



PHOTOGRAPHY: CAMPBELL SCOTT

ASK THE ORACLE

Running guru **Pat Carroll** has seen and done it all. Here, he answers your top running questions

Legendary runner Pat Carroll was one of Australia's top distance athletes during the 80s and 90s. Only three Australians have ever run a marathon faster and no-one has bettered his time over a half-marathon on Australian soil. He retired from competition in 2001 and now spends his time mentoring runners, managing Brisbane running group PCRG and has an online coaching service. He is an ambassador for the Blackmores Sydney Running Festival.

Can I run when pregnant?
This is a decision you'll need to make in consultation with your doctor. I know of a number of women who maintained a reduced amount of running while pregnant and kept this up until it became uncomfortable.

What is the impact of long-distance running on the cardiovascular system?
Distance running over a long period of time will result in you having a more efficient cardiovascular system.

How important is footwear in preventing injuries?
Some people are biomechanically perfect. They can get by with a basic running shoe and remain injury free.

Others are not so blessed and are susceptible to injury. These runners require a more structured shoe as well as custom orthotic foot supports.

What do you need to look for in a good running shoe?
The shoe should feel 100 per cent comfortable as soon as you put it on. There's no such thing as "running a shoe in". Shop at a specialist running shoe store – the expert advice will be more than worth what you save by purchasing online.

Are some bodies better built for running than others?
It's possible to correct biomechanical issues, but this can involve extensive tedious "homework" in the form of drills and exercises.

Is there an age limit for taking up running?
No but extensive distance running should not take place until someone is in their late teens. School-based running is more than okay for kids, however anything more is not advisable due to the stress it will place on a growing body.

What's the worst mistake people make when training?
Doing too much too soon, which usually results in injury.

What are the top three training tips for beating your last fun run time?
First, step out of your comfort zone in training once or twice a week. Second, involve shorter races in your training regimen. These will give you a better feel for what you're capable of at your goal event. Lastly, make sure you're well rested leading up to the race.

What do you think of the rise in barefoot running: is it a fad or a revolution?
There's some truth in it, however, at this stage it has to be regarded as a fad rather than a revolution. Time will tell regarding the number of runners benefiting or the number of runners being sidelined. I'm old school and simply don't buy it.

What are the golden rules of training for people who have never run before?
+ Don't over-commit – start with no more than three runs a week.
+ Build an aerobic base and run at a comfortable pace for the first few months.
+ Lock in short- and long-term goals to keep you motivated.
+ Join a beginners' running group or run with a friend.
+ Improvement takes time – be patient. **B**



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