

### May blog update – *you've gotta remain flexible!*

Since January I've been working towards two races at Ultra-Trail Australia - the 22km, followed by the 951 stair challenge the next day. Although this has been my focus for a few months, I've tried not to think too far ahead and skim over my UTA preparation because bigger things are on my mind... 100kms of bigger things to be exact...!

The UTA 22km race has been my goal for the last couple of months and I'm hoping to run it comfortably but also run it well, rather than faff about and tell myself it's a training run. This is a bit of a story I tell myself if I feel under prepared, or not confident that I'll get a respectable result - but this time I want to push myself harder than usual and really give it my all. I've been using a plan from the Body Mechanic as a guide which has helped to instill some consistency and structure to my runs over the past few months.

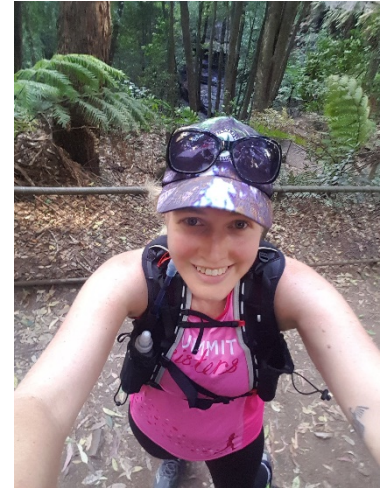
I'm going on about UTA but the point is, this recent block of training has been good base building for Surf Coast; giving me some focus for the first few months of the year, so I'm happy to roll straight into dedicated SCC training a week or so after Ultra Trail. I'm happy not to be starting from full sloth mode!

I've been preparing for this crazy adventure by setting up a schedule that is very specific to my life. I love having a plan laid out so that I can see where I'm going, as well as having stats from Strava to show me where I've been - but, even the best laid plans go to poo sometimes, so the key for me is to make sure expectation = reality.

I'm not going to get every one of these runs done. I may not even get half of them done. But having a flexible mindset instead of unrealistic expectations means that I won't get stressed about completing everything on my training schedule, because when I stress too much I get sick, or worse, get injured.

This past few weeks have been a great example of being flexible and working together with my husband Richard so that we can both get out and train and do what we love, without sacrificing too much family time. One Saturday we did some family bush walking in Katoomba after my son's soccer game. Afterwards, Richard drove home with the kids and I hung around on the trails to get some tough stair training in, and caught the train home afterwards in the evening. This was a pretty spur of the moment plan that we'd only talked about that morning. It worked for both of us as Sunday morning was then free for Richie to go mountain biking with his mates. Kids sport, family hiking, me running, Richie riding, and even some housework got done - we managed to fit it all in! It may be a rare occurrence but that's proof we can do it. Then... the following week, chaos ensued as Richie had some unplanned surgery so we've both had to 'adjust our expectations' quite a bit while he recovers! In practical terms, that meant a stop/start run alongside Tyler while he rode his bike, some pre-dawn hill climbs in a small tract of burnt out bushland near my house, and also skipping some runs - because family is more important.

In terms of physical training, I've had a look at the great resources on the Surf Coast Century website including the free training plans and advice. However rather than trying to stick doggedly to the 100k solo plan, I'm using it as a guide to block out my own peaks and troughs in training. I'll never be a 6 day a week runner... little and often may be one of the best and safest ways to prep your body for a big race, but it just doesn't work for me and my family. Plus, I have the advantage (even though it feels like a disadvantage sometimes) of having a husband who works one week





on call about every 6 weeks or so. This means that I have a forced recovery week where I can't run long or go too far from home in case he gets a called out on a job. This used to frustrate me a lot but I've learnt to embrace a recovery week where I take the dog for a few walks, maybe do some hill reps in my street, or run loops of our local oval, as well as making time for a bit of yoga and self care.

So... on-call weeks, school holidays, kids sport and work events determine the framework for my training. I've blocked out some days where I'd like to try and get further afield to the beach to run on the sand, or just days when I'd like to get a solid 5 hours on feet. Much to my massage therapists delight, I've planned to book a massage every 5 weeks or so, and pencilled in Glenbrook trail marathon as probably my last long training run about 4 weeks out from SCC.

Other than that... I'm just trying to muddle through and keep smiling! My last long run before UTA is done; 20km with 800+m vert, and this week I've reached out to my running clubs for tips about training for Surf Coast Century. I hope everyone else taking on this fabulous adventure is just as excited as me! Catch you next time,

Leonie

