Vol. 2, Issue 1 SPRING 2022

LEITH LASSES

Leith Harrier and Athletic Club

A Spring in our Step – Welcome to a fresh new edition of our Leith Lasses quarterly bulletin, we hope you enjoy it!

As the winter season has wound down, it's been great to see our female runners still hard at it in events such as the Dunedin Marathon, Balclutha half, Kelly's Canter, Crater Rim, Cromwell half, Silverstream Spin, Leith Harbour Free and, of course, a good presence each week at Parkrun. Ka pai!

A recent story of a local female runner had us with the warm fuzzies knowing the work we do really does make a difference! A local lass, who wishes to remain anonymous, has been rekindling her love of running after many years out of the scene, and has credited our supportive female running community with gifting her such an encouraging and inclusive platform to do so.
Constantly on a crusade for female empowerment in the running scene, we simply can't get enough of personal achievements, such as this story, brought about by the incredible running community we create and so dearly wish to share with all.

So cast your doubts aside, jump in and run with us!
And as always, if you have any content you wish for us to cover in our bulletin or any questions, concerns or feedback within the female running community please do get in touch – we love hearing from you!

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ANNA O'BYRNE

Fresh off her incredible effort at the NZ Trail Running Champs in Christchurch where she placed second in the 83km event (yes, 83km!!!!!), we took the opportunity to put a Q&A to Anna O'Byrne for a quick insight into her unique running world.

Ultra running and trails seem to be your forté. What is it about this type of running that you prefer, and physically or mentally what is it that gets you through the ultra training and races?

I love the adventure that comes with ultra running. It literally takes you anywhere and takes you out of your comfort zone. The places that I have run are truly breathtaking and there are many places I wouldn't have run without it being a race or training for a race.

Ultra running is also less about the time and more about the challenge, as two races can be the same distance, but the elevation and course/conditions can make your finishing times completely different. On the mental side, my Mum and Dad taught me as a kid that you should always finish what you start, so I take that mindset into every race and also my training programs. This ability to grind it out and understand that I need to finish what I start is what gets me through the long training runs and races when I start feeling like it's not going well and giving up.

I also have a couple mantras that I like to use on race day. My favourite being "the pain won't last forever, but the memories will". Music helps too! My husband Adam will load my phone up with upbeat drum and bass to get me through the later stages of a race and the beats per minute of the music is also the right tempo to run at!

Do you have a go-to pre-race food and / or ritual?

I have no real pre-race rituals or specific foods, just keep it consistent and don't change it up, especially before a big race. Just be smart and eat what works for you.

I do strongly believe in pre-hydrating in the days leading up to an ultra (up to 3 days before affects your race day hydration levels) and I think this strategy has got me through a few hot and humid races. Fuelling during an ultra is also key - this is something I am still working on. I find if I am feeling negative during a run, I am often calorie deficient and eating or drinking will often help lift my mood.

Leith Lasses chat with Anna O'Byrne

What has been the best and worst/ hardest thing about being a running mother?

There is nothing bad about being a running Mum, just lots of positives. I took time off running throughout my pregnancies and in the early post-partum period. Once I felt my body was ready, I re-introduced running into my daily routine. I spent many mornings running around Perth with the boys in the pram. I also loved passing people running while pushing my boys in the double pram - and if you have seen the size of my boys, this was quite a challenge!

Now that the boys are older, they enjoy coming to races and will sometimes join me on my shorter training runs on their bikes. It is also important for me to be the best mum I can be; I love having the time to do something for myself, which for me is running. I am then energized and happy when I am home with my family.

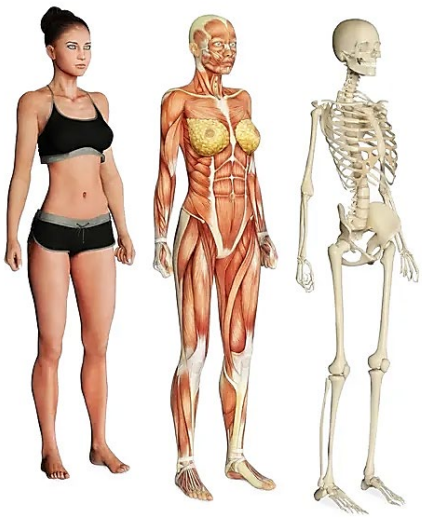
What tips do you have for female runners continuing to run past their 30s and/ or through motherhood?

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that female endurance runners peak well into their 30s. Only recently, a Mum won the Ironman World Championship on debut 18 months after having her first child. This is redefining what being a mum is and what you can achieve. All of my running PBs have been achieved after becoming a Mum because I believe I am stronger, mentally and physically - and running doesn't seem so hard when compared to some of the challenges Motherhood presents. My tips would be to listen to your body, focus on strength work and invest in a good running pram to include your kids in your running.

Make it part of your weekly routine and a way to get out and about. My kids know that Mum runs just like Dad swims and they play rugby. We all have our activities and support each other to achieve our sporting goals. Our boys now love being a part of supporting me at a big race and running across the finishing line, which is something I absolutely love and helps me get to the end.

Finally, if you had one piece of short-sharp advice for female runners what would it be?

Run because it is fun, don't get wound up in comparing yourself to others. Comparison takes the joy out of life and takes your focus off what is important about running, which is being active, connecting with others and having fun!



Female Anatomy Acknowledged in the Educational Setting

Every bone, every joint, for every body

Sitting in high-school science classes and the human anatomy subject rears its head with classroom props of a life-size skeleton along with a human head & torso model jam packed with removable organs. We take the lessons for granted and no one bats an eyelid at the fact these over used teaching tools only ever depict 50% of the human population's anatomy, being the male.

Fortunately in the 2020s world we live, health professionals are becoming more adept to the significant difference between the genders and questioning the use of the male body as the relative norm.

" One of the inherent dangers in using only the male body as 'anatomical normal' and the female body as deviation or variation from this, is perpetuating sexist assumptions. This unconscious bias will be carried by learners into their future interactions with the body; their own, and patients". – Dr. Yasmin Carter, UMass Chan Medical School

What this means for female runners:
By utilising both male and female models in teaching practise, the learner can better identify and acknowledge the differences in the female anatomy and use this in real world consultation. Health practitioners can more accurately diagnose ailments of the female runner and, in turn, prescribe treatments and/ or exercises appropriately tailored to the female, as opposed to assumptions based on male model learning practices.

Is that pain all in your head?

If we expect pain, we will feel pain!

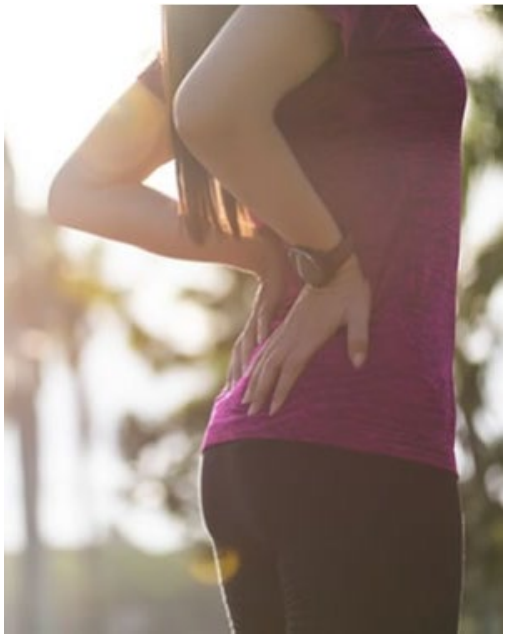
Can rewiring our mind be the key to overcoming chronic injuries? Don't dis it 'till you've tried it!

Take 50min out to listen to this enlightening podcast on Pain Science and Mindfulness where the interviewee covers how she overcame years of severe Plantar fasciitis.

Podcast worth a listen here:
open.spotify.com/episode/5rlX5UGtpRZexBnjYR5JuP

ACC Agree to Cover Birth Injuries

Why this is great news for post-partum female runners



Sarah was 2 months post-partum and previously led an active lifestyle enjoying her cycling commute to work and recreational hiking, yoga and running.

After medical clearance to resume her previous levels of activity, on her first few light jogs Sarah noticed painfully odd feelings in her lower abdomen and a trip to her GP confirmed a pelvic floor prolapse which was being exacerbated by actions such as running or jumping.

Pelvic Physiotherapy was recommended, and what would once hit Sarah in the pocket without ACC cover is from October 2022 covered in ACCs new policy.

Examples such as Sarah's are great news for female runners wanting to return to running. Where in the past many women would wait out birth injury symptoms, cough up large sums for specialist treatment or, at worst farewell their running days, today we can finally utilise affordable specialist services and support. Returning to physical activity is important and with these changes new mothers can return safely and in the best possible condition for their "new normal".

For more info on the ACC policy, check their website: https://www.acc.co.nz/im-injured/what-we-cover/cover-for-maternal-birth-injuries/

Props to all the runners who **NEVER FINISH FIRST**, **never get their name in the paper**, **never win a trophy**, and still work their asses off everyday to **be the best runner they can possibly be!**

Iron-Rich, No-Bake Muesli Bars

We all know how important Iron is for the female runner, especially those covering high mileage. Healthy iron-rich snacks are a great way top up our stores and the ingredients in these bars pack a punch in the mineral.

2 cups instant oats (“quick-cooking”, not rolled oats)

1 cup puffed rice cereal

½ cup almonds, chopped

⅓ cup pumpkin seeds

¼ cup chopped dried cranberries or apricots

½ cup almond butter or peanut butter

3 tablespoons coconut oil

¼ cup molasses

2 tablespoons honey

¼ teaspoon salt

4 ounces dark chocolate bar or ½ cup dark chocolate chips

In a large bowl, combine oats, rice bubbles, almonds, seeds, and dried fruit.

Melt the nut butter and coconut oil in a small saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat. Add the molasses, honey, and salt and stir until smooth. Pour wet ingredients over the dry and stir to combine.

Scoop the mixture into lined baking dish (approx. 20cm x 20cm). Spread out and press down evenly and very firmly.

Melt dark chocolate over low heat, stirring occasionally. Drizzle the chocolate evenly over the pressed mixture and spread out to coat the entire top. Place dish in the fridge for 1 hour, or until the chocolate solidifies.

Use a sharp knife to cut into 16 squares. Store bars in an airtight container in the pantry or fridge.

Come “Crush the Cargill” with us!

A very unique local event, Crush the Cargill will take place from 10am on Saturday 19 November at Bethunes Gully.

The idea of the event is simple: You run up and down Mt Cargill as many times as you can (or want to) in a 24-hour period. The winners being the man and woman who run up and down the summit the greatest number of times.

No entry or fee needed, just a small koha to The Valley Project is all that is asked.

Run, walk, skip, hop, crawl for one summit lap or for the full 24-hours, whatever you please! This is a great event to come along to and get to know your local Dunedin runners. See you there!