**How did you become interested in running?**

I grew up in the country, so we were always running around for play. I remember having to run a time trial in high school, and then again in college when I tried out for the hockey team. I did well, but since I was stereotyped a “geek” rather than a “jock”, it never occurred to me to take running seriously. The first time I ran the Manchester Road Race, shortly after moving to CT as an adult, a friend who was a runner told me I could actually be a good runner if I tried. I laughed. Then another work friend convinced me to run with him at lunch each day to relieve stress. He was the one who exposed me to running all year long, even during the winter months. But what mostly propelled my interest in running was my son. When he became interested in running in middle school, we started doing 5K’s together. Doing something fun with your kid is the best.

**What would you recommend a runner do to improve their time?** Variety is the key: long runs, tempo runs, intervals (repetitive speed drills); varying distances and terrains; sometimes with a watch and sometimes without; etc. Always keep it fresh and fun.

**What should a runner do when they are running long distances?**

Have fun! Long runs are supposed to be slow and steady, at a conversational pace (your breathing should not be so heavy that you can’t carry on an extended conversation). They help your body adjust to the more vigorous strain of speed training. So I love going out on long runs to chat with friends, soak up nature, explore new routes, etc.

**What should a runner do when they are sprinting?**

I think sprinting requires more mental toughness than physical toughness. You have to be able to concentrate on your form, and placement, and how much you have left in the tank. The faster you run, the more it hurts, so the more you need to fight through it.

**How do you build up endurance?**

Once again, variety! Endurance is all about building up a tolerance. “Slow and steady wins the race” partly refers to training your body to do stuff it is not use to, to taking it further than you ever thought possible. Some people call long slow runs “training to train” because these help build the endurance needed to race further and faster. 75-80% of your training should be endurance (“quantity”) training, so that the smaller percentage of the rest of your training can be “quality” speed training.

**How does running cross-country compare to running on flatter terrain?**

It’s a lot more fun! Who wants to keep running in circles, covering the same spot over and over? Much more fun to dial up the challenge with hills and valleys, unique routes, uncertain footing from ruts and roots, etc. Besides, XC is where a smart runner has an advantage over a more “talented” runner, because smart runners can adjust to the terrain better by using their brain and their body.

**What running strategies do you use?**

Strategy usually implies physical factors, but I think the mental aspect is much more important in running, which is why I think running needs to be fun. You have to enjoy training because the percentage of time spent training to competing is more than any other sport. No one likes doing something that feels like work, but everyone likes doing something they enjoy. And if you are doing something you really enjoy, that you really feel passionate about, you are going to have a much better chance of “success”.

**What would you recommend eating and drinking in preparation for a race?**

I am a little unusual in that I don’t eat or drink anything before a race, unless it is a marathon. I am not recommending everyone do this. For me, it helps with my nerves and feeling light on my feet. The point is many people obsess about fuel on race day. I think you should simply eat and drink whatever makes you most comfortable and confident. It is much more important to eat and drink healthy (food pyramid, proper hydration) as a regular habit all the time. That way your body will be ready when you stress it in a race. It is just like studying for an exam – regular studying helps you learn much more than cramming the night before.

**How is running a physiological challenge?**

In layman’s terms, I have referred to “stress” a lot in my answers because running makes the body do something it is not necessarily used to. So you have to give your body a chance to get acclimated. This doesn’t mean stress, or running, is bad. Humans were born with the natural ability to run, that is how we had to find our food long ago. Like any stress, this is how we learn, and grow, and get better.

**How do you prevent injuries and what should you do if you get injured?**

Yet again, variety is the key. You need to subject your body to a wide range of stresses, not keep pressing the same stress over and over. This is why cross training and stretching (a little dynamic before, more dynamic & static afterwards) are so important. Staying healthy overall (by getting enough sleep and eating a healthy diet) is also important to avoid injuries. Most of all, give your body a chance to recover (with adequate rest and proper post-training nutrition) after stressing it. If you get injured, turn your focus 100% to dealing with getting healthy again. Don’t try to continue pushing your running while you heal. It’s like a timeout when you were a kid -- just accept the “medicine” so you can move forward again as quickly as possible, rather than prolonging the agony.

**How does hot weather affect runners?**

I hate hot weather. It is my kryptonite. In cold weather, you just put on more layers. Cold is not really dangerous, just uncomfortable. Hot weather, on the other hand, can be very dangerous, which is why hydrating (but not overhydrating, that is even more dangerous) is so important. There are charts that show how much a runner slows down for every 10 degrees hotter it gets from the ideal (which is somewhere are 40-50 degrees). So, like being injured, all you can do when it gets hot is to accept the circumstances and adjust accordingly.

**How should you train for a marathon?**

I think marathons (and ultras) are totally different than any other distance. They are more than twice as difficult as a half marathon because the mindset, training, number of variables that can go wrong, and stress are magnified exponentially. Unless you are an elite runner, marathons are more a test of endurance than a race. In my opinion, no one should even consider a marathon until they are fully developed physically (post college).