

Some weekends I spend the whole weekend running, so my social life has gone out the window the last year or so. I run mainly around Table Mountain or Silvermine, even Cape Point. I spend so much time running in these mountains, I know them backwards. Apart from two years when I lived on a farm in Franschoek when I was quite young, I've lived in Hout Bay my whole life. I can run out of my front door and be in the mountains in two minutes.

When I'm training a lot, I wake up fairly early and normally eat breakfast. I've grown up eating ProNutro, and I still eat it – chocolate ProNutro. Probably have some coffee. With the deserts being hot, I try to do a lot of my running in the heat of the day, so often I'll start at 9 or, if I'm doing a shorter run, maybe 10 or 11. The runs vary from three hours up to nine, 10 hours. When you're running, you think so clearly. I have so many ideas when I'm running – especially training. When you run on the top of Table Mountain or on Cape Point, you don't see anyone for three hours. It's awesome, it's kind of your own space, you kind of zone out and go into your own world.

A lot of my training I'm doing with layers of clothing on to try and mimic the heat. I've got two jackets on so I get quite funny looks from passing-by cars, and also I run with quite a big backpack on because in the race you've got to carry all your own food and water and stuff like that. When I do finally finish, I'm kind of always so buggered I just want to sit down and chill in front of the TV or go to a friend's braai. I've stopped going out too much. If I know my friends are going on a big night, I don't really go too often these days. I just can't do both because I basically run Saturday and Sunday. I think a lot of it is discipline because I think I'm always one for extremes. I used to party quite hard. In more of a relaxed stage after a race I'm doing a bit of mountain biking as well. Often I'll go for a ride with friends, whether in the mountains or towards Camps Bay, have coffee that side, and ride back.

I try mix it up. I train in four-week phases. I'll start with an easier week and then build up and get to a big weekend, which I call a block weekend. I do a long run Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday so it's kind of four days of solid running. Normally I'm like a vegetable the whole weekend. I don't do too much. And

then I have a recovery week after that. And then I start building up the week after that again. In a big weekend I'll probably do a five-hour run on the Saturday and a six-hour run on the Sunday, and a smaller weekend I'll do a three-hour run on a Saturday and the Sunday, or a three-hour and a four-hour.

On my weekends, I also spend quite a bit of time emailing people. I get quite a few emails from random people asking me what must they take nutritionally, they're doing this race. I watch quite a bit of sport, rugby and cricket. Or hang out at friends' houses. Nothing too hectic anymore. I go watch rugby quite a bit at Newlands. Sometimes I meet old school friends at Forries. I might go there before or after rugby. A lot of my friends are very into surfing, so often on the weekends I'll go down to Llandudno beach. I've got a few friends that are lifesavers so if I do a big run and I just feel like chilling, then often I'll just go down to the beach, go for a swim, attempt to surf, but I haven't really been too much lately. I'm too tired to try stand up on a surfboard after a long run.

I've got lots of different groups of friends. The guys I used to hang out a lot with, kind of when I used to party a bit more, I still try see them, but I don't really see them as much. I spend more time with the people I train with now – that I've actually met through running – and obviously because they're also training a lot, they're not going to go and have a huge Saturday night. So often I'll just go out to Col'Cacchio with them for dinner or have one or two beers at Caprice – something a bit more chilled out.

I eat quite a lot of pizzas. I'll watch what I eat slightly, try to stick to fairly healthy food, but I'll still eat fast food, drink beers. You've got to live as well. Obviously my alcohol tolerance is not that great anymore but maybe it helps my training. The days when I have to run with a hangover – I call it dehydration training – it kind of helps me for the desert.



Ryan Sandes

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