left it too long to take it! The times are obviously very general. If you keep on top of topping up your glycogen, there is no such thing as The Wall. It is now some years since I found this timing – do see if there's more recent research or something more specific to your running.
- There are loads of different views, and probably more research since I last needed to check it out, on glycogen. Don't trust me! Like I said, not much time really to experiment. Some people (e.g. Dr Stacy Sims, experienced with Iron Man events

and cyclists and generally brilliant especially for women) are anti gel. Allow time to experiment with an easy to carry and consume alternative if you find out that gels are not your thing.

- Even practice the night-before-the-race meal a couple of times. Maybe you'll be eating out, so go for an approximation of food type. Consider the volume if staying away and not self-catering. For half marathons, never mind anything further, I take a supply of cold pasta and cheese as protection from the horror of small portions. Oh, and I just take frozen porridge to defrost overnight for a reliable breakfast in content and volume.
- Definitely practice all pre-race fuel and drinks. Do not scare your body with anything new on race day or the day before. For example, do not chuck down a large cup of coffee an hour before the race if you do not usually drink coffee and have not practised doing this before a race. I know 2 people who have come a bit unstuck with this temptation.

One thought that will sound particularly patronising, but I have seen people leaving it until too late a few times then get in a right state: -

- Choose your shoes early. Find what you want to race in AND buy a second pair, so you have a fresh pair to race in. Try the race pair once early just in case there are any slight differences to worry over, then stick 'em back in their box and get out for your 3 weeks of tapering. Or whatever your feet think a modern shoe needs. Train long runs in the first pair. Also select and train in socks early.
- Just like finding and rehearsing nutrition, you do not have many long runs to play with and find the right shoes and socks. In addition, shoes are often not available in my experience. You cannot assume you can get the new pair you want at short notice and if you do, they may have had an annoying tweak to the design that rubs exactly where your bunion is. I know it's expensive...
- Also do a couple of runs in the kit you're planning to wear. You don't want a brand new bra or shorts chafing at mile 17.

Knowing your shoes and fuel have served you well on training runs will give you confidence. The long training runs are the rehearsal runs for your glorious victory.

- If you have an injury, see a physio straight away. There are plenty who won't dream of telling you not to run - they know you will and will tell you how. I do wish I had done this for 2019!
- Be ready for the training to be tough. It will be tough. It can be psychologically tricky to HAVE to run, even if you probably would anyway. Runs on dark mornings on a route where you can see, and also see if it's icy, are tough. I wound up doing 3 circuits of very dull roads at 6am before going to work.
- Have a plan for if the weather is SO icy or hot that you can't train. Yup find a treadmill. Be a bit careful how you use it if you haven't to date – I find the very repetitive action compared to my usual mix of surfaces can cause a niggle. I would therefore reduce mileage as well as varying the gradient if I had to train much on a treadmill. Do some dynamic stretching afterwards – just wiggling your ankles sitting down will help; balancing on a Bosu better. You could run round and round a garden if you have

access to one you can clear of ice – don't forget to change direction so you don't set up an imbalance on one side.

- It is YOUR race. Carefully consider what works for your body and head. Unsolicited and unhelpful advice for marathon running challenges driving test myths in volume and potential for confidence destruction!
- Do some work on your head – think about what might worry or upset you at different stages in the plan and on race day. Find and practice some calming activities that work for you.
- No high heels after about a month before the race in case of ankle injury.
- Contemplate the possibility of avoiding alcohol from 2 to 4 weeks before - it's empty calories. Instead of thinking of depriving myself, I think of only putting good and lovely stuff in. And that first pint after a month off is amazing, although you might shock yourself by not wanting one straight away.
- Do not worry about toilets in the race – usually loads are provided and frequently (check!). No worries if there's a prohibitively long queue at the start, there'll be a queue-free block of bogs not far in. Much easier than on your long runs!
- Warn your nearest and dearest what a pain you will be during taper when exercise is reduced, and nervous energy increased.
- Do not undertake any new exercise during taper. If you weren't already doing it comfortably well before pre-taper - and ideally from the start of the plan, don't go near it. It's a big injury risk. Lay off weights and hold back a bit even in yoga in the last week. Gentle swimming, indoor cycling IF already doing these. Failing that just go for a walk – not a march. Have a massage.
- Book the Monday after off.
- Do the taper. It really works.

Here's a recent Runners' World article (<https://bit.ly/44mRRM2>) that pretty much agrees with me, in case validation needed! The only major thing missing is the tip on selecting and buying shoes early – then again, the writers probably get their shoes provided so it didn't cross their mind...



PART FIVE: FINANCE

Annual Financial Report

The past year has seen an increase in championship activity following the pandemic. At the end of the year, we made a small deficit as part of the plan to slowly reduce reserve funds.

The committee has continued to keep membership subscriptions at the same level since 2014 and has agreed to continue this for another year. Virtual working and efficiency savings have helped to keep costs down. During this time England Athletic first claim registration has increased by 90% and general inflation by 33%.

Club income and expenditure were similar to the previous year. We continue to support members competing in specific events with £3,807 worth of funding. The Committee agreed to increase competing members support in 2024 with a 25% increase bringing it in line with levels agreed in 2018.

Sales of club kit via the website and at championships has proved popular. Kit is sold to members at less than cost price as a service to members. The cost price of club kit has increased with a subsequent small increase in sale price to members.

MMAC was founded in 1971 and the president's chain of office has names of over 50 past presidents. Each bar is plated sterling silver with historic significance. Unfortunately, the ribbon is now full and alternative options need to be considered for the future.

The Committee discussed the level of cash in the bank (reserve funds) and agreed this is more than is required to cover any risk or future expenditure. It was agreed to reduce this slowly over a few years. Due to increases of bank interest rates the committee approved moving funds in savings to the non-interest-bearing current account in order to remain below current corporation tax thresholds.

After being treasurer for 11 years I am in danger of "doing a Putin" by being re-elected annually. I feel a new person should be identified to take on the roll. I am happy to continue until such an individual is identified and provide ongoing support. I would be glad to discuss the role with any interested members. May I thank the committee for their support over the last year.

(Dr) Martin Wilkinson
Honorary Treasurer
April 2024



Martin Wilkinson, Treasurer

INCOME	2023	2022
MMAC Membership	£9,908	£10,293
Championships ¹	£3,807	£3,086
Club kit ²	£714	£1,107
Donations	£93	£67
Bank Interest	£285	£45
Total income	£14,807	£14,598

EXPENDITURE	2023	2022
AFFILIATION		
England Athletics	£1,414	£1,346
BMAF	£2,312	£918
EAMA	£441	£459
CHAMPIONSHIPS <small>Error! Bookmark not defined.</small>		
Competitor support ³	£3,189	£3,436
Officials	£1,584	£1,738
Facilities	£1,659	£1,134
Medals & Awards	£726	£950
Mid Vets T&F League	£180	£170
Inter-Area	£400	£350
OFFICE COSTS		
Online transaction costs ⁴	£774	£775
Newsletter	£448	£463
Office Supplies	£264	£313
Insurance	£65	£60
IT ⁵	£120	£15
MISCELLANEOUS		
Club kit	£759	£2,345
Donations	£0	£633
Committee ⁶	£271	£71
Equipment ⁷	£803	£0
Total Expenditure	£15,409	£15,176
Surplus (Deficit)	(£602)	(£578)

1-6: See explanatory notes below

	2023	2022
Cash		
Cash at the bank	£22,059	£24,018
Membership transactions costs for 2024	£185	£469
	£22,244	£22,487
Purchased items, stock – value @ 31st December		
President Chain	£3364	£3,364
Awards & Medals	£1445	£710
Club Kit	£530	£901
Equipment ¹¹	£953	£100
	£6,292	£5,075
Payments received in advance		
Subscriptions received for 2024 ⁹	£2385	£3136
Creditors: Amounts falling within a year ¹⁰	£475	£510
	£2,860	£3,646

Explanatory Notes

1. Championships

	2023	2022
Cross country	(£118)	(£128)
Track & Field	£451	(£40)
10 miles	£105	(£90)
Profit (deficit)	(£228)	(£258)

2. Kit sold to members is subsidised by MMAC. 32 vests, 7 tracksuit tops sold.
3. Support provided to those members competing in England vests and Inter-Area at approved events.
4. Online and contactless payments costs for membership and club shop.
5. IT includes website and Zoom costs.
6. Committee costs include committee related travel plus the cost of one physical meeting (including food). All meetings were virtual in the previous year.
7. Equipment includes 2 banner flags and a media wall.
8. Online costs paid for membership subscriptions received for the following year.
9. Membership subscriptions received for the following year.
10. England Athletic first claim member payment received for the following year.
11. Equipment includes new equipment bought in year.



PART SIX: Answers to Xmas Quiz

Joyce's quiz raised a total of £23,861 nationally for Macmillan Cancer Support including contributions from MMAC. Answers below:

1.	Area of loss in the Atlantic Ocean	Bermuda Triangle
2.	Merit point for doing well	Gold star
3.	Re-start from the beginning	Go back to square one
4.	Bird of prey in the UK	Red Kite
5.	Where the US president works	The Oval Office
6.	Fighting area within the ropes	Boxing ring
7.	Acrobatic formation of 3 or more people	Human pyramid
8.	To commit to memory	Learn by heart
9.	Sung in "Gentleman Prefer Blondes"	Diamonds are a girl's best friend
10.	A romantic relationship involving three people	Eternal triangle / <i>Love triangle</i>
11.	Someone not fitting in	Square peg in a round hole
12.	Tea or coffee sweetener	Sugar cube
13.	Good Friday cakes	Hot cross buns
14.	Getting nowhere	Going round in circles
15.	Shot by a god of love	Cupid's arrow
16.	To phone a number of different people	Ring round
17.	A balanced, satisfying repast	Square meal
18.	Absence makes ...	The heart grow fonder
19.	The person or thing that people most want to see	Star attraction / <i>Star of the show</i> / <i>Heart's desire</i>
20.	Steps around a central axis	Spiral staircase
21.	Head jewellery	Diamond tiara / <i>Earrings</i>
22.	Betray someone who trusted you	Double-cross
23.	Latitude 66.56 degrees north	Arctic Circle
24.	Result of watching too much TV	Square eyes
25.	A lunar phase	Crescent moon / <i>Waxing crescent</i>
26.	Provides links with Bakerloo and Northern	Charing Cross
27.	Winning honestly	Fair and square
28.	A 3D puzzle invented by a Hungarian	Rubik's cube
29.	Vary ways of doing things	Ring the changes
30.	Fielding position in cricket	Short / Deep square leg
31.	To be unrealistically hopeful about future events	To have stars in one's eyes
32.	The essence of something	Heart of the matter
33.	Romany request for advance payment	Cross my palm with silver
34.	Pointed front end of an aircraft	Nose cone
35.	Fraudulent system of making money	Pyramid scheme/selling
36.	Humanitarian aid body	Red Cross / Red Crescent
37.	At the junction of 7 th and Broadway in New York	Times Square
38.	What you wish deeply for	Heart's desire
39.	Scuba tank	Diving cylinder / <i>Gas cylinder</i>
40.	Strabismus	Crossed-eyes
41.	Putting money aside for a specific purpose	Ring-fencing
42.	Lacking courage	Faint hearted
43.	The bad things that happen to you and are not your fault	Slings and arrows / Ill-starred / Star-crossed

44.	Edible container for a cold sweet	Ice cream cone
45.	Hoping for the best	Fingers crossed / Wishing upon a star
46.	1939 song about a bird in Mayfair	A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square
47.	Four Wagnerian operas	The Ring Cycle
48.	Small area around Wakefield with an edible crop	Rhubarb Triangle
49.	16th century court of law	Star Chamber
50.	A sport run over open terrain	Cross country race
51.	An emotional re-evaluation	Change of heart / Search your heart
52.	Complete a task in all its details	Dot your I's and cross your T's
53.	An exclusive group that controls an organisation	Inner circle
54.	Incredibly speedy	Swift as an arrow
55.	Openly show your emotions	Wear your heart on your sleeve
56.	Home of Surrey C.C.	The Oval cricket ground
57.	A burden one must put up with	A cross to bear
58.	A cycle of one bad thing causing another	Vicious circle / Spiralling out of control
59.	A Masonic symbol	Square and Compasses
60.	Announce your intention to compete	Throw your hat into the ring
61.	A chunky finch which enjoys conifer seeds	Crossbill
62.	To seem untruthful or insincere	To have a hollow ring / False-hearted
63.	People who know and like each other	Circle of friends / Close circle
64.	A good person, but seen as unrefined	Rough diamond
65.	Denoting top quality accommodation	Five stars
66.	Draw a line through	Cross out
67.	About to fight	Square up / Enter the ring
68.	Comedy quiz with Reeves and Mortimer	Shooting Stars
69.	A symbol on maps for a battleground	Crossed swords
70.	Symbolises never ending love	Eternity ring
71.	$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$	The square on the hypotenuse / Right-angled triangle
72.	To have high and ambitious aims	Reach for the stars
73.	Images on the Via Crucis	Stations of the Cross
74.	Wrongly thought to result from UFOs	Crop circle
75.	Don't deal with a problem until it arises	Cross that bridge when we come to it
76.	Theodore Roosevelt's domestic promise	Square Deal
77.	A row of 30 terraced houses in Bath	The Royal Crescent
78.	A pattern of intersecting lines	Criss cross / Cross-hatch
79.	To be encouraged and more optimistic	To take heart
80.	UK standard of safety and quality	Kitemark
81.	US headquarters of Defense	The Pentagon
82.	Impressed by famous people	Star-struck
83.	Stop, look and listen	The Green Cross Code / Cross the road/ Zebra crossing
84.	Thank your ...	Lucky stars
85.	Nickname for the City of London	Square Mile
86.	Fail to understand each other	At cross purposes / Cross wires
87.	Do what you want, not what is expected of you	Follow your heart / Fly your own kite
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