

THE RUN DOWN

THE OFFICIAL SYDNEY MARATHON MAG

Issue 1, February 2024

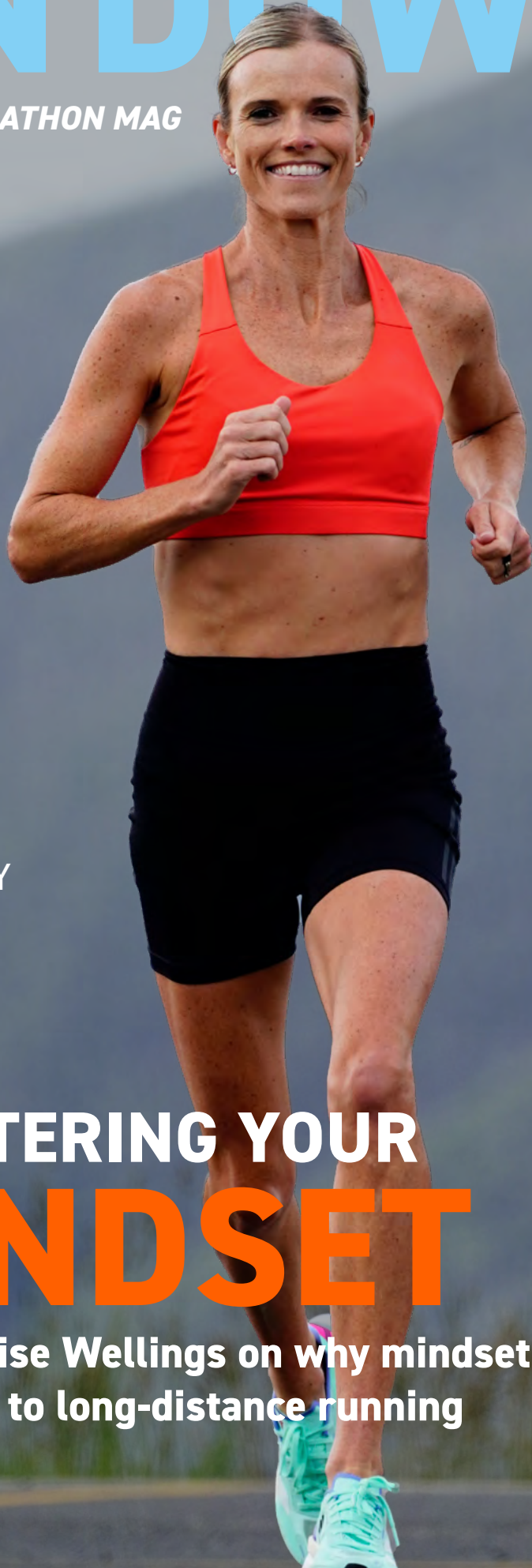
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8 DOUBLE PASSES
TO THE 2024 TCS
LONDON MARATHON

BACK TO BASICS
HOW TO RUN
MORE EFFICIENTLY

SPOTLIGHT ON
TV & RADIO PERSONALITY
MERRICK WATTS

MASTERING YOUR MINDSET

Olympian Eloise Wellings on why mindset
is the key to long-distance running



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Enter for your chance to win two tickets to this year's TCS London Marathon

THE WARM UP

ALL THE LATEST GEAR, NEWS & TIPS FROM THE RUNNING WORLD



WRIST CANDY

Running and smart watches go together like protein and shakes but knowing which one to choose can be challenging. Luckily, the new Coros Pace 3 offers impressive GPS accuracy, advanced heart-rate sensors, a touch screen and offline music, as well as other high-tech features. Plus, you can access a free 5km to Ultra training plan. What's not to like?

From **\$399**, [au.coros.com](https://www.au.coros.com)

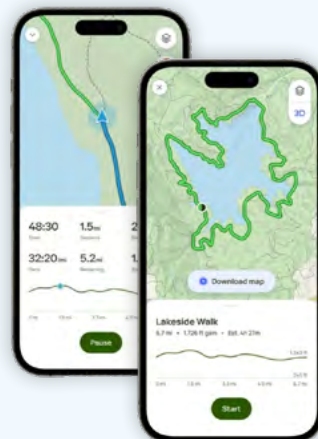


DID YOU KNOW 48% OF THE SYDNEY MARATHON PARTICIPANTS IN 2023 WERE FIRST-TIME MARATHONERS?

OFF-GRID ADVENTURES

If you're looking to ramp up your weekend runs, then the AllTrails is for you. Explore your local area with offline maps, wrong-turn alerts, and detailed planning features. From scenic city walks to challenging bush trails, there's a reason that this app was awarded the iPhone App of the Year in 2023.

[Get it now - Apple & Google](#)



STAY PROTECTED

Australian rates of skin cancer are on the rise, so don't forget to protect your kisser. This residue-free, SPF 30 lip balm is also water-resistant for 80 minutes - perfect for your post-run dip.

\$15.99, Salt & Stone



CUT THE GLARE

With a unique low bridge fit and non-slip grip, these running sunglasses from Oakley might just lead you to a PB.

\$253, Oakley Corridor



SPOTLIGHT ON: SYDNEY STRIDERS

**TO CELEBRATE THIS ICONIC RUNNING CLUB
TURNING 45 NEXT YEAR, WE SPOKE TO MEMBER
(AND RUNNING LEGEND) GILBERT GADDI.**



Firstly, do you have to be an elite runner to join Sydney Striders?

“Not at all. We’ve got training groups for speed demons and cosy-paced warriors alike. It’s about enjoying the journey and having a laugh along the way. After all, it’s a marathon, not a sprint - unless you’re racing for the last slice of watermelon!”

What’s your best advice for first-time marathon runners?

“Running a marathon is like baking cookies; it requires patience, a sprinkle of determination, and the understanding that it may get a messy. So become part of a group - it is much easier with support.”

What do you say to anyone considering joining a running group?

“Do it! Joining a run club is like finding your running soulmates... It’s not just about ticking the kilometres; it’s about the camaraderie, meeting like-minded and experienced folks, the shared blisters, and the post-run food chats!”

How do you feel about the Sydney Marathon becoming the seventh Abbott World Marathon Major?

“It means more spotlight, more prestige, and more fabulous running vibes. It’s like our beloved Sydney Marathon just got a glittery crown and joined marathon royalty!”

Want to join up? [Visit Sydney Striders for more info](#)

NEED NEW TREADS?

The new GEL-NIMBUS 26 from ASICS has just hit the shelves, and we’re excited. To hear why this new model has got everyone talking, we sat down with 2023 Sydney Marathon 10k winner and ASICS ambassador Ed Goddard.

Ed, what excites you about this new GEL-NIMBUS 26?

“The new GEL-NIMBUS 26 is a great update to the redesigned version released last year, with an all-new outsole that will add grip and durability in all conditions to the soft and bouncy ride, which runners love.”

What’s your advice for wearing in the new GEL-NIMBUS 26?

“I add new shoes into my rotation slowly to adapt to the subtle changes. Easy-paced shorter distance runs are the best way to break out a new pair to give your feet time to get accustomed to the fit and support. When buying new trainers, I recommend going to a specialist running store to find a pair that suits you perfectly. And while you’re at it, pick up a second pair for your fast runs and race day!”

[\\$260, asics.com](#)



MASTERING YOUR

Mindset



OLYMPIAN ELOISE WELLINGS ON HOW TO HARNESS THE POWER OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN YOUR RUNNING

Sure, she might hold the record for the fastest 10,000m by an Australian woman at any Olympics Games, but long-distance runner, Olympian and mother-of-two Eloise Wellings' impressive career has been anything but smooth. In fact, it was a panic attack at the warmup track of the 2016 Rio Olympics before running that very time, which became the catalyst for her renewed interest in harnessing her mindset and using it more in her running. "It felt like it came out of nowhere! I was in the best shape of my life, my training had been perfect... but I just felt so overwhelmed about what was ahead of me," she explains. As she started spiralling with "paralysing thoughts", she realised the only way out of that harmful mindset was to be present and focus on the things that she could control. So, she broke things down, step by step, for what she had to do to get to the actual starting line - beginning just with her breathing.

“ I WAS BEING HELD BACK BY THOUGHTS THAT WERE UNHELPFUL AND I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Facing adversity and winning

Wellings is certainly no stranger to overcoming disappointment. Injury plagued her early years when she suffered numerous stress fractures that prevented her from competing in three of the five Olympic Games she's qualified for. And just last month, while competing in Spain, she experienced a temporary blindness mid-marathon, yet still managed to finish with an Olympic qualifying time of 2:25.47. No doubt her legacy is one of career-halting setbacks and awe-inspiring comebacks. Throughout it all, she says she has gained indispensable insights into how our mindset can help propel us to greater results - in life and, of course, in running. "My philosophy is there's no better place to train your mind than preparing for a running race," she explains. "The challenges I've experienced in running have allowed me to get the best out of myself."

Defining mindset

But what is 'mindset' and how can it affect how we perform? Well, according to Rory Darkins, a positive psychology academic and Wellings' mental skills coach, our mindset is like a "lens we see ourselves and situations through". But contrary to what you might think, to have a good mindset doesn't mean you need to be born with one. In fact, Darkins believes we can always improve our mental game with focus and practise.



Eloise has qualified for five Olympics but was only able to compete in three. Image: AAP

"Our mental skills might be invisible, but they are just as trainable as our physical skills," he explains. "Developing them can unlock new levels of performance and wellbeing." Wellings agrees, adding that harnessing your mindset can help whether you are new to running or a seasoned pro. "Elite athletes aren't any different to the amateur athletes, we all have the same thoughts and mental challenges during races or during training," she says. And although building up your mindset can take practise, the important part, she adds, is to not assume it's for just professional runners. Mental skills training is for everyone.



Control your mind games

Mastering the powers of our mindset has become such a passion for Wellings, together with Darkins, they've created a ground-breaking course, Marathon State of Mind. Normally priced at close to \$1000, access to the six-week course (which includes a personalised mental game plan) is free to all 2024 Sydney Marathon registered runners. "Our Marathon State of Mind course is for anyone who wants to optimise their state of mind and realise their full potential," she explains. "Through world-leading mindset education we can help you make your mind your greatest asset."

FOUR STEPS FOR MINDSET GROWTH

STEP 1: Understand your why

The first step is to understand why you are running or training in the first place. "Knowing your 'why' in itself is so powerful; when you go through difficult days in your running, you can think about why it's so incredibly important to persevere," Eloise explains.

STEP 2: Build your self-talk

Next, take notice of what you're saying to yourself when things are not going well. "Be mindful and reflective of what

you're actually saying to yourself when you're in pain," she says. "Try to understand 'Oh, my brain goes there but I don't have to associate with 'I can't do this.'"

STEP 3: Be in the present

Use that self-talk to help keep your mind centered on the moment and in the race, also known as being "in the flow". "So much of long-distance running is getting 'in the flow', where you stay in the present moment, not worrying about what is ahead, not fixating on mistakes or how far you've come," she explains.

STEP 4: Practise tech talk

In addition to honing your own self-talk, a helpful strategy mid run is to embrace any pain or discomfort with 'tech talk'. "Ask yourself, 'How can I run efficiently? What's my body doing in this moment?', then notice your breathing, relax your shoulders and try to manage your form," she explains. "In my recent marathon, I said to myself, 'be calm and efficient'. That meant calming my breathing down and going back to the things I can control." **SM**



If you're interested in securing a spot on the next Marathon State of Mind course for FREE, simply register for the Sydney Marathon and then visit:

marathonstateofmind.com

RUNNER PROFILE

MEET JASMINE AL-ZOUBI

Sydney-based cardiac sonographer Jasmine Al-Zoubi successfully ran the Sydney Marathon last year for the first time... almost by accident. We sat down with her to find out about her training, how she felt during her first visit to the Sydney Marathon Run Club and how running a marathon has changed her life.

Jasmine, you wanted to sign-up for the half marathon last year, but it was full, what happened next?

“Yes! Six weeks out, I realised there was no hope of running the half. So, the first thing I did was look up marathon training plans to calculate how far ‘behind’ I was in my training. At that point, the longest distance I’d run was 21.1km - ha! And I think I deluded myself into believing that I had enough Sundays to ‘catch up’. A couple of days (and many pep-talks in the mirror) later, I took the plunge and officially signed up for the marathon.”

Your first visit to the Sydney Marathon Run Club was shortly afterwards, how did you feel?

“Nervous. Just really, really nervous. At that point, I was arriving at the last run club event the club was hosting. I was very used to running alone at my own pace, and honestly, I was having a serious case of ‘imposter syndrome’. I felt like everyone would just look at me and know I’m not a ‘runner’, or that I’m too slow.”

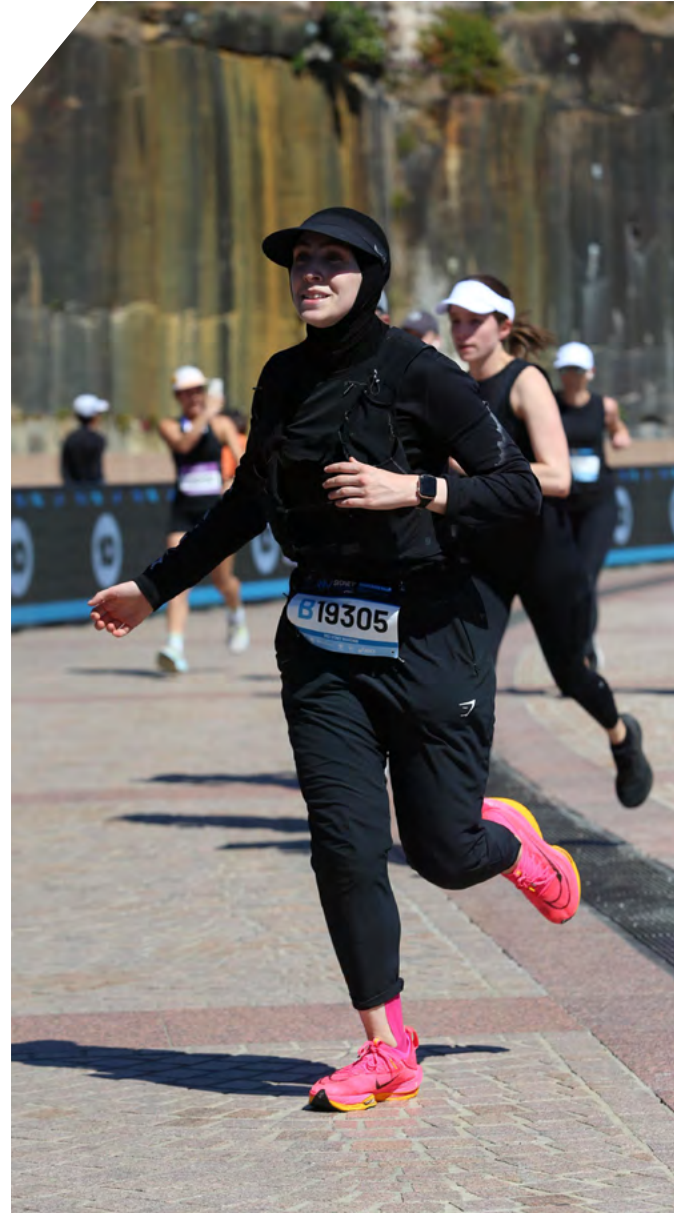
And how did you feel afterwards?

“I can whole-heartedly say it was one of my favourite runs

of 2023. From the moment that I arrived, everyone was so friendly and welcoming. And as we split into pace groups and started that run, it was just so easy to socialise - talking in groups about anything and everything. The vibes were so high, so fun and so full of energy and I just remember loving the whole experience. I remember literally looking around and thinking that if this is the atmosphere at the Sydney Marathon then I’ll be perfectly fine.”

Has running a marathon changed your life, do you think?

“I’d say, yes. I think most people underestimate how much self-belief you can develop when you accomplish something like running a marathon, especially when it’s something you wouldn’t have ever dreamed of achieving. There’s a certain amount of empowerment that comes with knowing you’ve pushed your body and especially your mind to its limits and beyond. I’ve definitely found myself more confident in my personal life, my work, and in other aspects of my training. I believe it’s part of human nature to fear failure, but I now tell myself more often than not, that if I’ve run a marathon, I can do anything. My life is honestly no longer ruled by a fear of failure, and I find myself taking risks and just having faith that whatever the outcome is, it’ll be what’s best for me anyway! Oh, and I’ve already signed up to run the Sydney Marathon again in 2024!” **SM**



NOW I TELL MYSELF MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THAT IF I’VE RUN A MARATHON, I CAN DO ANYTHING...

Add comfort to every step



Move from feeling chaotic to calm in the new GEL-NIMBUS™ 26 shoe.



GEL-NIMBUS™ 26

Soft landings - PureGEL™ technology combines with FF BLAST™ PLUS ECO foam cushioning to deliver soft landings and smooth transitions.

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LEARN MORE ABOUT GEL-NIMBUS™ 26

*Assessed using ASICS' carbon footprint methodology version 1.1 and the most comprehensive reporting available for industry average running shoes, conducted by MIT (report).

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Back to basics

While you may think running must come naturally to humans, according to sports podiatrist Odette Blacklock, our modern lifestyle can actually impede our ability to run correctly. “Unfortunately, because we live in shoes, walk on humanmade surfaces and sit in chairs most of the day, we can’t just take that seated posture straight into our running,” she explains. “The impact that goes through our body if we continue to take poor posture into our run is where most injuries come from.” Instead, before you go for your next run, Blacklock recommends reassessing your technique, alignment and footwear.

Correct foot alignment

The first step, she advises, is to find out how to align your feet. To do this, stand normally and find your balance so that it’s even from the front to the back of each foot. There should be an even weight distribution throughout the entire foot, with even loading on the heel and the balls of the feet (not the toes).

“A lot of time when I see people, they don’t know how to actually use their toes, they’ve never consciously lifted and lowered their toes,” she says, “and when we don’t do that, a lot of the inner muscles of the feet become weak and that leads up into the calf.” However, understanding correct foot placing, she says, will help use the impact forces from the ground to give you more energy when you run.

WHETHER YOU’VE NEVER RUN BEFORE OR YOU’RE GEARING UP FOR YOUR NEXT MARATHON, IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO GO BACK TO THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RUNNING.

“We store energy, and we release energy... as such, our running should be efficient, elastic and enjoyable,” she explains. “So, when it doesn’t feel like that, you need to look at your alignment, efficiency, and symmetry.”

Selecting running shoes

Next, when purchasing running shoes, Blacklock says to avoid being influenced by friends, or social media. Instead, get a foot assessment so you know the trainers are right for your body. “So many people get stuck with the wrong shoe for a year or two,” she says. “But in fact, we should all be replacing our trainers every six to 12 months especially if you clock up the kms!”

Your running posture

Lastly, with your posture, look for symmetry and balance where you are loading the right and left foot equally. If you’re mainly putting weight on your right foot, for example, you’ll feel unbalanced by the end of a five kilometre run or marathon. “Try filming yourself running from the front, from the side and from the back,” Blacklock advises. “That way you can see what is

happening with your posture. And don’t forget to assess your arm swing and make sure you’re not landing your foot in front of your hip - that’ll break you.”

Consider speaking with an expert

Next, she says, consider how you feel after a run - are you more fatigued on one foot, or one part of your body? If you can see that your foot is turning in the wrong direction, or you feel that your running technique isn’t efficient, then Blacklock suggests speaking to a podiatrist. However, if you feel that your core or your back is not quite strong enough, focus on those areas with your training and consider a physio. Not sure if you should consult with an expert? Blacklock says to think of your body as a car.

“If you want a great vehicle that’s going to get you to all these places, why wouldn’t you see someone about your tires first?” she explains. “It’s the same with a sports podiatrist. I can look at your gate, perhaps take 10 minutes off your next finish time and prevent you from getting injured. Essentially, you don’t know what you don’t know.” **SM**

essentials

THE RUNNER'S TOOLKIT

SPORTS PODIATRIST ODETTE BLACKLOCK RECOMMENDS DOING THESE AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK:

- Pilates (or strength training) for foot-to-core strength
 - Weight training focusing on the core and hips
 - A recovery session with multi-joint stretching
 - A rest day, which can be gentle yoga or a walk
-

Sports podiatrist Odette Blacklock is a movement and mindset specialist, who works with runners across Australia.

AMPED UP WATTS

THOUGH HE DOESN'T CONSIDER HIMSELF A RUNNER, RADIO & TV COMEDIAN MERRICK WATTS HAS CERTAINLY BEEN RIPPING UP THE KMS ON HIS "TROTTS" RECENTLY.



What started at first as intense training sessions for his appearance on Channel Seven's gruelling reality show, *SAS Australia*, has led to Sydneysider Merrick Watts being the fittest he's ever been. The 50-year-old is even gearing up to run this year's Sydney Marathon. Well, maybe...

Tell us, what does running mean to you - what do you get out of it?

"Running is just a good way for me to exercise. I can't say that I love it or I am addicted to it, but I never grimace at the thought of heading out for a decent trot. It clears my head and I always feel better afterwards, especially if I've trained in very poor weather conditions. I take the mental win by doing it when I know others won't."

You've been on an impressive health journey over the past decade, what do you notice that's different about life these days?

"The relationship I have between mind and body. They are symbiotic in a way I never

previously understood. My mind is stronger because of exercise... but because my mind is stronger, I am able to do very physically demanding things."

What did you take away from your *SAS Australia* experience?

"Tough challenges and pain are simply a part of life, and sometimes we need to seek them out in life instead of moving towards comfort all the time."

The *Daily Mail* once described you as "flaunting your bulging bicep and shoulder muscles", how did you react to that headline?

"Ha! I didn't see that article but am now going to spend six hours finding it so I can read it over and over again!"

You ran your first marathon last year, got any running tips?

"As people who have run a marathon know, it takes preparation and commitment. I followed a training program to the letter and that's the best advice I can give. I ran the whole way on my own, that was my

choice, but it can help to find someone to buddy up with for motivation, support, and accountability. Also, gels are great but careful you don't crap yourself! (I was fine, by the way.) For recovery, I eat bananas with peanut butter. And, of course, drink water, salts, and beers... heaps of beers! Can I say that?"

Got any plans for running the Sydney Marathon this year?

"Well, I'm thinking of doing the Sydney Marathon 10km, but then again, knowing me, I am just as likely to go the whole pizza and run 42km again! We'll see."

Your favourite marathon story?

"Last year, I picked a bloke half my age off the ground who had quit, and I ran with him for the last three kms of the race until he sprinted off with 200 metres to go and beat me! Cheekybugger!"

What do you hope your kids learn about health and fitness from you?

"Just that being fit and healthy is a gift, and a privilege not to be dismissive of." **SM**

WIN

Your chance to run the 2024 TCS London Marathon!

In conjunction with the TCS London Marathon organisers, we're thrilled to offer eight lucky readers (*& their best running mate*) a double pass entry to run in this iconic event on Sunday, April 21, 2024!

ENTER NOW

To win this once-in-a-lifetime experience, simply follow these three easy steps:

1. You & your mate are already registered for the 2024 Sydney Marathon
2. Follow us on Instagram at @sydney_marathon
3. Submit a 60-second or less video explaining why Sydney should become the 7th Abbott World Marathon Major. Upload this video to your Instagram page & tag @sydney_marathon

Entries are open from Feb 7th until Feb 28th. Winners will be announced on March 1st, 2024. Terms & conditions apply. [Visit here](#) for more information.



FEEL
SOMETHING
THAT STAYS

WITH YOU

📍 Sydney Harbour



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