



Brain Training For Runners: A Revolutionary New Training System to Improve Endurance, Speed, Health, and Results

Matt Fitzgerald , Tim Noakes (Foreword)

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Based on new research in exercise physiology, author and running expert Matt Fitzgerald introduces a first-of-its-kind training strategy that he's named "Brain Training."

Runners of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels can learn to maximize their performance by supplying the brain with the right feedback. Based on Fitzgerald's eight-point brain training system, this book will help runners:

- Resist running fatigue
- Use cross-training as brain training
- Master the art of pacing
- Learn to run "in the zone"
- Outsmart injuries
- Fuel the brain for maximum performance

Packed with cutting-edge research, real-world examples, and the wisdom of the world's top distance runners, *Brain Training for Runners* offers easily applied advice and delivers practical results for a better overall running experience.

Brain Training For Runners: A Revolutionary New Training System to Improve Endurance, Speed, Health, and Results Details

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From Reader Review Brain Training For Runners: A Revolutionary New Training System to Improve Endurance, Speed, Health, and Results for online ebook

Suukii says

I found this book immensely helpful and followed the intermediate marathon plan. Although his thinking has now moved on, I think the logic of this approach is a realistic one for a club runner.

Lesley says

Makes running seem so logical...

Roberto Rigolin F Lopes says

Now I'm very very deliberative during the long runs. Last one I started with full of confidence knowing I ate and slept well. During the first 5 min I checked form and started pushing Earth using my hamstrings, you probably noticed shorter days recently. After 30 min I was warmed up and found a pace where I became running. You read it right: I became running. That is the best feeling out there and I managed to switch from flow to tough reality every one kilometre or so. Reach 2 hours felt like having a superpower, pain was welcomed cheerfully; I even managed to smile knowing that the little pain was just my lazy brain pushing homeostasis. When I reached 3 hours the pain started asking: who you gonna call? I increased my pace and shouted: GHOSTBUSTERS!

Sandi says

Amazing! This was my bible for about a year and the knowledge gained never gets old. I recommend that if you get this book, get sticky tabs so you can quickly access the most meaningful passages. (I'm not kidding about it being my bible). In psyching myself up prior to the marathon of my hour PR, I would recite the passages over, and over again so as to commit the knowledge to memory so I could access it when the race got tough in the later miles. After so many positive outcomes, I can't help but attribute some of that success to this book.

Kaylee says

The introduction was absolutely atrocious. *For* Tim Noakes' horrendous writing did little more than annoy the expletives out of me - he certainly did not lend credibility to Fitzgerald's argument.

Moving on.

I picked up this book because I thought, oh, hey, this guy's going to give tips on how to train your brain to get beyond those "I can't do this" barriers - awesome! I'm not an avid runner, but I am a fitness instructor, so I figured there might be tips I could use and share with my classes. I'm always looking for new physiology tips to apply, and brain-related ones are just as important to me as keeping joints healthy.

Alas, Fitzgerald immediately lost my respect when he effectively said, "The body has safety mechanisms in place to protect against overexertion -- let's go beyond those, yeah?" There's a difference between training your brain to allow you to tune out that voice that says, "oh, I can't make it another minute" and training your brain to allow you to use up ALL of your energy reserves. Saying, "Your brain will let your muscles deplete more energy if you're being chased by a lion than if you're running a marathon" is not a glowing recommendation to push your body to the brink of safe exercise. After all, he's not saying you're going to build your body's endurance/strength/energy reserves/etc.; he's saying you're going to learn to mute an integral part of your brain (you know, the part that realizes you're dying in the jaws of that lion if you don't risk a heart attack/aneurysm/whatever by pushing harder than you do when there's no lion threat - like a damn marathon).

The training guides are pretty lovely -- I would definitely model my someday-when-I-go-crazy-and-sign-up-for-half-marathons training after his approach. I wholeheartedly believe in the cross-training and recovery aspects he touts; I just don't think training your brain to stop doing its job of monitoring your body's ability to keep going is a sign of intelligence.

Ryan Henry says

Decent read with good tips on running form, developing resistance to fatigue, and training. But more than half the book is devoted to training plan examples, which could be helpful but could also be seen as filler content.

Jess Dollar says

This is a good choice for athletes and coaches that want to learn more about the Central Governor Theory. Fitzgerald sums it up pretty well. It's very important to at least understand that there is more to fatigue than just be tired. Certainly if you believe that lactic acid comes first and then fatigue, you can learn a lot about yourself and how your brain works through this book.

As a coach, I know that most people don't want to think about their brain; they want to swim, bike, and run. I see a LOT of thinking mistakes in athletes and it's very frustrating. I see athletes that want to train too hard and minimize the importance of diet and sleep. I see a lot of athletes that talk negatively about themselves all the time. I see a lot of athletes that don't think that their thinking has anything to do with when they slow down in a race or a workout.

Being a good athlete is about pushing and manipulating your thinking more than your muscles. A physically gifted person won't get anywhere without the mental tools to embrace pain.

The most useful parts of this book for an every-day athlete:

running drills and how to use them

quick and simple strengthening routines

discussion of how to mentally handle pain

The training plans that make up half this book look pretty intense but I am sure would be a change of pace for most runners looking to try a different approach to training. I think everyone can benefit from learning to push through intense workouts as a way of breaking through mental barriers.

Nikki says

A solid book of training advice and plans plus a lot of good talk about the science behind running. Some may have criticized Fitzgerald for trying to "run past what is conceivable" - but if you read the book closely that is not what he's saying. It's true, running is mental, and many runners mentally block themselves. Running is going to hurt - and often runners don't push themselves as far as they could, or they push themselves too far. Fitzgerald examines both sides of the issue clearly and asks for a happy medium.

I also liked the fact that the training plans in this book are longer than the usual 16 weeks that you allot for a half marathon or marathon. As someone who has suffered from injuries, this longer amount of time, plus a focus on good form and gait training as part of the process of running, is important to me.

I will say that Fitzgerald is a fan of minimalist running shoes, which are definitely not for all of us. I am also unsure if some of his gait training exercises take into account women's bodies, which have different strides and needs. Most of the examples that he gives in the book are male runners, (including himself multiple times) with the exception being he claims that female runners can use the techniques, and a quote from a female runner saying that it is nice to be in the zone. This book was published in 2007, so I was surprised there wasn't a section addressing women's running.

Currently going to be using this book to train for the Richmond Half Marathon in 2017, in hopes of setting a PR. Hoping that it works.

Jennifer says

I've read a lot of books on running. although Fitzgerald tends to over use the term 'brain science', I found this book to have interesting training plans that incorporate more than just running. good technique work and interesting speed work. one critique- his intermediate 5k plan has more mileage per week than the intermediate 10k plan. that doesn't seem logical.

D says

matt fitzgerald is a pretty reliable, nonextreme resource for serious amateur runners who don't have/can't afford to hire a good coach. this book details a number of exercises and training plans for runners hoping to break through the exhaustion threshold.

Keith says

I should mention that while reading this book, and gently applying the exercises in it, I twice beat my 5K PR from 7 years ago. I feel like those exercises made me a faster runner.

Cross Training is not just doing other sports. There are muscle specific exercises that enhance speed, endurance, and reduce chance of injury. It is based on recent advances in sports physiology. To me, these are sound principles. It even has a forward written by Tim Noakes, MD where he endorses it.

Some parts I liked:

p 59: Race specific key workouts

p 102: Core conditioning workouts

p 103: Cross training exercises

P 153: Weekly workout template

p 176: Stretches to prevent injuries

p 203: Part 2: Training plans for various distances

I bought a copy after reading it.

Scott says

Great book with cutting edge training plans, and insight into what is actually happening during intense/event specific training. The brain needs gradual conditioning to race pace and race distance to avoid sending signals to the muscles to shut down and protect the organs. Also, the maximum number of muscle fibers should be brought into action. When brain senses problems, it starts shutting down the fibers, important to get them activated early in the training cycle.

I've not read cover to cover, and should. There are areas I've re-read and will continue to use as a training companion.

One thing about his pace based training method that gives me an issue is how to maintain the pace objectives during training if weather is hot, humid or windy. Perhaps I should re-read for the answer.

Damon Henrichs says

This is a great book with a new way to look at how "fatigue" works, what runners can do about it, and how to train better as a result of that knowledge. Traditional training (while still in most ways getting it right in terms of HOW to train for best results) suggest that the body physically breaks down in many ways when we "hit the wall", but new science has shown this to be largely untrue. I can't remember without looking at the book all the "science" aspects of it, but his arguments are strong and seem valid.

At any rate, he is not suggesting you re-invent the wheel anyway. . .just add some things to your training regimen. Great book, well written, and includes training programs for a variety of races. I'm training for the Houston Marathon with it right now.

Melanie says

I didn't get to finish this but it was very interesting. I like the way Fitzgerald combines physiology and psychology. I used to fear something bad would happen to me if I ran too far for my body, like my legs would just give out and I'd fall. I learned that even when we have "hit the wall" we still have about an hour's worth of energy available to our muscles. Our brain causes us to feel we've ran out of energy in order to PREVENT muscle death from lack of energy. Knowing this, I was able to become more confident and push myself further. Finally, this book helped me to understand what pain (or discomfort, rather) I could safely ignore and which to listen to in order to prevent injury. This is a fairly high level read but if you're interested in the human body at all, you'll enjoy this.

Craig Goltramb says

Very gimmicky but I like a lot of the training techniques in it.
