



PHOTOS: NICK MUZIK

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## **1** EXPLORE NEW ROUTES

Many trail runners get into the habit of running the same routes, and these can get predictable and boring. During my peak training weeks, I spend up to 20 hours a week on the trails and try to run a few new trails to mix it up a bit and keep things exciting. I often end up getting a bit lost and running for longer than I wanted to, but finish feeling energized from the adventure. I suggest that at least once every two weeks you go out and explore a new trail route, but take a friend and cell phone with you.

## **2** GET INTO THE GYM AND DO SOME CROSS TRAINING

A strong core will prevent a lot of the common running injuries, as well as improve your speed and endurance. Doing core exercises can feel like a waste of time, as unlike running, you do not build up much of a sweat and it will not make you fitter. However, in the long run you will stay relatively injury free. Cross-training such as mountain biking or swimming are great for recovery, as well as preventing injuries and keeping your muscles in balance. After a heavy week of training I always enjoy getting onto the bike or going for a swim to do something different.

# HAVE A GREAT TRAIL RUNNING YEAR!

# SALOMON



## XT WINGS 2

"THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S TRAIL RUNNING SHOE DESIGNS ORIGINATED ON PAVEMENT. OURS COME FROM RUNNING IN THE MOUNTAINS."

- FREDERIC CRETINON  
PRODUCT DEVELOPER - SALOMON TRAIL RUNNING FOOTWEAR

### 3 ENTER A TRAIL RACE

Having a goal in the form of a race is always a great way to motivate you to get out there and keep fit. A race will give you something to aim towards, and motivate you to get up on cold mornings to go out running when more sleep feels like a better option.

### 4 TRAIN HILLS TO GET STRONG ON HILLS

One of the toughest elements of trail running is running up and down steep technical hills and mountains. The only way to make this easier, and to improve as a trail runner, is to train on hills. Do not feel guilty walking up a very steep hill, as a fast power walk may be faster than running the hill. Get used to running down technical descents, but do not go too fast, as your legs will feel like jelly when you hit the flats, making the rest of your run very uncomfortable.

### 5 GET THE RIGHT GEAR / KIT

First on my gear list would be getting appropriate cold weather gear such as a waterproof jacket, base layer, beanie etc. It can be a clear summer's day, but on top of the mountain it can be overcast and freezing cold. I speak from experience - on a few occasions on Table Mountain I thought I was going to transform from the "Sandman" into a snowman.

Getting a pair of trail shoes will give you a lot more stability, support and protection on the trails, giving you the confidence to run faster on the technical sections. My recommended trail shoe would be the new Salomon Wings 2 - they are even lighter than the old Wings!

Some of my other favourite items of gear are: Oakley JAWBONES, Suunto X 10 wrist GPS and Salomon EXO tights.

### 6 RUN WITH A PARTNER OR IN A GROUP

For safety reasons, I would suggest running with a partner or in a group, especially on longer runs. The commitment of running with a group/partner will force you to go out running on the days that you are feeling lazy. Running with a stronger partner can also improve your running, but then also get a few runs in with a slower group/partner so that our legs get a chance to recover.

### 7 HAVE A PRE, DURING AND POST RUN NUTRITIONAL PLAN

A car will not run without petrol and our bodies can not run properly without the correct nutrition. Eating properly leading up to a run will give you a lot more energy, improving your performance during the run. During longer runs of over two hours, your body needs more than just water to fuel itself. This could be in the form of energy bars, gels, a sandwich, potatoes. After a hard trail run I would suggest drinking a recovery drink to replace all the electrolytes, salts etc. that you have lost while running.

### 8 PACK THE CORRECT GEAR IN YOUR BACKPACK

During the last few weeks I have seen a number of people running on the mountains without water, emergency equipment, cell phone etc. Anything can happen out on the trails and it can be hours before you see another person. I would suggest always taking more than enough water - trail runs often end up taking longer than expected. A basic first aid kit with a "space blanket", food/nutrition, cold weather gear, sunscreen and a cell phone are must have items for your backpack.

### 9 ONE ROAD RUN SESSION A WEEK

The hills and unpredictable surfaces on the trails make you a very strong runner, but cause you to lose speed. A good way to prevent this is to do one or two road runs per week to keep your leg speed up.

### 10 GO FOR REGULAR MASSAGES

Regular massages help prevent your muscles from getting tight spots, which cause imbalances in your body and can eventually lead to injuries. I go for a massage at least once every two weeks during high training periods and often the massage therapist picks up tight spots that I was unaware of, which would have led to me picking up an injury a few weeks down the line from a muscle imbalance.



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