



Mark: I'd like to welcome Nate to the Healthynomics podcast. Nate, thanks so much for joining us today.

Nate: Mark, I'm pumped to be here.

Mark: That's awesome. Yeah, I've been following your work for a while now and I have to thank a former podcast guest, Mario Fraioli, for introducing us via email. So anyways, thanks to you, Mario, if you're listening to this. But anyways, I'm looking forward to chatting and yeah, really pumped to talk to you. As I said in our sort of pre-chat, my listeners are primarily beginner runners. That being said, there's probably some that have run half-marathons and marathons before. So mostly beginner runners, so I'm sure they're looking forward to getting some tips and advice from you. So why don't we start by, if you don't mind, giving us a bit of background on you, sort of where you grew up, went to school, your history with running, and what you're up to today.

Nate: Yeah. So I live currently in San Francisco, California and I am a running coach, and a strength and conditioning coach, and I've been a triathlon coach as well, and I've helped out with mountain bikes and mountain bike racing, so I've done some different things in the endurance world. But I've gone pretty deep in the strength world too and, you know, Mark, I sort of found myself, there's a lot of fantastic run coaches out there and a lot of great strength coaches out there, and I've yet to find too many that were able to kind of go back and forth, or like

really were deep in both worlds. And so I've found myself at this kind of happy crossroads, so to speak. Not necessarily claiming to be the best coach in either one but really thoroughly understanding each world and trying to understand more, and being able to kind of like go into their culture and community and poke around and see what's going on.

And I got into that, backing up, because when I first moved out to San Francisco right after college, I was really interested in triathlons, and I got into some Ironman training, and was racing a lot, wanted to race professionally for a while as a triathlete. I dealt with a few different injuries, of course, on the training on the way there as we all do, and sort of got into more about learning about the body and about strength training and proper movement, which is really on the kick I am in now. And before that, I was actually a Division 1 sailor at Boston College. Yes, for you listeners out there, sailing is a sport.

Mark: Yeah, I grew up on the West Coast so I know it's a sport.

Nate: Yeah, right. So it was a lot of fun to do that, and we sailed a lot of dinghy boats. And we always did different...you know, a little bit of running for some conditioning, but it was, you had to be so mentally focused and on it. It actually helped me a lot. Like when I got into running, I was like, "Man, all I have to do is run in a straight line, like that's it?"

Mark: That's easy.

Nate: I was like, "Oh man, this is way less stressful." But I played a bunch of different sports in high school. And I was a little prep school kid, so I was like downhill skiing, played soccer and lacrosse, sailing in the summer. And then, I eventually, I actually like I knew I was more on the endurance side of things when I kind of got bored with soccer and migrated over towards the cross country team, then I knew that maybe the running thing was something that I was kind of hardwired to do.

Mark: Oh, that's cool. And do you do some work with CrossFit now or is that part of your strength and conditioning training protocol you do with other people?

Nate: I do. You know, so Mark, it's funny, I've worked out of a CrossFit gym for the last probably six or seven years at San Francisco CrossFit in the city, and it's actually been owned and operated by a physical therapist, a man by the name of Kelly Starrett. And he is a pretty

established and well-known business called MobilityWOD, mobilitywod.com...giving him a little shout-out.

Mark: Yeah, I'm familiar with his work and I have all of his books. Anyways, keep going.

Nate: Oh, well, there you go, you know, I'm preaching...

Mark: Keep going. Many people probably don't about him.

Nate: Yeah, I'm preaching to the converted. Anyway, I learned a lot about Kelly and really how we can take care of our bodies ourselves, and employing relatively simple strategies like a lacrosse ball, and a little willingness to suffer and to poke around under the proverbial hood, so to speak, as opposed to just sticking a bag of frozen peas on our knee and just kind of hoping the pain goes away. I was definitely in that category earlier on in my life and I've just pained around with a lot different injuries. It sort of got me into there.

You know, with all the work that I do online right now with...Man, it's crazy. We have about a team of 10 people now working with The Run Experience, which is something I co-founded my partner, a guy named Craig dos Santos, who is also a runner. He ran college at Rice University. He ran steeplechase and something else terrible, maybe like the 3,000. Just horrible...

Mark: Equally terrible.

Nate: It's funny, right? Like all long-distance, all marathoners are afraid of going short because of how painful it is and then all the short guys obviously are afraid of grinding it out over the long distances.

Mark: Yeah, the short guys are just like short-term pain, maximum gain, yeah. The long guys are just, you know, just hold that pace forever and ever and ever.

Nate: Oh man, you know, the start of the ultra, like everyone just starts walking and it's like the most anticlimactic thing. Like, "Oh, well, all right. I guess we're going." Yeah, so we do a lot of strength training and movement for runners. But I sort of found that, you know, for us, when we're really talking to runners, CrossFit is sort of a distraction. It's not a battle that we need to dip our toe in. So I usually talk about it with my runners, it's like, "Hey, you know, it's not CrossFit but we're gonna do a

little bit of squatting over here. It's not CrossFit but let's work on our pushups. It's not CrossFit but maybe we'll add a burpee in there too because those can be productive.”

Mark: That makes sense. Well, let's dive in it a bit more. So as I mentioned, my work, I'm focused a lot on beginner runners. And I was doing a bit of reading before our chat, and I know you have an affiliation with Reebok, so I saw an article that I'm not sure if you wrote or they were recording you. But anyways, there's a really good quote that I liked and I'll just read it here.

Nate: Sure.

Mark: This is you, I guess, being quoted saying, "To get better, runners have to run a lot, but for us to be able to consistently run a lot, we have to be athletes. We have to move like athletes, we have to strength train like athletes, and we have to work on injury prevention like athletes," and I really liked that. But I'd love it for you to explain to listeners, so what you mean by that.

Nate: Thank you, I remember that. So I really believed, you know...I can kind of hit this from a few different ends. You know, I find that from the running technique angle, I really struggled with changing my own running technique and changing the running technique of my runners because I kind of realized, especially watching them move in the gym, that their running technique or kind of the less beautiful variations, the ugly stuff that was coming up in running, was just ugly stuff that was coming up period. And it was showing up in lack of hip and ankle range of motion in their squat, or the ability to stabilize themselves in a pushup, or press something overhead and maintain good posture. And it made me realize that there wasn't anything special or specific, or unique about how our body broke down in running, our body was just breaking down.

And if we try to just change our running without first addressing our core athletic foundation, we're not gonna get very far, it's just trying to change running in a vacuum. But if we can improve our range of motion in our shoulders and get us more upright, all of a sudden it's easier to breathe, it's easier to swing our arms, it's also easier to get our hips underneath us, and we start to see this virtual cycle occur. So I've really been able to have a lot of success improving peoples' running technique without actually having to talk about running technique that much. Which is nice because you can kind of tell the runners outside, when they're like

messing with how their foot hits the ground because they're like running with a pencil up their butt, like things get kind of weird.

Mark: Yeah, exactly.

Nate: ...When they start messing around. And actually, I remember this...I think another bigger, broader, you know, issue with this, Mark, is, you know, why are runners not being athletes in the first place? Like why are we having to even put this message out there? And I think a huge part is this love or romance with the notion of specificity and specific training. And as I kind of said in that earlier quote, it's like to be good runners, we do have to run a lot, right, so we need to have that specific training in there. But let's not, you know, be fooled by the amount of general athletic foundation we need just to even support that level of specific training. Have you ever read "Boys in the Boat?" Have you heard of that book?

Mark: I haven't, no.

Nate: Okay, so it's kind of a cool book. Like if you were going through an airport like I was and you're walking by like the display table of all the books, it would be sort of one of the books up there, right? It was kind of like a top ten New York Times sort of bestseller book. And it tells a story of the 1936 Olympic gold medal rowing team from the United States, and it was like this very unlikely squad of rowers from Seattle, University of Washington. And this is back in the era when it was all the Ivy League schools on the east coast the Harvards, the Yales, that were the dominant rowers. One of the things that was interesting about it was like these guys, compared to their Ivy League counterparts, were kind of scrappy and they did a ton of manual labor. So they were literally like woodsmen.

This wasn't even a major part of the story but sort of like my coaching years perked up when I heard when they're not rowing, they're like walking 5 and 10 miles everywhere, they're like hauling stone and trees through the woods and all this work. It was amazing to me. And actually, the coach at the time was actually saying, "Hey, when you're rowing with us, I want you to be specific. Everything you do should look like rowing, you shouldn't be doing everything else., Which is really a perfectly reasonable thing to say when six or eight months out of your year involves serious, hard, physical labor, so these guys were just...they were just strong, they were mobile, they were flexible. So it was reasonable to get in a boat and just row for a couple months and things would be fine. But we kind of still keep that message but what we've

done is we've removed all the hard physical labor out. Right, so it's like most of us are, if we're honest with ourselves, are like we're desk jockeys. Even if we're standing and we have a standup desk, we're not moving through that much range of motion and I think it's just so important that we have to like get that back into our lives.

Mark: Yeah, no, I like that story. Thanks for sharing that. It makes me think of...I'm in Canada, so I'm gonna talk about hockey for a second here.

Nate: Oh, yeah, hockey.

Mark: Yeah. Anyway, so there's always a lot of talk about young kids getting in sports and I've got two young boys, so I'm always I played a lot of sports growing up, so I'm always thinking about this. And specificity, you mentioned, I don't know who was talking to Wayne Gretzky but he was being interviewed, and asked about specificity and kids excelling at sports and he said, " Absolutely not." He's like, "I played every sport growing up," like he was in hockey, lacrosse, baseball, and numerous other sports, and I have no doubt he was probably good at all those sports. And I love that because...especially for kids but for everyone, like if you do the same things, the same motions over and over, you're body's gonna break down. I like the notion he's saying about just being an athlete and then that's what Wayne Gretzky, that's what he stated, so a great message for not just kids but for everyone really.

Nate: Yeah. You know, I used to do a lot of work with juniors when I was younger, actually through sailing. But I was working with a high school mountain biking team out here in Marin County the last couple of years and I was just so fired up that they actually had a mountain bike team because I basically had to quit mountain biking in high school to play the high school sports that were open to me. I was like, oh my god, I would've totally done this if this was available.

Mark: Yeah, that's cool.

Nate: And, I remember, Mark, I brought these kids in the room, we were doing a little cross-training. And these kids are like 15 years old, I've watched them ride up the mountains like on one wheel, you know, jumps. Like I was a pretty fit cyclist back then and these little whippets they weigh like a hundred pounds soaking wet and they could just rip and shred. Like they were so powerful it was unbelievable to watch them

and see how graceful they were on their bike. But I pulled these kids into the gym and you're thinking like 15 years old, prime of your life, no problem. I'm just having them warm up with some simple air squats and other movements and the room was quiet for a second, Mark, and all of a sudden I heard this snap, crack, pull, and pop of stiff tendons sliding over knee joints, and ankles, and low backs cracking, and it sounded like a bunch of old men in the room.

Mark: And these are 15-year-old kids?

Nate: These are 15-year-old kids. And then you start to talk to them and they're like, "Oh yeah, like my IT band, I got this problem. I've got this issue with my SI joint, my sacroiliac joint, which is right at the base of your tailbone, for you listeners out there. And the movement that's required in this area, it's like a few millimeters, but if that gets locked up, it really throws everything else off in significant ways. And these kids were basically a mess. And then you start to talk to them and you kind of unpack their day, and you're like, "Wait a minute, they wake up in the morning and they go down to the breakfast table and they sit at the breakfast table, have their breakfast, and then they go to school. Chances are they're sitting in the car or the bus as they go to school. Then they're at school and what are they doing, hey, they're sitting again. And then hey, at least they have their sport in their afternoon. And like oh, what do they do, what's their sport? Oh, they're sitting again on a bike." And so they're like, "Oh my god, these kids are professional sitters." And they're growing so fast but their hips are tight, and it was just a mess. So it was just getting these kids to kind of undo some of that was so big. And seeing it show up so early made me realize how even more important it is for adults to get on it.

Mark: Yeah, that's cool. That's a good story as well. And you mentioned earlier a little bit about posture and technique, and people doing funky things to change their running. I mean, I have to admit, back when sort of the barefoot running craze came into play and people are talking about form, well, I started experimenting with some different shoes and changing my technique, and then of course, the next day I did a 10K, like a 6-mile run, the next day my calves were freaking just on fire and I'm just like "What just happened?" So I'd love to hear your point of view or your thoughts on running form, especially for beginners. The big thing I always wondered too is whether or not, do you play with form in the beginning or do you just get those people a little bit stronger, a little bit more flexible, increase their mobility, and let technique and form take care of itself. I'd love to hear your thoughts about that.

Nate: Yeah, so the one thing I'd sort of say with running form is that, I'll always share my perspective, I'm not a stickler with very, very hard, specific standards. Like I don't think you're cadence should be one number, how many steps you take per minute. I really think there's sort of a range here that we wanna be in. And when we think about running form, I do believe that there is a degree of something we're born to do, right? You know, so like are you born to run? It's like yes. But like a lot of things, we were also born to sit upright and we were also born to be really good belly breathers, to breathe diaphragmatically deep into that belly. But we see, over the years, that all of these, what I almost call like short-circuit movement patterns start to get layered on to our bodies, right. So all of a sudden, we sit all day a little slumped over, we don't breathe into our bellies much anymore, and we become chest and shoulder breathers, where we breathe our shoulders up into our ears. We can understand why our shoulders are sore after we run. You know, we carry so much stress there.

So when I think about technique and moving people in that direction, I'm not fundamentally changing how they move their body, I'm just trying to gently remind them that's how they're body's supposed to move in the first place. So we're sort of unpacking and undoing some of those things.

You now, I know...and Mark, I'm sure you get a lot of questions on foot strike...where and how your foot is supposed to interact with the ground. For me, it is the last thing I like to look at, and I try to start at the other end of the spectrum. Because if I find that if I'm just trying to arbitrarily change where my foot hits the ground without addressing first what's going on further up the kinetic chain of my body, my knees, my hips, what's going on with my spine, my shoulders, my breathing, I'm gonna probably swap one problem for another. And I'm not really going to address why my foot lands the ground the way it does in the first place.

I can't remember where I read this but I really loved the visual, was that it was like your foot is sort of like the end of this like kinetic whip. Right the way the foot hits the ground is sort of the crack of that whip. So for me to change how that whip occurs, I need to address my hand placement and where the start of the whip is, which is really in a lot of respects for me, the upper body and those hips. So I address that with some strength exercises, which is really just getting people in their bodies. And a place I love to start are easy exercises. Not easy in that they're necessarily easy to do but easy in that they don't require any

equipment, and you can do them at home, or outside in the park with just like a squat, a pushup, some basic core exercises like a hollow body exercise and an arched body exercise. Which just kind of teaches me to how to go from a neutral position where I've got that nice, straight line for my ears, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles, and then taking my body into degrees of flexion and into degrees of extension. And that kind of gets me into my body. And if I pair short doses of running with that, that just draws that awareness of your posture and it's really such a great place to start.

Mark: That's great, I like that, and a good segue into strength training itself. Say a beginner runner comes to you and they wanna start running and they know they need to incorporate some strength training. Where do you start with them and what sort of exercises do you prescribe? I know it's different for every runner but we'll generalize here. So yeah, some of your favorite exercises? How many days a week do you run? Do you strength train on your running days or your days off. Yeah, how do you approach that?

Nate: So I try to like...when I'm thinking bigger picture, especially when I'm thinking about newer runners, I say for most of these guys, we're going from nothing to something. So we don't need to get totally in the details of what, and when, and where. It's just that if you can fit it in somewhere, sometime, it works. It's like that's a victory and then we can kind of iron out the wrinkles of optimizing your schedule with your run workouts as those get harder a little bit later.

I find it perfectly reasonable to fit two sessions. They don't need to be much longer than 30 minutes at the minimum. You know, you can get a lot of work in there and it could be all bodyweight stuff. And we actually have...at The Run Experience, we have like a little free workout series we like to send people if they're interested, and it starts with a little warm-up, which takes them through some arm and legs swings, some lunges, some hip circles, just some good stuff just to get the body moving and starting to increase that range of motion, and then give them a little strength circuit, which could include like some squats and some pushups. The other two favorite movements I like to start people off are the lunge and the burpee. And if I feel like if I can hit the squat, the pushup, the lunge, and the burpee, I'm getting a good template for learning how to stabilize my hips and my shoulders, take them through different ranges of motion, and understand some good principles of movement. And from there, I can get more technical, I can get under one leg, I can start to add weight. But basically for new runners all over the country or the world, you wanna try this at home, it's pretty safe and

easy to do squat, pushup, lunge, and burpee and two days a week. And then if they're in the gym with me, I will start to load them up a little bit but starting with those basic foundations.

You know, Mark, and my other favorite place for those runners who are like, "I don't know, I don't have time for this, this is stressful just listening, thinking about adding more stuff to all the stuff I already have to do, and I'm a busy mom, and I gotta take the kids to soccer practice, and drive around everywhere, and I'm working late, and all those things," is to inject little five-minute doses of strength and mobility and injury prevention into your runs. You know, like I kind of joke with runners that I've had numerous conversations with guys like Mario on this. But as a community, runners, I think, we could do a better job of warming up in general.

Mark: Oh, I'm terrible. I went for a run Sunday, and yeah I've got two little boys, wife, and I get out the door, I'm like, "Eh, I'm gone," like no warm-up, yeah.

Nate: Yeah. You wanna maximize the time and mentally it's hard to choose. You're like, "I've just gotten out here, I just need to keep my momentum going and keep it rolling." But what's interesting is like if you show up for a group run, it's not any better, right? When you give yourself that weekend morning and you're the new runner, like the more advanced runners aren't teaching you the better ways. And there's some guys out there who are like, "Hey man, I warm up, what are you talking about?" And there are a few of you out there, but I haven't seen it at the cultural level, that like 80% of the group is doing it. And I kind of tease that slow jogging is not the optimal warm up for slightly faster jogging. Like we could do a little better.

And sometimes you see it in the context of a track run or a race. You go to a race your first time, you see people touching their toes, or doing leg swings, or something else. It's like the last-minute study tips before an exam, you're like, "Oh man, these guys are preparing differently, maybe I should do that too." But my little challenge to runners out there is it's perfectly reasonable to take two minutes out of your run in a sidewalk anywhere and stop and do some really simple stuff. And you can inject some squatting, as I said, some leg swings, some lunges. That's really scratching the surface in what you can do but notices if you even stick to those basic movements, you're just getting into your body and you're giving yourself a nice transition from either being asleep, if you're running the first thing in the morning, or undoing that time mentally and

physically stuck at work and your body's just a little stiff. I haven't had a runner do the warm up and not say their body and their run didn't go better afterwards.

Mark: Yeah, no, I agree. Anytime I do take the time, I'm just like, "Why don't I do this all the time?" But yeah, who knows? And I was reading...I can't remember if I got this on your site or another article you were quoted on. But anyways, another quote which I really liked, which will lead to us chatting about injuries, but it says, "Think of running high mileage as a privilege, not a right. Running higher mileage needs to be earned in the sense that runners need to do the necessary secondary work to be able to make running mileage sustainable." Again, I really like this quote and I'm keeping this in mind, how does one learn to read the signs of early stages of injury? And yeah, maybe just talk a little bit about sort of what you mean by running high mileage as a privilege and not a right.

Nate: Sure. So for the mileage thing first and then we'll get into the injury piece. You know, this is where my worlds between the strength world and the running world start to kind of come together. You know, the same way runners like the PR, the first 5K, or half-marathon, or marathon the strength guys like the heavy squat. They like the PR other than the lift. And sometimes with those guys, you're like, "Oh, well, I wanna get strong so I'm just gonna start to lift really heavy early." But you sort of realize that with strength, as soon as you step underneath a heavy bar, it can be risky if you haven't prepared yourself properly. And you sort of realize that to go for those heavy back squats, you have to earn the right to be underneath that heavy bar. Like if you wanna squat something crazy, this is gonna sound ludicrous to most runners out there, it's actually not that heavy in the strength world, this would be almost the equivalent of running like a 6-minute a mile. You know, if you wanted to squat like 300 pounds as a guy, which I can't do for the record by the way, you gotta earn that with consistent weeks and months, and potentially years of showing up, of paying attention to your technique, of working on your squat form with lighter weight, with stopping before you get hurt, and looking at feedback before you go and you make the attempt. And we know that with strength, okay, to perform, you need to squat that heavy weight but we also realize that if we pay attention more to the process of it, that's really what's gonna get us there.

I think the correlate with running, especially when we see runners who are more beginner runners and they're making the jump to that next level, they see what their buddies are doing, they're like, "Hey, I was a

21-mile-a-week runner, he's running 50 miles a week, I'll run twice as good if I do that or go even more." And it's the same thing, it's like a lot of those guys, if they've done it right, they've taken 5, 6, 8, 10 years to get to that level of running that much mileage. You know, if you look at a professional runner who's 25 years old and running 90 to 100 mile weeks, it took them 10 years to get there, starting at the age of 15. He didn't just start. And when you give yourself that time you get that experience of learning all what those little aches and pains mean in your body. And I think a lot of runners who have...they've injured a body part, they've become acutely hyperaware of what's going on in that body part. Right, let's say it's your right IT band or your Achilles, and it becomes a fool me once scenario shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me.

Once you go through that experience, you're like, "I'm not letting that happen again." And in retrospect, you realize like, "Oh, that's what all that like tingling sensation meant." And, "Oh, maybe it wasn't good," you know, "maybe the pain that just sort of faded after the first ten minutes of warm up, and then took 20 minutes to fade away, and then 30 minutes to fade away, maybe that was my body telling me something." You know, like if you go through so many little rumble strips on the highway saying that the road is gonna end, you can't be surprised when the road actually ends. I kind of say that as little tough love, that injuries don't come out of nowhere, like literally, unless you get hit by a taxi cab. It's like injuries do not come out of nowhere for most runners, that all of these injuries accumulate over time.

And if you're new and this is all new to you and it had never happened before, like, "Hey, I've been there, I've hurt things I didn't understand what was happening and I kind of learned in retrospect," that's part of the experience level needed with runners. But you can vastly accelerate that process if you are doing daily and weekly mobility work. And this is where the power of a lacrosse ball and a foam roller become really, really important.

Now, if you start to only address something once it's painful or once you're limping, the car has already crashed to a degree. It's almost like it's like too late. You know, not too late to obviously fix yourself and run again but you're gonna be a couple of weeks at least of seriously modified training. The ideal is that you are foam rolling your calves, your quads, your hamstrings, your IT bands, kind of all the major players on a somewhat regular basis to establish a good baseline. And then you've done a good workout and you notice that that calve is a little bit tighter than normal, that's information that can help you make a better training

decision in the next day. And then from there instead of having wild swings from super successful training to being depressed looking out the window while you're friends play at recess, you can make those minor adjustments. So you're like, "Well, instead of a 15-minute run, I'm gonna run 35 minutes today and I'm gonna give my calves a little bit more love. Maybe I didn't get the speed work I was supposed to but I've ironed this kink out and I'll get to do my long run Saturday, and then next week I'll be fine."

Mark: Yeah, no, exactly. I mean, yeah, everyone's experienced those injuries. But yeah, if you've done the work, once you feel that little niggle or tingling feeling, you know, "Hey, let's shut this run down or maybe let's take an extra rest day." I mean, like you said you gotta earn the privilege to run, so if you need a day off, you take a day off. And I'm a big proponent too, especially for beginners, to not try to make up workouts if you're sick or injured, don't try to the next week, like, "Hey, I missed two workouts because my calve was sore," don't try to squeeze those in the next week, like just write them off and just say hey, take care of your body and you start from where you left off.

Nate: Yeah. You know, that is so hard to do. I even struggle at that every once in a while, especially if I'm on a schedule because I wanna be successful with it, I know how hard that is, but trying to remind yourself for the long game.

You know, one more way to think about it too with those longer miles and when our goals get a little bit bigger, like risk-free training just doesn't exist, it never will. And whenever we're looking for anything that has a big potential payout like that higher-mileage week, we just have to recognize that there's an equally big underside on the under of it, and just addressing that. And I think the hard part, when people start running more, is they get more tired and they have less time to do all this stuff that's really gonna support their body like the strength training and injury prevention work. So ironically, the more they need it, the less it happens because their schedule gets squeezed. And for me, that's just...it's part of it. You know, it's like what you signed up for. And I think you would be more successful on a little bit less with this work in than vice versa, for sure.

Mark: Yeah, exactly. So when one of your runners does get injured and, of course, it depends on the injury if someone rolls their ankle, you're not gonna go out and tell them to do some plyometric box jumps to get back running. But if someone's got an injury, a little niggle, what are some

things people can do so they don't feel guilty that they're just sitting on the couch watching Netflix doing nothing?

Nate: I love this question. Yep, for sure. You know, this is where I actually learned and benefitted from CrossFit and actually being a triathlete. And Mark, I put myself into the accidental triathlete category earlier on because the way in which I was running and training at the time, my body was getting pretty beat up. I'd run like three marathons and I signed up for an ultramarathon by mistake in South Africa, and I ran all of these things in like a 12-month period, and I couldn't understand why my body was sort of rebelling against me after that.

Mark: Wait, how did you sign up by mistake? Go back to that.

Nate: So it was a race called the Two Oceans Marathon. And the way the Boston Marathon is sort of this epic run in the United States, they have this race called Comrades down in South Africa and I actually lived there as a student in college for a semester. And they have this race which is a point-to-point race, it's a double marathon. And it became so popular that there are these training races that started. And I was just shopping for a marathon while I was there and I saw this race, it was called the Two Oceans Marathon, it was in Cape Town, and it was supposed to run all the way around the point in right at the tip of Cape Town. That's basically where...what is it, the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean meet. So basically, you'd run past two oceans and it's supposed to be beautiful and epic.

So I printed this out and got everything set up, and then I'm looking at the kilometers, and granted I'm like a year into like running marathons and I'm in the U.S., so I'm not really familiar with kilometers, and I'm like, "56K, I was like 56K, there's something that seems a little strange here." So I literally like punched it into Google translate and I got to see that I signed up for a 35-mile race. I wasn't even old enough to drink a beer yet and I had just signed up for this thing and I was like, "Oh, my goodness." But yeah, I doubled down and I did the training, and had a good time, but definitely paid for it on the backend because I was pretty beat up after that cycle.

Mark: Wow, that's a cool story. Yeah, I've heard of that race before and I definitely...I don't know if I'm gonna run that in my life, we'll see. Never say never but I definitely would like to get down to South Africa and check that race out.

Nate: It's really neat. You know, I'd say like I haven't gone that far again. I've done some ultra things, and I've done a few Ironmans, and I've done some long mountain bike races, I've done like the Leadville 100-miler, which is awesome, terrible but awesome. But I think if I were to go north of marathon again in the 50, because I'd probably go in the trail. The Two Oceans, one of the things that made it such a challenge was it was all pavement. You know, so you're just...

Mark: Oh, wow.

Nate: You're beating that body up, yeah, in a way that obviously for you listeners out there who run on the trails just the softer surface and the constantly changing terrain, it makes longer runs not feel quite as bad, or bad in a different way.

Mark: Yeah, exactly.

Nate: Yeah, the road was rough.

Mark: So we haven't really talked a lot about stretching yet, so how does stretching fit into the equation for the runners that you work with, or does it? And if it does, what are some of your favorite stretches?

Nate: Yeah, so I like to...with my runners, and this is definitely something that I've learned working with the coaches, and athletes, and physical therapists I've worked with, is actually to, instead of using the word stretching which is relating to sort of the length of a certain muscle like your hamstring or one of the muscles in your calve, to look instead more at mobility. And mobility has more to do with the range of motion in the joints of your body. Right, so as opposed to looking at the length of your hamstring, you're looking at your hips' ability to move around, to flex and extend. And there are other words that basically talk about its ability to kind of swing out, and swing in, and rotate around. You realize that it's this very multi-movement joint. And when you start to address the movement there, you can actually get yourself into positions that challenge multiple muscle groups at the same time. So in terms of time saving, thinking about mobility over just stretching one muscle is great because I can simultaneously get my hamstrings, my calves, and my glutes at the same time, for example, as opposed to just one muscle at a time.

When I'm preparing for a section or for a run, I don't wanna do a lot of static work or deep work. Because I wanna get the body temperature

up, blood flow going. I wanna get blood into those tendons. I wanna get the body prepared to do this crazy thing called running. And so with that, I like to include a lot of my dynamic stuff. And dynamic work involves anything from some jumping jacks, like some burpees, some sprawls without the pushup part, a burpee without that, everything like bear crawls, a little walkout where you walk out into a plank, you walk yourself back up tanning, leg swings, lunges, squats, just like a handful of those things. It's just a great way to start touching different ranges of motion, getting your arms up overhead, swinging them back behind, squatting down all the way, really getting that hip into full flexion, and your ankle into full what's called dorsiflexion, is when your toe flexes back towards your knee, that really opens up that ankle. So doing that type of stuff in the beginning is just a great way for you to athletically prepare your body and to open it up.

Afterwards, once I've finished my session and I'm really warm, I feel like that's a time to go into some deeper, static stretches. And probably one of my favorite static stretches of all time, and it's like the best thing for runners, it's the best thing if you just sit in a chair at any point in your life, it's something called the couch stretch.

Mark: Oh, I love this one.

Nate: Yes, exactly. And the way you would set up...I think at least some of you listeners out there have probably done the like kind of the stork style position where you kind of balance on one leg and you pull a heel to your butt and try to stretch out your quad. What we're gonna do is use the wall for a little bit more leverage and we'll start on all fours on the ground with your heels back up against the wall. You'll just, staying on all fours, you'll back let's say your right knee right to where the wall and floor meet, so that your shin is now parallel to the wall and your toe is sticking straight up. And then from there, you're just gonna press your hip forward a little bit. And even for this early stage, you're gonna notice that you're starting to get a pretty monster stretch in the front of your hip, which is your hip flexors, which are things that get tight when we run all the time. From there, you can make it a little bit graduated by pulling that opposite foot onto the ground. You could get up onto the sole of your foot almost like you're...so your right leg...then the knees, on the ground, the shin's against the wall if you can visualize this and follow along.

Mark: I'll make sure I put a link to a video of yours or a post where people can see this as well, but sorry, keep going.

Nate: Totally. And the left leg is now in like a lunge position, it's more upright. And then slowly, you just try to wind the body more upright and push your hip more forward, and it becomes this lovely, terrible way to open up your hips and your quads. And especially for you guys with any aching knees, something you'd put in the runners' knee bucket or anything you'd put in like the IT band bucket. You know, you can spend two, three minutes here, you can Instagram here, you can upload from Strava here, you can do a lot of multitasking in this position.

Mark: That's awesome. So yeah, definitely I'll put a link to a video and a post of yours for that.

Nate: Totally.

Mark: For all you listeners. So I just wanna respect your time, so we're getting close to the end here, so I wanna hear a bit more about maybe some of your favorite resources for runners or books and then tell us a little about The Run Experience.

Nate: For sure. You know, so some of my favorite books that I really enjoyed, they were not a geeked out training manual per say but more some stories around some of the greats. And right now for better or worse, I'm on this like kind of biography kick in general. I've just been reading about early presidents and other things, and just sort of...it's really powerful. You realize that like oh, man, they were human and they made mistakes. And they were 10 years old and they skinned their knee, and they had a mom. And then all of a sudden, they blossomed into these incredibly powerful people in our world. So it's sort of fun to read books similar with runners.

I think one of my favorite books in that respect is a book called "Bowerman and the Men of Oregon" and it's written by a Sports Illustrated writer, a guy named Kenny Moore. And Kenny Moore was actually on the University of Oregon team with guys like Steve Prefontaine, and ran in Munich, Germany. I think it was the year that Frank Shorter won gold medal, which was I think the last time an American male has won an Olympic gold medal in the marathon. I hope my stats are correct on that one. But it's just a fascinating book. It talks about Bowerman's life, how he started to develop shoes and tinkered with that, how he was really pushed and developed training ideas and methodology. You know, Gatorade didn't exist, electrolyte drinks didn't exist. So Kenny Moore tells stories of Bill Bowerman like mashing up like bananas and other little pills, and things that normally don't go with

banana into these water bottles. And making all of his runners choke this stuff down and recording like who throws it up, who doesn't, how it seems to work. So it's just such a cool thing because sometimes we get into this mindset that how you run is established, how you train is established. And for me as a coach, it's a nice reminder that there's this sort of continuum that we're all on and everything is up to be tweaked, and developed, and to get a little bit better.

Mark: That's cool.

Nate: That's one of my favorite books.

Mark: I'll have to check that book out. I just actually finished reading "Shoe Dog" with Phil Knight.

Nate: I read that a little while ago, it's great.

Mark: Yeah, it's awesome. And yeah, I love hearing just...you know, I was a big Nike guy, a kid growing up with the Air Jordan's etc., so that story is amazing. And just, I mean, the resilience of the company. But I also recently watched a...it's like a design documentary on Netflix, I think it's called "Abstract". And there was one with Tinker Hatfield who is the shoe designer at Nike, who pretty much did the whole Air Jordan range.

Nate: No way, I'll have to check that out.

Mark: Yeah, it's really good. And it taps in a little bit with the history with Bowerman. He tells some good stories as well. So anyways, for you listeners and you, Nate, if you enjoyed that Bowerman book, you'll probably like this "Abstract." Just Google 'abstract Nike shoe design' and I'm sure you'll find it.

Nate: Oh, man, I'll definitely have to check that out, for sure. And then you were also asking a little bit about The Run Experience. So you can find us at [therunexperience.com](http://therunexperience.com). The best way to interact with us, we actually just launched, we're super pumped, a run training app about a month ago.

Mark: Oh, cool.

Nate: You just search for 'the run experience'...well, really, if you go to [therunexperience.com/app](http://therunexperience.com/app), you'll get to a little landing page where you'll be able to go either to the Apple Store or the Google Store, and

download that guy. And basically, it's got a lot of our videos, and blog articles organized into if you're a beginner runner, strength training injury prevention exercises. So it's like a really good resource of everything you'd want to get a little bit better as a runner.

And then we have a lot of programs and it's a way that you can interact with our programs as well and log in. The thing that we really put out is a lot of video-based training kind of showing you exactly what to do, and how to do it and how it should feel in addition to just the spreadsheet that says run three miles on Tuesday, cross-train with an X on Wednesday. Rather than cross-train with an X, we'll tell you exactly what we think you should do and how it'll help. And you can find all that at [therunexperience.com](http://therunexperience.com).

Mark: That's awesome. Yeah, I watched a lot of your videos. And I can't recommend to our listeners enough, check them out. I believe it's probably you on most of them, Nate, is that right or your partner sometimes?

Nate: It is but we're building a team we have right now. It's actually been really fun. It used to just be me and now we have three other coaches. We have Kirk Warner, who's a fantastic running and strength coach out in Colorado. We have Elizabeth Inpyn, who's our resident nutritionist. And we have Holly Martin and she's another local person in the Bay, who's great with our beginner runners and running motivation, and we end up filming together a lot and doing a lot of videos. So it's a lot of fun. We're putting three videos out a week on YouTube right now, so it's nice to have a team.

Mark: Yeah, I mean, that sounds like a lot of work. So [therunexperience.com](http://therunexperience.com). So I'll make sure we link that up in the show notes. Is there anywhere else that people can connect with you? Are you on Twitter or Instagram, or any of those places?

Nate: You know, you can definitely check us out at The Run Experience for Instagram and everything else. I'm trying a little experiment, Mark, and I'm actually not on Instagram or Twitter right now, personally.

Mark: Good for you.

Nate: Yeah, it's been nice. I wanted to do it for just a week or two just as a little reset, and to focus on all the things we're building. The Run Experience is having a hard time updating everything. And I was like,

"Well, I'll put it back on if I miss it and that day hasn't come." I haven't missed it yet so we'll see.

Mark: Yeah, good for you. I think it's probably a good practice everyone should do sometimes.

Nate: A little digital detox we need it.

Mark: Digital detox, I like it. Well, listen, Nate, I'm not gonna take any more of your time but myself and all the listeners thank you for your time and expertise. And like I said, we'll be sure to put all the links and the show notes to all the resources, and videos of course to The Run Experience.

Nate: Awesome, Mark. Thanks so much for having me, this was a lot of fun.