



Loughton Lines

Welcome to *Loughton Lines*. This issue features news and reports from around the Club, including updates on all the coaching sessions and reports from Helen and James on their charity runs. Thanks to Rob, Helen and Lara for sharing their expertise in the form of their coaching, physio and nutrition updates. As ever, there's more news, results and race reports on the recently updated Club website, www.loughtonac.org.uk. And let me know if there's anything you want to see covered in the next issue of *LL* – it's your Club, and your newsletter.

November 2014

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URGENT! Help Needed!

The good news: our young athletes section is thriving – see Shaun and Doris's update on page 5. The bad news: one of our regular helpers can't carry on, so Shaun and Doris (pictures right) need someone to step forward – or a few people to make up a rota. Please consider whether you could offer to help them run the sessions for the young athletes on Tuesdays. Shaun and Doris will offer whatever support they can (plus there are coaching courses available for those who are keen!). As you'll see from their report, it's a rewarding role, as well as an essential one: if regular help can't be found, the Club is in danger of failing to fulfil its safeguarding duty. Please don't assume that someone else will step in! If you can help, or you know someone else who can, please speak to Shaun or email him at shaundsb@hotmail.co.uk



Quids In for the All-Weather Surface

Please support your Club by continuing to put £1 in the bucket at each training session towards the all-weather surface. The grand total for the first year of the appeal (to April 2013) was £1,597.51, and so far this financial year we've banked £1,029.88. Thanks for your support! We have a big loan to pay off though, and we can't do it without you, so please keep those pounds coming in at training sessions to help pay for this important Club and community facility.

Tuesday Coaching Update

Due to a number of unforeseen circumstances, several of our regular coaches have become unable to commit to sessions. This has meant that there has been a slight change to how we deliver coaching. Our main night is still Tuesday – as well as the young athletes group there are two other groups during the winter. See pages 5–6 for further details of some of the sessions on offer.

As a Club we are actively seeking support for the coaching sessions, to provide some back-up if we need it. The Club will fund courses and the DBS (vetting) process. The coaches will be supported to help develop knowledge and understanding. We would like volunteers from the Club, especially athletes who are unable to compete through injury and are recovering, or perhaps athletes who are competing but would be prepared to assist in running the sessions they take part in. Do speak to Shaun if you can help: shaundsb@hotmail.co.uk

Three Ways to Keep in Touch: Facebook...

Calling all those who use Facebook! Please add Loughton Athletic Club as a friend. It was set up as a person some years ago and currently has 109 friends. Lara Regan is going to be regularly adding information about events and training, as well as general LAC updates that you may find useful. You can also add comments, suggestions and photos to keep us all up to date on your running progress. So to be kept in the loop, please add LAC to your friends list.



...and Twitter...

We are looking for someone to pass on information about the Club through Twitter. If you use Twitter and would like to help the Club by setting up an LAC page and updating followers on LAC news, please contact Lara at lara_regan@hotmail.com



...and email

For those who are not au fait with social media, the other way to keep abreast of LAC news is via email. We have a couple of email lists in circulation. David emails details of forthcoming races a few days before each event. His email is djhdroftarts@yahoo.com, so do send him a message if you want to be in on the race details. If you've never competed for the Club before – or if you have in the past but haven't recently – please consider coming along. The teams always really appreciate having new runners join in. Tony runs the Club email account and sends out info to all members about other exciting LAC events, so see him if you want to be included on that list.



Winter Fixtures

Please do clear some slots in your diary to compete for your Club in the various League races this season. Turn to page 11 for the fixture list. Note that our annual 'fun run', the Mince Pie Relay, is on 20 December at 11am at the Clubhouse. Bring along children, mums, dads, grannies, etc to run a

lap of the field 'for fun' and enjoy a well-earned mince pie and cuppa afterwards.

Jack Petchey Award Update

Congratulations to Eleanor Donnelly and Taylor Read, who were our summer winners. The Jack Petchey scheme is a reward and recognition initiative which enables schools and youth organisations to celebrate the achievements of their young people as well as receive additional funding. Well done to these two rising stars.



Circuits Update

Circuits has begun again for the winter season. Shaun and Gavin are on hand every Thursday at 7pm to put you through your paces. There's been a change of venue this year: the cheerleading squad have finally managed to turf us out of Roding Valley, so we are currently meeting at the Wesley Hall, behind Loughton Methodist Church, High Rd, Loughton. The venue is smaller but there's plenty of space to work up a sweat and have fun! Building on the experience of the children's sessions, there will be aerobic, stretching, strength and conditioning elements to the sessions, which will be reviewed at the end of October. Feedback is invited! The cost per session is still a very reasonable £3. Please support these sessions if you possibly can.

Folk Club Fundraiser: Update

You may remember that the last issue of *LL* advertised a night of folk music at Loughton Club. Renowned songstress Edwina Hayes played to a packed room, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed her melancholic melodies and sultry songs. Thanks to John Hart's enthusiasm, £76 was raised for the Club, which will go towards the all-weather surface. Thank you, John.

One from the Archives...

A Mr Greenaway, from Suffolk, recently got in touch with the Club to tell us about a photo he'd found from 1912. It shows some race walkers at a location you may recognise – the cricket pitch. It's great to be a member of a Club with such a rich history: turn to page 10 for more on this in the form of Peter's article about a book he's written on the last 100 years of race walking. Here's Mr Greenaway's message in full:

Good afternoon,

I attach a rather poor photo/postcard of walkers (I think) taken in Loughton, 5th August 1912.

This was a postcard sent from a great Uncle from Loughton to his brother living in Victoria, Canada.

The writer states that he won three prizes: 1st in half mile, 2nd in Obstacle and 3rd in the two mile walk. Members of the Loughton Athletic Club.

The writer of the card is shown in front in the picture.
His name was Archibald Greenaway.

You may/may not find this interesting.

R Greenaway
Suffolk

(Greenaway is an old Loughton family name)



...and A Slightly More Recent One!

Here's Helen Real, running the London Marathon in her Club vest. She reports that the BBC's top ten tips for running the marathon included this peach: 'Follow a nice bum.' So she did. Bet they didn't give Archibald Greenaway that advice in 1912!

And Finally...

The Hobbses made LAC history in July when three generations competed in the same 1500m Southern Athletics League race. 'But how is this possible?' I hear you ask. Your *LL* editor, four months pregnant, slogged round the A race, while Jean Hobbs, mum and grandma-to-be-again, won the B race. The official pointed out that if it's a boy, he'll disqualify us for fielding a male in a women's race, which is pretty harsh considering I wasn't gaining much of an advantage by lugging an unborn baby round the track. (I've since been told it *is* a boy, but I won't be telling the official in question.)



Sportshall Athletics and Young Athletes Update

Shaun and Doris DSB write:

We now back inside at Roding Valley with the children's training. The last week on the track brought it home to us just how far the young athletes have developed, as they completed the 600m and 100m races. There was a tremendous effort from all those taking part, and the smiles on their faces said it all about what it meant to them. We must thank the officials, George, Pauline and Peter, for their help, and David for fitting it into the schedule.

The children aged 8–11 years train with Shaun, Doris, Jackie and Heather at Roding Valley sports hall from 7pm to 8pm on Tuesday nights during term time. From approximately Easter onwards, training moves to the track area. We coach what is known as 'fundamentals', namely the basics of running, jumping, throwing and agility. Focus is not only on technique but also on the FUN bit, so we are trying to coach technique through games rather than drills.

We are looking for volunteers to help with the Tuesday night sessions, as from the end of October Jackie will be unable to commit as regularly as she has done previously. We can't thank her enough for her contribution, and she will be missed. For anyone who is interested, even if you can't commit every week, there are courses available, and we will provide whatever support we can. Please contact either Shaun or Doris for further information: shaundsb@hotmail.co.uk or ddsb10@hotmail.com

At the age of 12, the athletes move on to Gavin's group, still on a Tuesday night at the same time, but on the all-weather track area. This group is in coaching terms 'foundation', with the focus on improvement and development. The sessions take place come rain or shine, and the group numbers approximately 20. While the focus is on sprinting and speed development throughout the winter, there are also opportunities for stamina and endurance work.

Shaun and Doris DSB

Hurdles Training Update

The LAC hurdlers – Amie, Lauren, Cliff and Jim – are in full swing with their winter training. Amie reports that their winter schedule includes hills, hills and more hills, plus distance runs, endurance runs and lots of 800m sessions. Sounds gruelling! They're hoping to lighten the load by heading off for a couple of weeks of warm-weather training. As Amie says, 'Any excuse for a holiday...'

And news of another hurdler: Jo Richardson, who holds the Club 400mH record, had a baby boy in August – Jack Henry. Big congrats to Jo, Ged and big sister Martha on the new arrival.



Vets Track and Field Update: Summer 2015

As most readers will know, the resignation of key people within EVAC in September 2013 left an enormous vacuum that subsequently, despite volunteers at the AGM of that year, failed to actually be filled. As with all things in life, actions speak louder than words!

In early 2014, I contacted the other Essex team managers and the ensuing dialogue led to the 2014 Essex Vets League, which had three Wednesday fixtures at Southend, Chelmsford and Lee Valley with a fourth team (Thurrock), plus a more inclusive philosophy to invite guest athletes from other clubs and include a number of non-scoring events. It is fair to say that the results were mixed. There were fewer athletes representing LAC than in previous years, and a large contingent of second-string members from the clubs such as Barnet and Eton Manor which made our representation respectable. There were injuries, of course, but I suspect some felt the Essex League was little more than a token replacement for EVAC.

For 2015, there have been overtures about the resurrection of the EVAC set-up. I personally am doubtful about this. Some have suggested joining SEVAC, which competes on Monday evenings. If we were accepted and joined them, their subdivision for us would mean competing at venues north of the Thames, at places like Hemel Hempstead and Watford as well as Barnet and Lee Valley. Two obvious disadvantages to this option: getting to these places during what would be the rush hour may prove trickier than heading into the wilds of Essex; and not being able to include any Barnet athletes, who already compete in their own right - LAC would also lose out on their LAC subscriptions! Or we could plan for year 2 of the Essex League on Wednesdays with some alterations and improvements based on the experience of 2014. I can honestly say that we had the best Essex team of officials in 2014, but for how long? Age is creeping on and no one is omnipotent...

What do the club members want to do? Is there some apathy and, if so, what can be done to remove it? Please email me on mjh1952@hotmail.co.uk to give me your views and recommendations. Thanks in advance.

Mick Higgins

Endurance Group Update: Enduring Tuesdays

If you are at all puzzled by the motley crew of runners dressed in day-glow and sometimes wearing headlamps which shuffles out of the Clubhouse on Tuesday evenings, it's the Endurance Group. And that's all you might want to know. If you want a little more detail, then here it is.

The EG is aimed at runners who feel more at home doing cross countries than track (although they might turn out for a 5000m or 10000m track race). Some of them are training for road races from 10k up to marathons. Some just like the sense of achievement which comes from a tough training session and the sense of depletion which follows the next day.

The sessions are all over about 6 to 6.5 miles, start at 7pm and end at 8pm. They include fartlek sessions, handicap hill climbs, hill repetitions and

relays. The usual session will include a combination of these. This sadistic programme has been worked out and perfected over many years, and the September to April sessions are issued in written form to reduce backsliding. The summer sessions are more ad hoc but include various forms of cruelty in the forest or from the Clubhouse or a monthly handicap race in Lee Valley Park at Waltham Abbey. Further details can be obtained from Lorna Gaffney, Jim Whiffen or the retiring Chief Whip (yours truly).

John Hart

Update on Epping Forest District Council Sports and Health Development Initiatives Involving LAC

We have friends in high places in the district: Rob Hyatt is Assistant Sports and Health Development Officer for Epping Forest District Council. LL asked him about the work he's been doing involving LAC.

Part of my role is supporting sport clubs across the district through various ways, including projects to increase participation. Below is a review of two that involved LAC.

Satellite Club Work

After securing funding from Active Essex, we have developed a satellite club link between Debden Park High School and Loughton AC. What this means is Loughton AC provides an athletics coach (Shaun) to deliver after-school athletics coaching (initially this took place over the summer term). In exchange for providing a coach, pupils are directed towards joining Loughton AC. The work also is a good example of a LAC working within the local community.

We piloted this project over the summer, and I felt it was fairly successful. I have now secured further funding from Active Essex to continue this link with Debden Park High School and also to expand to another school. (At the time of writing an offer has been made to Roding Valley, but we've had no response as yet.)

10-Week Beginners Running Programme

Again after securing funding from Active Essex, we piloted a 10-week beginners running programme under the title of 'Legs n Lungs' rather than Loughton AC. The reasoning behind this is mainly because novice runners perceive running clubs to be full of elite athletes running super quick. So, to help overcome this perceived barrier, we used the Legs n Lungs branding. Legs n Lungs sessions have already been successfully run in Waltham Abbey at Gunpowder Park. The project took place between May and July. Although a number of enquiries were made about the programme, only three individuals attended the initial session, and this dropped to one over the following weeks. As is the way of things, I had a number of enquiries after the programme finished, which I directed towards the Club. No further programmes are planned at this stage, but it's worth the Club considering how it attracts novice runners either through specific initiatives like this or by offering benefits to new members.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Shaun for his continued support with these initiatives. Without him the activity could not have taken place.

Rob Hyatt

Helen's Hair-raisers...

LL heard that Helen Real has been attempting some seriously crazy ultra-races of late. Helen told us all about them.

So I sit here 2 days after my second and last ever ultra. My first was Hadrian's Wall in June, and my second was this weekend, North to South Lake District. For a race to be an ultra it needs to be anything over 26.2 miles. I say 'race' loosely, as my main aim was to finish alive. What's an extra hour when you've been running for more than 10?

What would possess a vaguely normal person to do this, I hear you ask. Really I have no idea. There I was, happily doing the summer and winter fixtures at LAC, not normally running more than 10 miles. Then 2 years ago, no one took the marathon place offered to the Club. I 'volunteered' to do it if it remained untaken. And so my longer distance running began.

The facts

The Wall race is from Carlisle Castle to Gateshead Millennium Bridge: 69 miles; partly off road, but mostly on road. They had pitstops every 13–18 miles, giving you the opportunity for a loo stop and some food. You don't actually run along the wall, as it's a Heritage Site, but you run alongside some of it. The pace is a lot slower (sorry David H!) than you could ever imagine. I started with a race plan of 10-minute miling for 35 minutes, then walking for 5. We largely stuck to this until it got really painful at mile 60! I ran with three other ladies from Orion: Sarah and Liz Maidment, and Angie Flight. They were great company and definitely helped get me through it. Total time 16 hours something... Note for next time: don't stop for so long at pitstops!

Highlights: making three great friends, running across a historic route I've always wanted to try, knowing I can push myself that far.

Low points: the monotonous road, getting running again after a pitstop, when it turned dark, attempting to get out of bed the next 3 days.

Lakes in a day was in mid-October: 48 miles (which was actually 53.6), with 4000m of ascent. It started in Caldbeck and finished in Cartmel, passing over the higher peaks of Blencathra and Helvellyn, among many more. Total time: 19 hours, 54 minutes. It was a race of two halves: the first over the fells and all off road; the second on the trails, a bit on road and some much smaller fells.



Highlights: beautiful views over Helvellyn, stunning scenery (when still light), running parts of a route I walked when at school doing my Duke of Edinburgh with my best friend Jen (I raised money for Cardiac Risk in the Young in her memory – <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HelenReal>), knowing I was going to finish with 2 miles to go!

Low points: thick mist, the dark, the fear of getting lost and going round in circles, attempting to roll over in bed for the next 3 days.

Turn to page 14 for Helen's tips on how to adjust to distance running.

James's Jaunts...

James Ryan has caught the running-for-charity bug! He told LL about the recent races he's done.

In the last 6 months I have had two races: the first was the marathon in Edinburgh, which runs out of the city down the coast and finishes in Musselburgh. I had a number of injuries leading up to this, including struggling in the Watford half marathon in February. This didn't stop me though! I got over this and completed the marathon in 4:13 before crashing over the finish line and rolling into a local Scottish pub watching rugby, which was scarier than the 26.2 miles. I ran for Macmillan Cancer Care and raised £850, which was an achievement, but just short of the £1,000 I was looking for.

After all the pre-marathon training and actually doing the marathon, I had the running bug again and competed over the summer for the Club on the track so that I could support Gavin and the lads.

In September I had another run in Dartford, a 10-mile event around the country roads, which I completed in 1:20. I was proud of this and it was a great way to start the winter season. I ran in the BUPA Great Birmingham Run, on Sunday 19 October. I ran for Macmillan again to try and get the £1,000 I wanted for the charity. I was happy to get 1:45 - only 5 minutes off my target of 1:40. If anyone would like to sponsor me, I have a Just Giving page online: www.justgiving.com/james-ryan7

I will keep you posted with the amount I raise. Thank you to everyone who has supported Macmillan.

James Ryan

2014 Track Stats

Thanks to George R, resident statto, for compiling rankings and Club records for the season and for working out the Newman Trophy results. See the Club website at www.loughtonac.org.uk for the full results.

Loughton Lines

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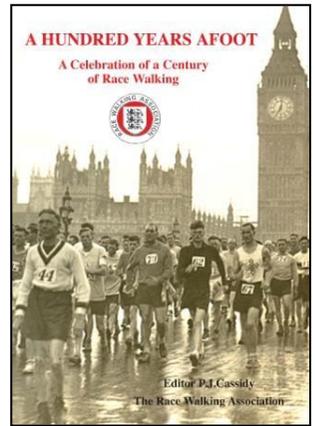
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Please send any LL articles or feedback to Mary and any photos to Tony.

A Hundred Years Afoot

Peter Cassidy, race walker extraordinaire, moonlights as a budding author. He told me about his latest book.

Why was a pioneer of race walking in danger of being hanged? On which greyhound track did someone once walk 3000 miles, dodging the dogs? How did licensing laws stimulate race walking? Who thought that dosing an athlete with opium and sulphuric acid would be beneficial?



In between not training and not racing properly, I have been busy with *A Hundred Years Afoot – A Celebration of a Century of Race Walking*, produced to commemorate the Race Walking Association’s centenary, and the answers to those questions can be found in its 460 pages.

The story of race walking from its earliest times is traced, showing how it developed from the unregulated free-for-all of the 18th and 19th centuries – when no one really knew how to distinguish walking from running – to the tightly controlled competitions of today. It might seem odd that no one *did* know the difference, which seems pretty obvious; so vague were the ideas that the first rules of the AAA, which were used for the 1908 London Olympic Games, stated simply: ‘In Walking Races, cautions and disqualifications to be left to the discretion of the Judges.’ The first President of the RWA took a more straightforward view: ‘It’s so simple. If you’re on the ground it’s walking; if you’re off the ground it’s running.’ It did, however, take decades to reach the modern (very nearly) accepted definition.

Many people think that the sport is highly peculiar and the book deals with some of the oddities, such as Ada Anderson, who walked 1000 miles in a music hall in King’s Lynn, occasionally playing the piano during her rest periods, and George Wilson, who, while imprisoned for debt, walked 50 miles in an exercise area 11 yards by 8. Indeed, a second-claim member of our own Club once finished a race by walking backwards and shouting encouragement to himself; no, it wasn’t me! It has been a strange old story, one way and another.

Peter Cassidy

[So that you don’t have to spend £15 just to find out, the answers to the earlier questions are: (1) John Fowler Dixon looked rather like Dr Crippen and was for some time under suspicion of murder; (2) Romford, where Bert Couzens did so in 1946; (3) In Wales at one time, the pubs could not open on Sundays but private clubs could; some of those who needed a drink on any day joined such clubs and a number of them took to walking; such unlikely club names as Roath Labour and Splott Conservative appeared among the results; (4) A strange 19th-century writer calling himself ‘Stonehenge’ reckoned that such treatment was good for the body; he also thought that ‘bookishness’ was bad for sportsmen and that working men and gentlemen had different digestive systems.]

Winter Fixtures

Nov

Tue 4	Chingford League Road (all)	Redbridge Circuit	19:00
Sat 8	Vets Inter-Club (M & W)	Loughton	11:00
Sat 15	Essex Cross Country League (all)	Hylands Park	12:00
Sat 29	Essex Cross Country Champs (Veterans, M & W)	Chigwell Row	11:00

Dec

Sat 6	Essex Cross Country League (all)	Chingford	12:00
Sat 13	Ware Cup (S/V, U/20, M & W) (incl. Club 5-mile CCC)	Loughton	11:00
Sat 20	Mince Pie Relay (all)	Loughton	11:00
Sat 27	Chingford League (all)	Trent Park	13:30

Jan

Sat 3	Essex Cross Country Champs (S, U/15, U/13, M & W) (including 7-mile men's club cross country champs)	Claybury	11:00
Sat 10	Essex Cross Country League	Braintree	12:00
Sat 17	Chingford League (all)	Chingford,	13:30
Sat 24	South of England Cross Country Champs (all)	Stanmer Park, Brighton	
Sat 31	Essex Cross Country League (Also alternative date for Essex CCC if needed)	Colchester	12:00

Feb

Sun 8	London Walks champs (promoted by Loughton AC)	Hillingdon	12:00
Sat 14	Chingford League (all)	Victoria Park	13:30
Sat 21	National Cross Country Champs (all)	Parliament Hill	

Mar

Sat 7	Chingford League Cross Country Relays (all) + presentations	Highams Park?	13.30
Sat 14	Essex Road Relays (S/V/U20, M & W)	Harwich	14:30
Sat 21	Orion 15	Chingford	10:00
Tue 31	Physical Shield Road Relay	Redbridge	19:30

As ever, remember to wear your Club vest in all races. All priced at £10. Contact Barbara Higgins on 020 8508 3230.

Club Contacts

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Coaching Update: Exercise of the Month – Squats

Rob is has an MSc degree in Strength and Conditioning from Middlesex University. He is a qualified Personal Trainer and UK Athletics Level 2 Coach. Rob currently delivers strength and conditioning sessions to distance athletes at Woodford Green AC & Essex Ladies. He is also Assistant Sports and Health Development Officer at Epping Forest District Council.



Variations include over head squat, goblet squat (and squat to box), front squat, back squat, split squat and sumo squat, plus changes in feet and arms stance e.g. single leg, narrow stance, feet turned in and out, and arms out in the front, behind the head or on the hips. Google these variations for more info. The guidance below is based on the over head squat, which is the most basic and is a whole-body exercise.

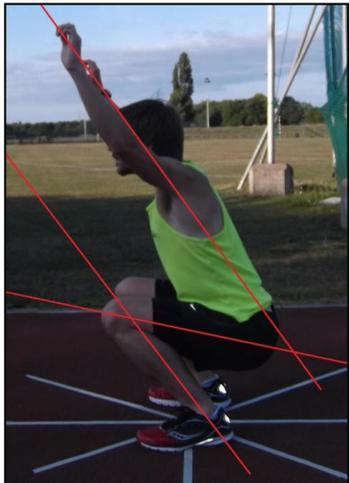
Why is it an important exercise for runners?

Squat exercises are vital in order for an athlete to develop overall strength, increase tendon and ligament strength, increase bone density and develop muscles around the lower back, hip and knee.

How do you perform a squat?

Start Position	<p>Head position: Head in a neutral position, eyes looking forward</p> <p>Posture: Shoulders back, chest up</p> <p>Feet position: Shoulder width apart, feet either pointed ahead or slightly turned out</p> <p>Arm position: Arms above your head</p>
Descent	<p>Head position: Head in a neutral position, eyes looking forward</p> <p>Breathing: Deep breath on initial descent and holding breath throughout the movement</p> <p>Hip/knee action: Flex together, must maintain upright posture, knees track over toes</p> <p>Feet position: Weight distribution towards midfoot to heel</p>
Bottom Position	<p>Head position: Still looking forward</p> <p>Hip/knee action: Must maintain upright posture, full depth squat (see photo below)</p> <p>Feet position: Feet flat to the ground</p>
Ascent	<p>Head position: Head in a neutral position, eyes looking forward</p> <p>Hip/knee action: Must maintain upright posture, knees track over toes</p> <p>Speed: Explosive phase of the lift, should not be performed slowly</p> <p>Feet position: Feet still flat to the ground, weight distribution heel towards to midfoot</p>

What does a good squat look like?



Over head squat

- Full depth (hip below knee)
- Head in neutral position looking forward
- Upright posture (chest up, neutral back)
- Knees track in line with toes (not seen in pic)
- Feet flat on the ground
- Parallel angle with ankle/knee to hip/shoulder

What keys thing do I need to be aware of when performing a squat?

- Avoid knees falling in (knocking knees) on the descent part. Knees must track over toes (think 'knees out' as a coaching cue).
- Avoid heels rising on the descent part. Stretch, and invest in a foam roll to use on your calves, if this occurs.
- Avoid rounding of the back or your chest facing down. Stretch, and use a foam roll on your chest, lats and back, if this is this occurs.

Always start with bodyweight exercises. Tackle any movement deficiencies before adding load and progressing. (You can use kettlebells/dumbbells for goblet squats; search YouTube for examples.)

What about reps/sets/load?

	Learn	Build	Strength	Power
Reps	12–15	10–12	4–8	3–5
Sets	2	2–3	3–4	3–5
Load % of Body Weight	20–50%	50–70%	85+%	95+%

I hope the above information proves useful to you. Happy squatting!

Rob Hyatt

If you have any queries relating to his article, do speak to Rob. Note that the information given above is of a general nature. If you want medical advice tailored to your individual circumstances, consult a medical professional.

Physio Update: Getting into Long-distance Running

As you read on page 8, Helen Real has been running very long distances! Here she tells LL readers what to consider before they embark on longer distances.

How to stop yourself from getting an injury if you increase your distance

The key is to give yourself enough time to train properly for the given event. Generic training plans are useful as a guide, but everyone comes from different fitness and running backgrounds. For example, if you are a new runner, don't aim to run a marathon at the end of the year. It takes time for your body to adapt to loading. Always do a strength and conditioning programme in addition to your training plan. It should include flexibility, single-leg strengthening, core exercises and plyometrics. Speak to Rob Hyatt for some ideas. Do not forget the upper body, especially if you're planning on doing ultras using backpacks.

Don't do junk miles. Make every training session count. Aim for one long distance, two speed (or one speed, one hills) and one middle distance session a week. Practise on the terrain you will run on. If you feel pain that doesn't go away with walking and stretching, rest for a few days, then seek help.

If the race you're aiming for is on terrain you're not used to...

Ensure you have good flexibility of your knees and ankles. Make sure you are doing exercises on one leg, such as single-leg squats, single-leg dead lifts and single-leg heel raises. Challenge your balance by using wobble boards or bosu balls or by drawing an eight-point star with one leg while balancing on the other.

Do plyometrics so that you are strong enough to hop on one leg with good control at your hip and ankle. Challenge your hopping further by hopping up a step, over a box step or down a box step. Set up an assault course that gets you jumping over items and side stepping.

Practise on the same terrain you will run your race on. Book into smaller races that are on similar terrain.

On race day...

Don't do anything new. Make sure you have practised and trained in all your kit beforehand. If you have trained for 9-minute mile pacing, do not set off at 8-minute miles. Have a race plan and stick to it.

After a longer race

Rehydrate. Take on sufficient fuel to help repair muscles. If possible, take an ice bath. Do some gentle stretching. Get a good night's sleep!

The week after a race

Do a gentle range of movement exercises and stretching. Try not to stay in one position for a long period of time, or you'll stiffen up.

How to get back running and training

Recovery time depends on the type of event you've done. For the first few days, take active rest. Don't sit down for long periods of time. Carry out a gentle range of movement exercises and stretches. If you have access to a pool, try some pool walking. Use a static bike with no or low resistance. This will help get the muscles pumping to clear the lactate and reduce swelling. If you don't have access to a bike or a pool, don't return to walking until you can do it normally and pain free.

Recovery time

Around 2–3 weeks for a half marathon, 4 weeks for a marathon and 4–6 weeks for an ultra.

Helen Real

If you have any queries relating to his article, do speak to Helen. Note that the information given above is of a general nature. If you want medical advice tailored to your individual circumstances, consult a medical professional.

Nutrition Notes: Fuelling your body to aid recovery after training

Lara has been a professional dietitian for nine years and works across West Essex from her base at St Margaret's Hospital in Epping. She works with both adults and children who require specialist dietary advice on a range of medical conditions such as diabetes, obesity, malnutrition, irritable bowel syndrome and raised cholesterol. She enjoys combining two of her favourite things in life... sport and food!



Why is it important to eat the right foods to aid recovery?

Our bodies are designed to recover from training naturally, but choosing the right nutrition can enable our bodies to replace important stores of energy (glycogen) and rebuild muscle tissue more efficiently. This enables us to train time after time and reduces muscle soreness associated with training. Recovery also helps our immune systems: low stores of energy can make it more difficult for our immune systems to respond to the threat of infections. Endurance training can cause a slight reduction in our immune system function for 3 to 24 hours. If you train for marathons, ironman events or ultra-running, this reduction in immune system function can affect you for up to 3 days.

When is the best time to start refuelling?

As soon as possible. The replenishment of our energy stores and muscles is greatest within the first 2 hours after exercise.

What foods are good to aid recovery?

Replenish glycogen stores and rebuild muscle by choosing fast-absorbing carbohydrate and a source of protein. Good choices include sports drinks or energy bars that contain both protein and carbohydrate, sandwiches/toast/wraps filled with lean protein (tuna, chicken, cottage cheese, peanut butter or egg), or a cereal such as Rice Krispies or Cornflakes with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk. It is also important to include some fruit and vegetables to aid recovery: exercise causes increased free radicals (unstable atoms in our bodies which can damage cells), but the antioxidants present in fruit and vegetables can help to reduce the harmful effect of these free radicals.



How much protein and carbohydrate should I aim for?

Aim for 1.2g carbohydrate per kg of body weight and 20–25g protein. This means a 70kg (11st) person will require 84g (1.2 x 70) carbohydrate and 20–25g protein to aid their recovery.

Other than choosing the right foods, what else will help me to recover?



Maintaining hydration is vital to make sure you allow your body to recover. An average adult loses around 1000ml fluid per hour while running. You need to aim to replace any fluid lost by 150% to aid your recovery, so for every hour running you require around 1500ml fluid.

Make sure you get enough sleep. Most of our growth and repair is done as we enter deep sleep phases during the night. Ideally we need around 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep to get the maximum benefits.

By following the guidance above you will give your body the best chance to recover, helping you to take part in as much training and competition as you want!



Lara Regan

If you have any queries relating to her article, do speak to Lara. Note that the information given above is of a general nature. If you want medical advice tailored to your individual circumstances, consult a medical professional.