

FITNESS CHALLENGE

# Going the distance

Each week **Rachel Grunwell** tries a new fitness challenge to bring you the lowdown.



## Auckland Marathon

**What is it?** An annual 42km run in Auckland, sponsored by adidas. It starts in Devonport, goes over the Auckland Harbour Bridge, then along the waterfront to St Heliers and back to finish at Victoria Park. A record 17,000 runners participated last weekend including in shorter run options. Runners raised more than \$1 million for charities.

**What's needed?** Registration, running gear.

**The experience:** Do one thing every day that scares you, Eleanor Roosevelt famously said. Well, I decided to scare myself and run a marathon. I had no idea if I could, so I thought I'd try. But I'm not totally silly and I went in prepared with extensive training behind me. Thank God.

Trainer to the stars Gaz Brown helped me train up to 10 hours a week through his club, GetRunning, which helps anyone who has ever dreamed of running a half or full marathon.

He prescribed running, yoga, pilates, strength work and through the club I heard experts talk about nutrition and running science. I also ran two half-marathons, one in Taupo and another at the Sydney Running Festival.

So, when I got to the start-line of the adidas Auckland marathon, I felt ready to conquer this goal and I was inspired by fellow GetRunning members.

I loved their stories about their marathon triumphs and I dreamed of one day following in their footsteps.

When race day arrived I was excited and terrified. As the sun rose at 6.10am under a red-smeared sky the start-gun blew and my marathon effort began alongside pal Saatchi Goldwater.

The first half of the course through the North Shore was undulating. At the top of one hill, I could see swarms of people for miles ahead wearing the official orange marathon T-shirt. It looked like a packet of Jaffas rolling down the road. Highlights were the Maori cultural and drumming groups who performed, a welcome change from the drum-beat of masses of feet. Running over the Auckland Harbour Bridge was choice — sparkling seas beneath, little boats in the marina and that famous city ahead.



Saatchi Goldwater, left, and Rachel Grunwell tackle their first marathon. WWW.MARATHON-PHOTOS.COM

### Product profile

#### TomTom Runner GPS Watch \$249

This has a large display and a one button control. So it's easy to navigate. You can change the strap colours too.



By 21km, I felt fantastic. But by 32km, I was doing it tough and my stride became a run/shuffle/run but I told myself "I'm going to do this", and I did.

I also felt thirsty and ravenous; my feet were bricks and my left knee screamed "this hurts".

At this point, a friend and marathoner Allister Macgregor had promised to meet me. He knows this stretch along the beautiful seaside of Tamaki Drive can get to runners, and ambulances collect those who collapse. If I'd had the energy to talk I might have begged Allister to carry me. But all I could mutter was one-syllable grumpy responses to anything he asked.

Along this road my kids screamed "go mum" and some friends cheered. My mate Jo painted a message on her car windscreen: "Pain is temporary. Success 4 Ever!"

Allister told me there were just a few kilometres to go and I dug deep and ran fast for a strong finish. As I strode through the arch, the weather turned and my salt tears mixed with rain. I had conquered something that scared me. I was miles behind the winner — Timaru's Samuel Wreford ran 2h 18m 57s — but my time of 4h 16m 03s was quicker than the average, which was 4h 23m.

Allister told me to be very proud. It's bloody hard and it's meant to be. That's why it's called a marathon. Afterwards, I walked like a cowboy poised for a shoot out, but today this mum is elated to call herself a marathoner. It's an indescribable pleasure and as my kids delight in my medal. I hope it inspires them to work hard for their dreams, too.

**Worth it?** It's a well-run event that showcases how stunning Auckland is.

**Try it:** November 2 next year.

**Rating:** 10/10.

**Rachel wears:** Oakley Radarlock glasses, \$329.95, www.oakley.com, Lululemon Mod Move Singlet, \$79, Energy Bra, \$69, Run For Your Life Crops, \$135, www.lululemon.co.nz

## Little helpers



**1 Ready, Set, Glow:** Air Max Glow Thea, \$160, available at selected Nike stores, phone 0508 47 84 78



**2 Run for the Sun:** Mod Moves Singlet, \$69, lululemon.co.nz



**3 Best Foot Forward:** Fitness Foot Balm, \$43, drhauschka.co.nz

**4 Short and Sweet:** Track Attack Short, \$65, lululemon.co.nz



**HURRY BOOK NOW! LAST WEEK**

BEFORE

# SPRING Makeover & Photoshoot

TREAT YOURSELF OR SOMEONE SPECIAL

To a beautiful spring makeover & photoshoot **\$155\***

Gift Vouchers Available \*

**BODYSHOTS**  
*glamorous at heart*

www.bodyshots.co.nz (09) 473 1555

Special conditions apply 10113