

9 REASONS WHY RUNNERS FAIL

***My observations over 23 years
Brad Pamp***



I. Unbalanced lifestyle stress

- I believe the greatest limiter to one's athletic potential is uncontrolled lifestyle stress – and the destructive hormonal imbalance it leaves on the body – physically, mentally & emotionally. Irrespective of your physical capability and potential, uncontrolled stress seems to make it very difficult to perform physically at your best. The mind/body connection is huge. Every facet of one's life goes into a great physical performance.
- If you're unable to control and balance lifestyle stressors, for example; excessive work & financial challenges, increasing family commitments and demands, self doubt when it comes to meeting your physical goals & expectations, uncontrolled pre-race nerves, and over-analysis of training and racing data, I believe, it makes it very demanding for the brain to function at its best when you need it most. When the brain is bombarded by uncontrolled stress, performance seems to be affected.
- If lifestyle is balanced, for example, with; stress-free aerobic-based continuous exercise and a balanced nutritional plan (limiting most sugars), I have found most can **avoid** – illness (immune deficiency), injury (excessive overload), weight gain, and a lack of motivation.
- My first recommendation when planning your athletic interests is to consider your lifestyle stress – and your options on how to balance it.



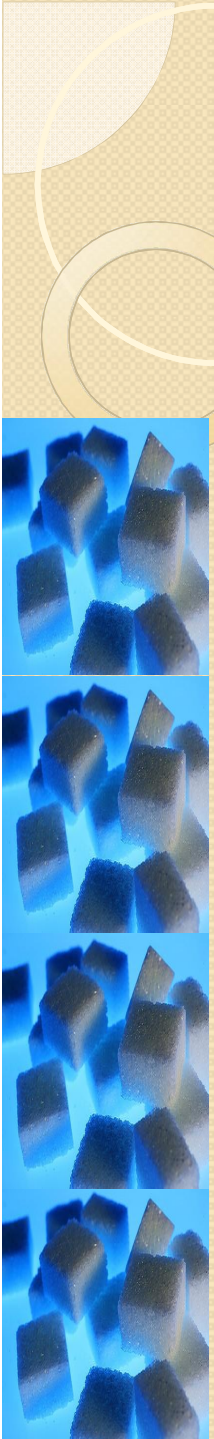
2. Overtraining

- Overtraining is essentially another form of stress – another significant reason for sending the body into hormonal imbalance.
- People commonly increase their relative workout intensity too quickly (classically training over and above their **Aerobic threshold** – which commonly leaves their body in an acidic state, with one major side effect being, a far greater stress on a struggling immune system. This can leave the body vulnerable to illness.
- Others increase training volume too quickly (before a sufficient platform of strength has been built – commonly leading to overuse injuries – shins, knees back complaints to name a few.
- Others place themselves in race conditions far too early – often leading to an unpleasant experience, which can kill motivation for future training & racing interests
- Know this - without taking the time and patience to build a sufficient aerobic base, specific strength endurance, and supplementing your training commitment with supportive recovery options, the result is nearly always ill-health, metabolic instability (weight gain) or injury.
- It's important to disregard/ ignore what others are doing – focus on yourself – again – most overtrain (racking up junk miles) – training without purpose
- Try not to turn every training session into a race. Determine your most appropriate **Aerobic Zone [AZ]**, wear your heart rate monitor [HRM], and test your progress weekly with time trials.
- Remember - less can often be best – and rest is **King**



3. Reduced fat burning

- Put simply – if you train too hard (before your base is built), more so, train over and above your aerobic threshold (which leaves your body in an acidic state), you'll teach your body to burn sugar efficiently (which of course is limited in supply – this is problem for endurance sports) – oh, and here's the worst bit – you'll end up teaching your body to store unused energy as stored fat – damn well – enter unwanted and unnecessary weight/fat gain.
- Equally, if you consume a diet too high in high GI (fast acting/ releasing carbohydrates – sugars) [this includes most sports drinks, gels etc], again, you'll unnecessarily spike your insulin levels – again, sending the message to favour sugars as your preferred fuel source.
- The two major problems with consuming excessive simple & starchy carbohydrates are: 1. running out of energy both in training & on race day (and relying on simple sugars as pick ups), and 2. finding it increasingly difficult to reach a perfect body composition – of lean muscle mass versus stored body fat.
- Once again, patience and consistency is required to become an efficient fat burner.



4. Poor technique

- I have assessed literally hundreds of runners, and it is clear that most, pre my *Free Fallin* workshop anyway; **over-stride** – meaning, they extend their lead leg out in front of their centre of mass (hips), landing and loading their weight through their heel. This results in a sudden braking of forward momentum – enter.>>> potential ankle, shin, knee, thigh, hip, & lower back injuries – and worse still, slows the athlete, and speeds the process to ultimate fatigue and stopping.
- Many hit the surface considerably harder than necessary – by ramming their foot into the surface – giving little consideration to cushioning at the point of impact.
- Many display poor posture by leaning forward from the hips – leaving body weight forward of their centre of mass – hence, encouraging overstriding yet again.
- Excessive rotation at the torso is common – resulting in, inefficient use of energy by excessive swinging their lead leg over the midline - enter potential lateral leg injuries.
- Poor choice of foot wear is also another reason people employ poor technique. I like the thought of allowing nerve endings in the bottom of our foot to play a role in cushioning impact. Heavy soled shoes can block this sensory feedback.
- So many focus too heavily on making split times or racing someone, opposed to making your form the centre of attention.
- At that classic point in a race or training session where breakdown occurs (usually with roughly 30% of the event to go), form tends to deteriorate. More than ever this the time for athletes to focus on their economy.
- Get taught – and PRACTICE



5. Inadequate recovery

- The important principle of **training balance** is the key for constant improvements: CONTROLLED WORKOUT + APPROPRIATE RECOVERY = TRAINING >>>>> IMPROVED PERFORMANCE
- It is fruitless training flat out for 60 minutes over and above your aerobic threshold (AZ), then, rushing off for a lengthy stressful day at work, coupled with a few quick fixes to top up your energy, like - sugary sports drinks, followed by a bagel with jam, 2 coffees, and then return home completely exhausted, eat late – usually looking for a quick filling/satisfying fat and sugary option, then sleep poorly for 4 hours, get up early and attempt to do it all again.
- Trust me, the only thing you'll gain from that session, after time, is, either illness , injury, weight gain, excessive tiredness or a lack of motivation – maybe all of them.
- Firstly consider your lifestyle – then consider the appropriate workouts and the recovery options that balance that session.
- If you're not in the position to recovery appropriately from a session – either drop intensity or the volume of that workout – or don't train at all. Further more, be super careful trying to make up for that missed workout the next day by throwing in a double day – again, this is usually unnecessary overload and can see you cooked in no time.
- Remember you need to leave energy for life – stacks of it. It's fruitless being sub-par in other facets of your life just for your training and racing interests– particularly if you're not earning a living from it.
- **Sleep is King** when it comes to recovery – better than compression attire, supplements, massage, ice baths, stretching, spin downs, alkalising foods etc, etc



6. Poor nutrition

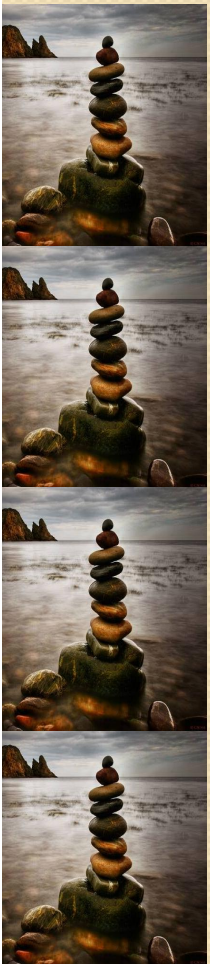
From my observation, many athletes don't reach their athletic potential because their diet presents with;

- Too high in sugar – resulting in frequent spiking of insulin (encouraging sugar burning – not fat)
- Too little in lean protein – often with selected protein being accompanied by saturated fat
- Some meals with next to zero protein – pretty much carb based
- Limited in monounsaturated fats like olive oil, avocado & nuts – which encourages fat burning (must be in moderation though)
- Too little in fresh vegetables – although fruit seems to be consumed it is usually sugar riddled fruits like banana's, mango's, watermelon and grapes. Fruits should really be limited – veggies however, should be loaded.
- Too high in alcohol – namely, beer (and yes I enjoy and drink beer) – I'm just saying if you're training solidly, I'd stay off beer – it seems to play a more significant role (more so than wine) with inflaming injuries. Not to mention disrupting your sleep with a huge sugar waking spike 4 hours after you put your head down – often preventing you from getting back to sleep.
- And finally a reliance on processed foods and dietary supplements.



7. Lack of consistency

- I've witnessed many highly motivated people roar out the blocks – overtrain > exceed their current fitness levels ability – expect extraordinary results in a short period of time, then be confused and frustrated as to why they haven't reached a stealth race weight, then, when it doesn't happen, lose motivation, miss a week of training, and lose any accumulated progress from training to date. It is rare that people develop the successful tools for endurance sports quickly – patience is required.
- It's inevitable and normal that some weeks you will not feel committed to training and a supporting balanced diet. There are ways to conquer this – in fact, to be successful, you must – remember, the effects of training are cumulative – you must keep the ball rolling – keep the fire burning. I would rather people train for 2 hours a week for 8 weeks, than 8 hours a week in 2 weeks, then nothing for 6 weeks. Remember – you train > you rest.
- I've found best results come when people commit to a structured and periodised plan – while reporting their weekly training results (Heart Rate based timetrials) through to the coach - this seems to produce continued motivation and allows both athlete and coach to objectively monitor progress to date (and importantly, consider possible changes to the individuals training program if need be)
- Over zealous training intensities & volume is a sure fire way to dent overall consistency – get yourself an individualised training plan, one that fits your lifestyle.
- **CONSISTENCY = RESULTS**



8. Starting races too hard

- In my opinion the #1 reason people don't hit their desired race goal (myself included), is pushing over and above their aerobic threshold during the first 20% of the race. – sending their body into an acidic state.
- Starting too hard ignites all the wrong fuel pathways, which can leave you tanked at the half way mark. Your race day emotions naturally amp up your energy usage – you must back it off at the start. Don't try and keep up with others – run your own race. More than often you'll catch most who burn their matches early.
- The second reason being, focussing too heavily on time splits – spending precious energy gawking at Garmin watches attempting to make time related goals. Get rid of the gadgets if you're the over analytical type. –they'll do your head in
- Finally, I'm seeing an increasing number of people consuming sugary options just before and in the first 20% of races – again – enter “burn sugar only” – this is dangerous as your sugar tank is limited.
- Just run – consider your form - pass people – and stay relaxed -this is how you'll perform at your best
- Warming up is equally critical – spend a good 10 mins of every workout simply easing into it – we don't want a body shock at the 2 km mark – most just thump right into it – well before their body has generated enough muscular heat to cope with the relative speed.



9. Lack of Belief

- If you don't believe you're capable of running 10km – you will find it too demanding
- If you don't believe you can run a marathon, it will take you down
- Training is simply an act of faith – it convinces you, you're good enough to get the job done – whether this be completion or competition.
- If you don't truly believe you're capable, it ain't going to happen.
- Discomfort in races and training seems to be related to how far you are from the finish line – usually around the 60 -80% mark of races. It is best to have mental plans for when you enter the pain cave. And trust me the cave is going to happen.
- Your most important session of the week is your long run, where, so many surrender to the discomfort in the final 25% of the session – either slowly, stopping or giving up. This feeling will happen in a race – no doubt. Generally, there is nothing actually wrong with your biology. We'll often believe we have; sore legs, feel de-hydrated, cramping, chaffing, feel out of energy, too hot, too cold, sore knees, sore lower back,? Research suggests it's simply your brain sending signals to slow you because you're under stress and may disrupt your body's equilibrium. It is a protective mechanism – that long runs can help you overcome.
- Focussing on your technique when the bomb hits seems to work best.

