

August blog update – Support and self-belief

Hi everyone! It's now well under 50 days till race day and I hope everyone is hanging in there. Me? I'm mostly managing OK apart from the odd meltdown and freak out!!

Some of the resources coming through on the Rapid Ascent facebook page have been a lifesaver for me. Sam's course run-throughs are brilliant for an out-of-towner like me, really helping me to get my head around the course. And David Eadie's live Q&A session in particular really helped me last week to get some perspective and acknowledge that 'it's ok not to feel good at this point in your training'. I have a few niggles but am not particularly injured - I'm just getting exhausted by the constant self-talk: am I doing the right thing, am I training too much, not enough, and what have I got myself into!?! That Q&A helped put so many fears to rest and just having some validation that the seemingly excessive amount of walking I'm doing is perfectly fine and will stand me in good stead on race day.



The enormity of the task at hand has recently sunk in. I'm a big fan of having a positive mindset and although I 100% believe I can finish, I don't want to underestimate the course either. I want to go in bit scared and a bit raw. Trying not to think of everything at once - all the things I have to do and organise and plan - is helping to keep the mind-melt at bay. One thing at a time... there are lots of checklists starting to materialise here!

I have also finally stopped the wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth process that was deciding on whether I needed a crew or not. I do - but that wasn't an easy decision to settle on. I wondered if relying on other people and getting help might take away from the experience, as though I hadn't really done it, or I'd done it the easy way. That sounds embarrassing and silly to put into words, but I'm all for transparency and it was taking up so much mental space for a while there that I feel I have to be honest about it.

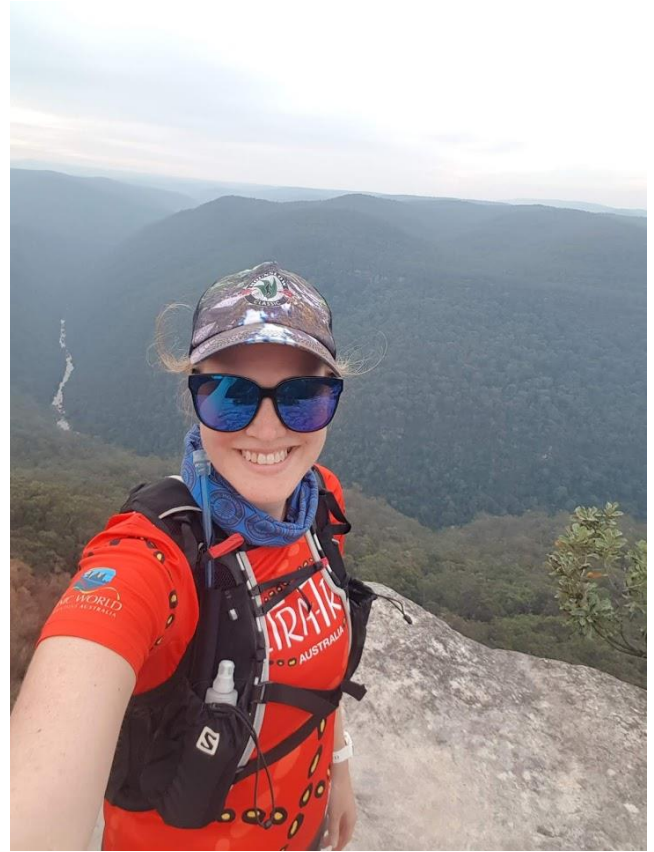
I love my girl squad - my local Penrith Running Mums and Summit Sisters and assorted Blue Mountains runners - but I'm a contrary, stubborn and fiercely independent person who doesn't accept help easily. Finally realising that I had to just get out of my own way and accept help was a lesson in itself.

My wonderful friend Rita has unselfishly agreed to lending me her caring, gregarious, no-nonsense brand of motivation for the weekend. My mum Bev and her partner Jim are also coming along to provide emotional support, help with practical stuff like driving, and prove that running is definitely not a solo sport. My husband Richard will be hanging at home with the kids, generously taking one for the team while I fuff about exploring pretty beaches.

So - flights are booked, crew plan is slowly coming together - although for someone who doesn't have a head for numbers, calculating how long I might take and when I'll get in to checkpoints is challenging. I've reached out to a great bunch of coaches on Facebook and had lots of advice about how to put together a crew plan and what my crew needs from me, so at the moment I'm trying to do a mental walk through and

think of what I'll need as the race wears on, as well as 3 different ETA times for the checkpoints - one if I'm having a perfect day, one if I'm trotting along happily, and another time if things are turning sour!

Speaking of turning sour - I had one of those crappy runs recently that hit you every so often just to remind you that you're human. I was all set for a long day out - 5 hours on feet, my longest yet - along part of the coast track in Sydney's Royal National Park. I'd never been here before so was looking forward to exploring somewhere new. Slightly out of my comfort zone in an unfamiliar place, and feeling like I needed to absolutely maximise this one and only time I'll be able to train on the beach, I had that high-alert feeling as I set off. I underestimated the trail - it was hugely technical and just not runnable in parts, combined with an unseasonably hot day in Sydney, and I was finding it hard to keep my heart rate under control. I ended up having a panic attack, sitting on a rock and having a cry, and wondering why it was so damn hard for me today. I did try my mental strategies like smiling to myself and positive self talk to try and get myself back into a good mindset - this helped a little but I kept finding my thoughts spiralling again. I pulled the pin after 4 hours, disappointed in myself and still emotional when I got home over an hour later. But, like I said earlier, watching that David Eadie video afterwards brought me down to earth a bit. Yes, it's hard. It's supposed to be hard. My husband Richie gave me some tough love, saying that I need to be tough to run 100KM. Well yes, good point!



Apart from this little hiccup training has been going ok. Finding time to fit in the longer Sunday runs has required a bit of creativity, and this week I'll step up and try that 5 hours again! I've got up to 4.5 so far, looping back and forth around a beautiful bird-filled trail mid way up the mountains. Deep breath - 5 hours(!) - I can do this!

Also, my fundraising for One in Five is going slowly but every little bit helps :)

Take care everyone and hang in there!

Leonie