

# What I think about when I'm running

EDINBURGH OPINION PASSION

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One, two, three, one, two, three, choo, choo, train,  
choo, choo, train.

No, I'm not having a meltdown on paper, this is the beat in my head which allows me to hit the ground with my feet 3 times a second. Why? I started running that's why.

I've never been much of a runner. I grew up skating and cycling which meant going really fast and overtaking the running fraternity. You always hear people harp on about doing marathons and I always joked at gatherings with friends saying...

"How do you know if someone is training for a marathon – because they'll tell you" oh the laughs!

The runners would then pipe up and comment on how it's the workout that burns the most calories, that it's strenuous on your body, that you'll need to buy a foam roller and maybe even go to physio in order to keep your muscles in shape.

What a load of rubbish I thought. Pah, runners...they tell all the jokes.

Then my oldest friend (by years I've known them, they aren't 104 or anything) and I decided to start running so we could compete in a duathlon back home where we grew up. Earlier in the year we'd taken part in a 100km bike race around Loch Ness together which had been something I chose. This time was his turn and he wanted to do a duathlon.

I said to him "that's swimming and cycling right?"

"Running" he said. "Up hills and everything".

Oh the laughs!

One, two, three, one two, three.

After gritting my teeth and signing up to the duathlon I then thought I could just get online and order a pair of trainers to get started, however I was advised to go to a local running shop for a 'fitting' – a fitting. I didn't realise I was getting a suit?! After an hour and a half in this store which incorporated multiple runs on a treadmill to have my gait analysed I finally ended up with a pair of trainers. I was now supposedly ready, ready for my first run.

Pile, of, crap, hate, this, run.

I hated my first run. I was getting overtaken by cyclists and skaters and my body was aching pretty early on. I'm a relatively fit person so this revelation that running was beating me sort of p\*ssed me off, however I kept going. No music. No running partner. Just me, the road and my £120 running trainers.

One, more, mile, one, more, mile.

I thought I'd hate running without music, I do everything with music. I didn't want to be alone with my thoughts on an hour long run, there's only so many times you can sing the words to When Doves Cry by Prince in your head without it getting boring (sorry Prince...the keyboard is off the scale in that track).

Turns out I've really enjoyed running with my thoughts. I've thought about life, about death, about people I love, I've thought about places I've visited and would still like to visit. I've thought about projects I've started and not finished, about projects I'd still like to start. I've thought about people who I lost contact with and would like to see again. I've remembered times with family and friends, times that I've laughed and times where I've cried. As I run around Edinburgh I am reminded at how beautiful it is to be outside with trees and birds and all that stuff. I never thought about that with my headphones on whilst cycling.

Ready, set, go, ready, set, go.

The duathlon is in a months' time. I find myself on the foam roller in the mornings and now catch myself telling people that I'm taking part in a duathlon and how positive for my overall health I've found running.

My name is Andrew Robbie, I think I'm a runner!

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