

# WHY DO I RUN

Over the past year or so I have been asked why do you do it, run that is. It seems many people cant understand how someone could run most days, let alone run a marathon or greater every few weeks or for that matter why someone would want too.

There is no simple answer I can give but I will try to explain why I run.

I guess I should start with, that for most of my life I have been involved in sport of some kind. My back ground in sport has mostly been ball sports and mostly team sports. My current passion for running is difficult to explain or understand, even for me, and I keep searching for the answer, however I think

the main initial reason I started running in January 2005 was in an attempt to get my weight down and improve my general well being.

Approaching age 40 and weighing in at 105 KG and standing only 5'9" or 175cm tall I was far from in good physical condition. In general I was pretty unhappy with what I saw and how I felt, I always felt tired and had little energy.

Due to my excessive weight and poor fitness level the first month or so was restricted to cycling in an attempt to avoid injuries, then gradually bringing in short running distances and some swimming. Over a period of a month or so things slowly started to get a little easier, or should I say not quite as difficult. After a few months I started feeling a little more energetic and happier with life in general.

During the previous 5 years I had competed in 5 Olympic Dream 10K runs, with varying degrees of fitness levels, often turning up with little or no preparation and dragging myself to the finish line. My first Olympic Dream I ran with my sister Kylie who inspires me, even though she doesn't see how.

The participation in the Olympic Dream was largely as a result of my "Uncle Tom" who has been an inspiration to me all my life and continues to be to this day.

To help keep me motivated and ensure I kept at it, I set some goals, when I reached them I would set more. Initially my goals were fairly small, setting myself 5K runs then trying to improve on times over that distance. Then when I felt I could go further I would set new goals.

Eventually working up to 10K runs until they became a little easier. The more I ran the 10K distance the faster I could go. This led to improving my distance to 15K, which was something I had never achieved before.

Around May of 2005 my sister Kylie gave me a book called "Ultra Marathon Man" by Dean Karnazes. I'm not a big reader but once I started this book I couldn't put it down. Dean's human endurance feats seemed unbelievable, running races that covered distances from 26 miles to 200 plus miles, he runs in the snow and in heat most people couldn't stand still in, he runs over mountains so high and valleys wide, truly testing his physical and mental limitations, he truly is inspiring.

Dean's book was probably the single most defining point of my running to date. Until I read his book I thought 10 to 15K runs were about my limit, but now I have completed several half marathons, several 20-55K training runs and my first full Marathon. Since initially writing this I have completed more than five Marathons or greater distances. These were distances I never thought I could ever get close to achieving. In March 2007 I competed in the Oxfam 100KM Trailwalker in extreme heat during the day and wet freezing conditions overnight my team finished the event in 18 hours 15 minutes although the distance was reduced to 88.5km due to high fire risk in one section.

And without the inspiration and assistance of a few people this would not have been possible.

You know its strange how small things can achieve big results.

For instance my sister for giving me Dean's book that instilled belief in me that you can achieve things if you set your mind to it.

Our local fruit and veggie man Pat who supplies our fresh fruit and vegetables keeping me healthy on the inside along with his encouragement and support through giving me a training program that got me through my first Marathon.

Dr Jim at Moreland Chiropractic Clinic for the care given to my body. Jim keeps me "Well adjusted" and also my massage therapists James who keeps my muscles in order or just provides the soothing relaxing massage to help recover from a long run.

Even the local neighbour's that support and encourage me when I'm out training is a great source of motivation.

Last and by no means least my family who allow me the time to train and attend events and their encouragement and support during events that keep me going.

All of the above helps to provide the motivation I need to keep going and through this motivation and new found passion I am now embarking on what would have seemed impossible to me a couple of years ago but now I feel it is achievable with the right support and hard work.

**On March 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> 2008**, I will embark on an Ultra Endurance Marathon of **162KM in 24 hours**, that's "**One Day - 100 Miles**". Apart from the enormous personal challenge I have had an over whelming sense to do this to benefit others and not just for the satisfaction of personal achievement. Although the planning has started there is much to be organised. I have chosen to support CanTeen "the organisation for young people living with cancer". Now that I have approval to raise funds for CanTeen things are really starting to move ahead.

I'm not certain why I have chosen this cause, as I don't have family members or close friends or know anyone personally that has a child with cancer except to say that when I see stories about children who have cancer my heart is really touched by their positive attitudes to fight on and be positive about life. Their positive approach to life can be an enormous inspiration to others; they are truly amazing and inspiring to me. For me, I have my health and my family is healthy too and I thank God for that. I thank God that I can run and if I can make a difference for one young person to have a more enjoyable life, then that is my motivation and why I am going to run this "Ultra Endurance Marathon"

An added personal bonus to my running is my improved fitness and health generally. In addition the changes in my life appear to be providing motivation to others to also get out and challenge themselves, beyond what they thought was possible and the resulting lifestyle improvements they have gained are also amazing.

**So this is why I run.**

I run to keep fit, I run to stay healthy  
I run because I enjoy being in the outdoors  
I run because it helps me unwind and relax  
I run to help and inspire others  
I run to meet people  
I run because God runs with me