

# STRIDE & TESTED

## The Denmead Striders Newsletter Autumn Edition 2024

Welcome to our autumn newsletter.

This edition is one of congratulations, from HRRL results, to saying congratulations to Bekki and all involved in the Denmead 10K race, an update will follow in the next edition and to Nick Griffin for his amazing seven marathons in seven days. All clear examples of how our small but mighty club supports its members and those in the wider community.

Our winter training is well under way, with our first time trial under our belts. Please remember to check the starting locations for Hill Sessions, Gary will send out reminders with information on meeting and parking points.

We have physio and nutrition tips, as well as Hampshire Road Race League and Cross Country updates and of course we are proud to share Nick's incredible marathon challenge story. Well done Nick, we're really proud of you!

### Seven Marathons in Seven Days by Nick Griffiths

Through a work partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, where we've committed to raising £50,000 as a business over the course of the next 12 months, we were talking about what we could do to fundraise. Somebody suggested to me running a marathon, and it was at this point I should have just kept quiet.

But no, a marathon just didn't seem enough. We were after things that would make a big splash, so what's the next natural step after a marathon? Apparently, according to my big mouth, attempting 7 of them in 7 consecutive days...

Now I have no real love for running, especially long distance. I enjoy the social aspect, but the long solo training runs required for such a challenge were not filling me with excitement, nor was the actual event, but given it was for such a good cause, and I knew ultimately I should be able to complete it, I 'publicly' committed to it. No going back now....

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I'd actually only given myself about 8 weeks to get myself from my normal weekly miles, to being able to run 183.4 of them. I knew I'd never have time to 'train' for the week, but I had the time to prepare myself the best I could, and that would have to do.

In the weeks before the challenge, I'd managed to get in some longer runs, with something less dramatic the following day, to prove to myself the back to back element wouldn't be my downfall. I also managed to get in 1 marathon distance training run 4 weeks beforehand. So I knew I was good for the distance at least once, and that would have to do. The most miles I managed in a 7 day period in the run up was just under 80- more than 100 less than what I'd need to do when it came down to the challenge. Most weeks I'd only manage around 50 miles.

I had no plans to do any of the runs 'quickly'- my absolute priority was just to finish each day in a position where I could go again the following day, and told myself to stay disciplined, run at a predetermined pace, walk if I was feeling tired, and generally take it easy. None of that actually worked....

Day 1 was a pretty chilled day, pace was on target, and Matt Gair supported me the whole run, either by running with me, or on his bike. It mentally felt a long run though, and it was pleasing to finish.

Day 2 is where the plan failed- running at the pace I'd given myself, my ankle was hurting 10k in. I took Ibuprofen, to no avail, so decided I'd just speed up a bit and see how it was. Miraculously, the pain went, and with it so did the carefully laid out plan. I decided to just run to how I felt after that, and I'd deal with the consequences as they appeared.

I'll not bore you further with the trials and tribulations of each day, some runs solo, some supported in parts, but for me Wednesday is the day my legs started to complain- the first mile on that run was the slowest I'd do all week, and I felt every step. Thursday was a mentally tough one, and also the day the weather turned for the worse. Which led me to dread the final day- yes it was the last one, but I'd spent the previous 5 days limping around, ice packs on whenever I wasn't running, pain killers stocked up, at times barely able to put weight through a painful achilles and knee. But, somehow I'd got to the last day.

The last run was pure adrenaline. 48 hours previously I'd run my slowest mile of the week, and that had felt tough. Little did I know that today I'd somehow run my

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fastest miles all week. I had a brilliant crew from the club supporting me on this one: Rick, Bekki, Matt, Ollie and Mikey all ran some of it with me, Clare and Rachael were also at the finish line along with my family and some work colleagues. They dragged me through the last 26.2 miles of the week, which was 30 loops of Waterberry Drive! Point to note, one thing we agreed on afterwards was how quickly the miles seem to go when you're going around (and around) there! Having done 45 loops of Jubilee Park earlier in the week, Waterberry Drive was fantastic.

A week that took me around an airfield, on boats, around Portsmouth, Fareham, Stubbington, Gosport, Havant, parks, industrial estates, all the great local sites, I'd managed to finish. The moral of the story here is we can literally do anything. I'm habitually lazy and despise long distance running. Before this, there's no way I'd have thought I'd have got through the week, let alone in one piece, but the body and mind will always find a way to adapt. It might not be pretty but you'll find a way.

My special thanks to all the guys and gals who got me through the week by running with me. Matt ran and cycled all of day 1 with me. Another friend ran the last 9 miles of Tuesday with me. Rick did the first 15 of Wednesday with me. Mikey did the middle 11 of Thursday with me. I had support from mile 1 on the Friday, everyone getting into double figures, and Mikey following up his previous day of supporting me by putting in another 20 miles. And this is why I love our running club.



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### Club Captain's Corner - HRRL

Hi, it's Mark your men's club captain.

Welcome to all our new members, I am responsible for badgering you all to enter our HRRL races, in which we have three teams entered, an A, B and C team!

It doesn't matter how fast or slow you are, all your superb efforts count 😊.



We are well into the start of this season, with some fantastic performances already 🙌

Currently the standings are as follows

A Team 4th/10

B Team 2nd/10

C Team 2nd/10

So come and see me if you want to know more 😊, and keep up the great running.



Hello fellow Striders, it's your friendly Ladies Club Captain here...

It's been a memorable first year as Club Captain, I've learnt a lot about how all things "league race" can mean to people as well as the club. Some races bring a long awaited PB, successful training runs, or some may be the first race at that distance. In my 5<sup>th</sup> year of competing in the Hampshire Road Running League (HRRL) its had an additional meaning to me, and I thought it would be good to explain.



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I'll be honest, when I first rose my hand to be considered for the position, I wasn't too sure what I would be signing up for. All I'd need to do is encourage ladies in the club to sign up and race, right?

Well, yes... but then the points started to be awarded. I quickly did my homework on how the league points worked and I realised this was going to become my new obsession... winning!

How do the team points work? I hear you cry... its easy, the gender position you are when you cross the line are how many points your awarded as an individual. The first 4 club women to finish are added together to make Team A, then the next 4 will be Team B and the next 4 will be Team C. So, in essence, the lower the score after all 4 have been added together, the better. However, if we do not have enough to fill a team then we'll be given the number of participants of that race as points. This is why its important for us to have at least 12 ladies enter the races, to complete the teams.

So, if you are ever thinking you may be too slow for the league races, please remember that unless you come last, you'll provide a better score then no team at all.

If you know me well, you'll know how competitive I can be. So when I saw that we were doing well with our Team A and B for last season I knew we were on for a win. I was able to predict a rough number of points we would need to remain top of the league throughout the season's races. I would like to thank every single female Denmead Strider for signing up and being part of that win. It even spurred me on to enter more races than I normally would, making sure all teams were full.

On average we had 12 ladies run each race with Team A coming in 1<sup>st</sup> and Team B securing 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Team A won the league by just 1 point with B team only 3 points away from 2<sup>nd</sup> place! Out of the 29 ladies who ran



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at least one of the league races, 6 completed 7 or more races and were included in the top 70. With two of them being in the top 15 overall!

We've now just completed our 3<sup>rd</sup> race of the new season with the New Forest 10mile, with 9 more races to go. This means we still have an opportunity to get Teams A, B and the newly added, C to the top and show how we may be a small club, but a mighty one! (Pic: Puck trying her hardest not to treat the trophy as a chew toy...)



### *XC - dates, intro, updates and training tips*

As we have a few new members, (and also to remind the longer standing members) I thought that I would give you a small insight into the world of cross country running. Denmead Striders is a member of the Winter League which has 22 clubs who this year will compete in 7 multi-terrain races held between October and April. We have a new rule this year where the clubs team comprises of the first 4 men and first 4 women finishers. (Previously 5 men & 3 ladies)



Each race is 5 ish miles of off-road terrain usually consisting of mud, grass, mud, trail, mud, tree roots, mud and maybe a few little hills. I think you get the idea. Now I understand that this might not immediately appeal to some runners, but it really is a welcome distraction from the pressures of road race running and trying to constantly get PB's or course bests. By the pure nature of the courses that we run, it is never going to be a 5 mile PB, so you can instantly forget about pace or time and just enjoy the run for what it is, a dirty, muddy, wet, Sunday run in the beautiful Hampshire countryside with like-minded athletes.

Although, as I said earlier it's only the first 4 from each gender that score for the team I would welcome as many members as possible to come along, there is always a great team effort in supporting and cheering on every last member, even the members outside of the top 4 can influence the result as teams are scored by adding up finishing positions, so getting yourself a little further forward can mean another club scoring 1 or 2 points less.

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Of course, after the fun we all discuss at length everything that we loved (or hated) about the race.

Oh and by the way these races are FREE! All you need is to wear a club vest to be eligible.

So get your trail shoes out, come along and give it go, you may just like it.

Unfortunately, not all dates are confirmed yet, but as & when they are I will let you know ASAP.

1. Benyon's Enclosure – 3<sup>rd</sup> November
2. Alice Holt – 24<sup>th</sup> November  
(all clubs are requested to supply volunteers for this event)
3. Lord Wandsworth College – 15<sup>th</sup> December
4. Fareham – 16<sup>th</sup> February (provisional)
5. Bourne Woods – 23<sup>rd</sup> February
6. Chawton House –TBC

Paul Welch,

Your friendly neighbourhood XC rep



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### Looking After Yourself...

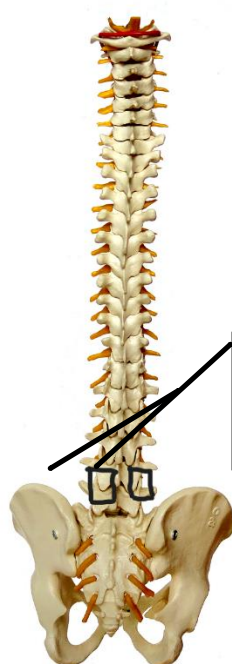
### *Physio Update*

**Are you struggling to run as far or as fast as you would like due to lower back pain? Tips and exercises from our Award-Winning Physio Clinic, Natalie March, our Specialist Chartered Physiotherapist from Physio-logical. We are a Physiotherapy Clinic based in Stansted Park, Rowlands Castle.**



Running brings many physical and mental benefits however this can change when you develop a running related injury such as back pain. Recent research shows that around 10% of runners will experience low back pain with lumbar facet joint pain being one of the most popular.

The facet joints are either side of the spine, they provide stability for the lower back. Patients who present to us with lumbar facet joint pain complain of localised ache and stiffness in the lower back. Facet joint syndrome occurs when there is inflammation or irritation of the facet joints.



Facet Joints – either side of the spine all the way up



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There are many reasons why you may start to get lower back pain but the most common we see is due to muscle imbalance of core, hamstrings, lower back, and quads muscles leading to increase in compressive forces through lower back facet joints. Due to this the joint capsules can become inflamed, and muscles tighten further leading to pain.

Physiotherapy (hands on treatments to mobilise the joints and release the tight muscles) plus strengthening exercises reduces stress on the facet joints.

### Exercises

Here are some exercises you can try if you are struggling with lower back pain. Please be aware of your body and take advice from your GP or a health care professional before exercising or send an email to [enquiries@physio-logical.net](mailto:enquiries@physio-logical.net) for advice and guidance.

#### Lumbar Spine Flexion (Bending)



- Stand with your legs hip width apart.
- Slowly slide your hands down the front of your thighs towards the floor
- Only go as far as you feel comfortable whilst keeping your legs straight
- Repeat x 10 x 2 per day.

#### Knee Hugs



- Start by lying flat on your back.
- Bring both knees up towards your chest.
- Wrap both arms around your legs to keep yourself in a ball.
- Repeat x 10 x 2 per day.

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### Knee Rolls



- Lie on your back with your knees bent with feet flat on the floor.
- Extend your arms out the side keeping your back flat on the floor.
- Keep your knees together dropping them to the side until you feel a stretch.
- Return to the starting position and then drop your knees to the opposite side.
- Again, only dropping your knees as far as you feel comfortable.
- Hold the stretch for 5 seconds on each side.
- Repeat x 10 x 2 per day

Once movement has returned and pain has started to ease, we would progress to add strengthening exercises for core and glutes muscles.

Here is a review from one of our recent runners we have treated *'My issue was diagnosed immediately, treatment and exercises given, and improvement so far is great. Everyone is so professional, friendly, and setting is so relaxing. Fantastic.'*

If you are currently struggling with lower back pain, an assessment and physiotherapy treatment can be [booked online](#), email us: [enquiries@physio-logical.net](mailto:enquiries@physio-logical.net) or call us on 023 9435 0270.

Don't forget to mention Denmead striders to get your £5 discount off all assessments and treatments.

For more information, please see [www.physio-logical.net](http://www.physio-logical.net)

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### Looking After Yourself...

#### *Nutrition*

I am Slavena. A foodie, with an allotment, addicted to running, and a founder for Nutrisay Coaching. My clinic provides pragmatic, personalised nutrition and lifestyle support solutions for increased energy and healthful life. Whilst I primarily work with people with dysbalanced blood sugar and insulin resistance, prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome etc, I inspire to support all with expert nutrition advice:

Reach out if you need real time support with:

- Diet assessment (beyond the generic apps and one-size fits all)
- Personalized meal plans and recommendations (looking to lose weight, improve athletic performance, manage a medical condition, or simply adopt a healthier lifestyle)
- Know your numbers (full biometrics, BP, glucose and cholesterol testing)
- Accountability and monitoring (to help you stay on track and achieve your goals)

#### Fat is Bad, But Is It Really?

For years, fat and cholesterol have been unfairly blamed for weight gain and heart disease. People swapped butter for margarine, eggs for egg whites, and full-fat dairy for fat-free options, thinking these changes would protect their health. But science has since debunked many of these myths, revealing that fat isn't the villain we once believed it to be.

One of the most persistent myths is that **eating fat leads to weight gain**. While overeating any macronutrient can cause weight gain, consuming healthy fats as part of a balanced diet can actually support weight loss. Foods like avocados, nuts, eggs, and full-fat dairy not only provide essential nutrients but also help you feel fuller for longer. Diets high in healthy fats, such as low-carb and ketogenic plans, have been shown to promote weight loss and improve overall metabolic health.

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Another misconception is that **all cholesterol is harmful**. In reality, your body needs cholesterol to function properly. It's transported through the bloodstream by LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) and HDL (the "good" cholesterol). The key is managing your cholesterol levels to reduce LDL and increase HDL. Simply focusing on cutting out cholesterol-rich foods like eggs doesn't have the same impact on heart health as once thought. In fact, many studies now show that healthy individuals can consume eggs without raising their risk of heart disease.

A third myth suggests that **low fat diets are always healthier**. In the past, the medical community recommended reducing fat intake to prevent heart disease, but more recent research indicates that a diet high in healthy fats, like those found in olive oil, fatty fish, and nuts, can actually reduce the risk of heart disease. The quality of fats matters far more than the amount—trans fats and highly processed fats still pose health risks, but natural, whole-food sources of fat do not.

Here's a summary of these common myths and what science now says:

Myth	Reality
Eating fat leads to weight gain	Healthy fats can support weight loss and keep you full longer. Overeating any nutrient can cause weight gain.
All cholesterol is harmful	Your body needs cholesterol. HDL is the "good" cholesterol that helps remove excess LDL (the "bad" cholesterol).
Low-fat diets are always healthier	Low-fat diets aren't necessarily healthier. Healthy fats from whole foods can lower heart disease risk.

It's clear that fat and cholesterol deserve a place in a well-balanced diet. Rather than focusing on removing fat, it's essential to prioritize quality and ensure that your diet includes a variety of nutrient-dense, whole foods. By debunking these myths, we can enjoy the benefits of healthy fats while promoting overall health.

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For more information and references to scientific studies that support these findings, check out the full article on Healthline [here](#).

### Get in Touch!

Interested in personalized dietary advice? Let's chat! Reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Let's fuel our runs and lives with energy and joy.

Happy Running!



**SLAVENA JENSEN**  
Nutrition Coach

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### *“What’s On”*

**Saturday Social Runs** are ongoing throughout the winter, led by Steve and starting at Costa in Cowplain at 7.30am followed by a well-deserved cuppa afterwards. A warm welcome is always guaranteed and the runs are a great way to catch up with old friends and make some new ones while enjoying the local countryside at a more sedate pace than training sessions and races.

### **Race Dates**

HRRL – Race & Date Link <https://hrrl.co.uk/>

XC - Race & Date Link [www.southerncrosscountryleague.co.uk](http://www.southerncrosscountryleague.co.uk)

### **Christmas Party – Save the Date**

The Denmead Striders Christmas Party will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm at Horndean Football Club, PO8 9NZ. Further details and updates will follow, so dust off those sequins and get your glad rags ready, it’s party time!

### *Well, that’s all folks!*

If you have any stories or adventures you are willing to share (even better some incriminating photographs as well) or you have any ideas or topics you would like to see covered, please email [dawnbanting@aol.com](mailto:dawnbanting@aol.com)

Thank you to each and every one of you for being a part of the club and a huge thank you to Clare, the Committee and to all who keep the club running.

Keep safe this winter and wishing you all the very best this festive season.

