

# The Runner's World Website

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## Introduction

In keeping with the Special Topic of this issue, Endurance Training, we have looked at the website of one the oldest and perhaps the most successful publications dedicated to distance running, the American *Runner's World* ([www.runner-sworld.com/](http://www.runner-sworld.com/)), which is part of the magazine's stable of English language sites, including ones from the UK and Australia.

Owned by the American company, Rodale Inc., *Runner's World* started in 1966 as *Distance Running News* with the name change coming

in 1969. Publication has since expanded to 18 countries. Appearing monthly, the USA edition targets all age groups including high school, university, post-university, and Masters. In early 2016 the publication *Running Times*, also owned by Rodale, was incorporated into *Runner's World*.

The writers for *Runner's World* include the magazine's own staff and editors, elite athletes, journalists, sports scientists, and other "experts" on the fitness industry. As the name implies, the focus is on running, especially marathons, and extensive coverage is given to heathand a healthy lifestyle. Elite International athletes are usually highlighted in monthly articles.

The screenshot shows the Runner's World website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with categories: SHOES, TRAINING, NUTRITION, YOGA FOR RUNNERS, and SUBSCRIBE. The main content area features a featured article titled "Nike's Audacious Plan: Break the 2-Hour Marathon Barrier in 2017" with a sub-headline "The company is training three top runners to make history—sooner than anyone thought possible." Below the article is a photograph of three runners. To the right of the article is an advertisement for "RETHINK PAYMENTS" and a "YOU MIGHT LIKE" section featuring "Age-Reversing Workout? Doctors Say It's True."

Figure 1: Typical article from the Runner's World USA website

The *Runners World* website was originally created in 1996. According to Alexa, a company that provides commercial web traffic data and analytics, the site is ranked about 8,000 in the world, and 2,800 in the USA (as of December, 2016). Of the visitors to the site, 55% are from the USA.

The primary sources of media used on the website are written articles, videos and podcasts. There is also a means for reader engagement and interaction using the comment section through Facebook Comments.

As it is mobile responsive, the site can be viewed on a computer or laptop, a tablet or a mobile phone and I found it is best view on a tablet or phone. It makes use of the “hamburger menu” (i.e. 3 short solid lines resembling a burger). When you slide out the menu, it will display a full listing of topics or categories. The site also uses the traditional horizontal menu

bar. Social media sharing buttons are available throughout every article for maximum coverage, and therefore more web traffic.

*Runner's World* also offers a free newsletter delivered by email. These emails will be links redirecting you back to full-page articles on the website. The magazine version of *Runner's World* is also available digitally through Google Play (Android devices) and iTunes (Apple devices). In defence of tradition, I will say that while digital media is mainstream and widely available, I sometimes feel that a printed version is useful in certain situations where you don't have access to your phone or tablet.

Like most websites, there are banner adverts throughout each page, with some linking back to the products advertised. A number of the ads are third party, subject to retargeting (An example of a retargeting experience is when you visit another retail site, then you visit Run-

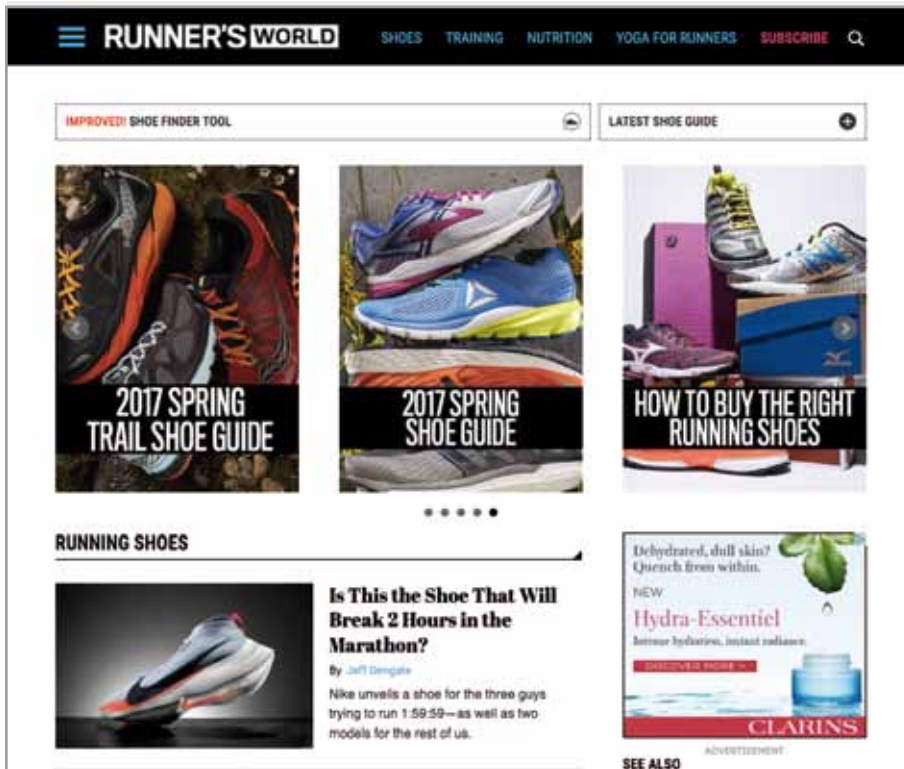


Figure 2: Shoes homepage from the Runner's World USA website

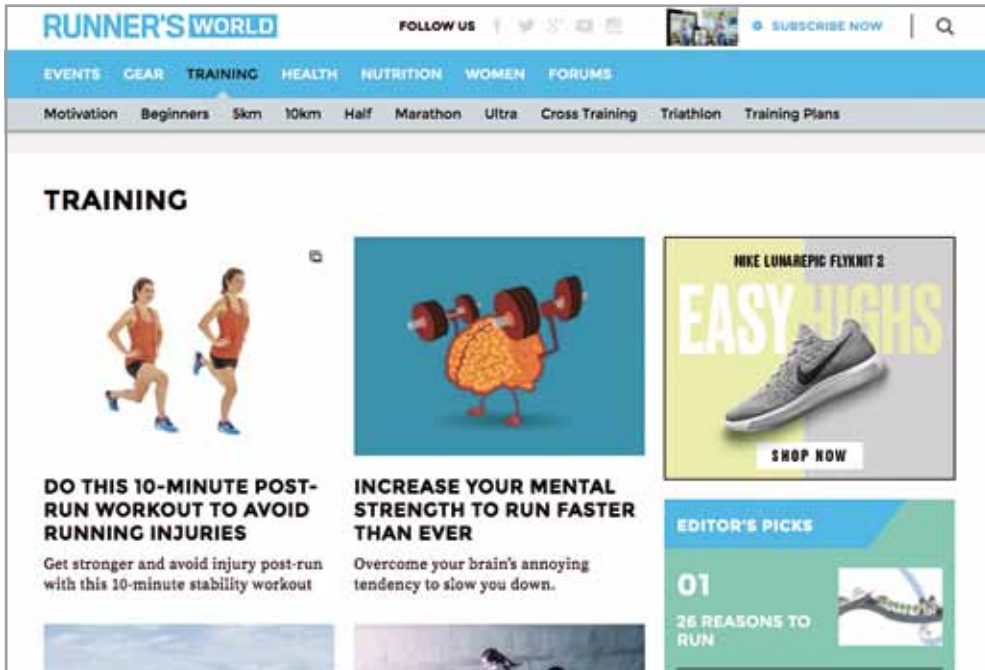


Figure 1: Training homepage from the Runner's World UK website

nersworld.com, you will see ads from the previous website. The assumption is that you had an interest in the previous website. This may affect your user experience). Another source of monetisation for *Runner's World* is the use of “sponsored stories”. The look and feel of these are blended with the site’s own related stories, based on topic and keyword relevance on the current article displayed on the web site.

In general, the site’s articles fall into two categories, Headline News and Information. Headline news stories often relate to elite athletes, but the occasional “story of the day” can be included, such as The Beer Mile or Juggling three balls while completing a marathon. Information articles include training tips, marathon profiles, health & fitness, injury prevention, commentary, shoe reviews, strength training, and nutrition. Fitness calculators, converters, and useful pace charts for splits are also popular information articles. For example, to run a four-hour marathon, what mile or 5km pace is required?

Overall, the *Runner's World* website is a great source for “generalist” articles, news and information. There is enough free content to help any runner with tips and motivation and beginner and intermediate runners can benefit by browsing the articles on a regular basis. But by no means can this website replace a real coach if you wish to run a competitive time.

If there is one gripe I have about this site it is that I wish there was an easier way to find your favourite writer or journalist. Only when you read an article, do you see that the author’s name is hyperlinked to a short bio, followed by their latest articles. A more complete search function would be a welcome improvement.

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