

# # 10 YEAR CHALLENGE

Running today; how it has changed and opportunities for the future...



RunTogether

With

DW | *Fitness First*



ENGLAND ATHLETICS

# TODAY'S RUNNER...

Just as the recent Facebook challenge had many of us posting pictures of how we looked 10 years ago compared to how we are today, the image of how a current runner looks is very different to the 2010 version – running has changed!

We've pulled together a series of fascinating facts that show how the running market has evolved; how we are today, what we expect from our fitness and more importantly where we are going in the future.

## 1. THERE ARE MORE OF US



**7 MILLION**  
RUN AT LEAST TWICE A MONTH

Many more in fact...

7 million run at least twice a month with 12 million other occasional or potential runners to encourage to run more often.

In 2010, there were 2 million people who ran at least once a week. 10 years on that number is closer to 6 million. There are also now 180,000 England Athletics registered athletes, an increase of 70,000 since 2010.

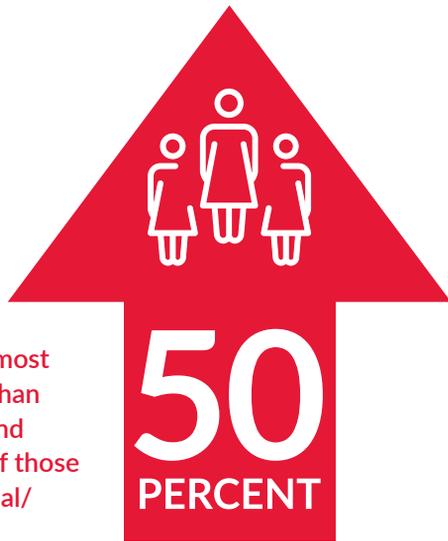
2010 

**RUN AT LEAST  
ONCE A WEEK**

 2020

## 2. THERE ARE MORE WOMEN

Of those 7 million regular runners, almost half are women – significantly more than 2010 when just 40% were women. And numbers are still growing with 50% of those who describe themselves as occasional/potential runners being women, too.



## 3. THERE ARE MORE OPTIONS TO RUN

The past decade has seen growth in the phenomenon that is parkrun with 2.5 million people completing over 35 million walks, jogs and runs at UK parkrun events between them.

 **35M**   
**PARKRUNS**

2010 also saw the first obstacle races emerge, providing runners with a much more varied selection of events than ever before. Throw in the booming trend of trail running, which didn't even exist 10 years ago and you have a very positive picture indeed. For all the traditionalists, there's also good news – there are now 4,000 licensed road races across the UK, 2,000 more than in 2010. The London Marathon has seen entries increase by over 10,000 in the last decade too.

## 4. IT'S EASY TO RUN

**330**  
**MILLION**  
**KILOMETRES**

Our data confirms something we probably all know; running is a simple sport to get involved with. Interestingly, it does also confirm we're still creatures of habit with 49% of solo runners sticking to the same route every time they run. The good news is that apps such as Strava have helped people stay motivated. Founded in 2009, Strava now has 48 million users worldwide and during 2019, runners in the UK logged over 330 million kilometres using the app.

## #10 YEAR CHALLENGE

### 5. AND WHEN WE DO, WE LIKE TO RUN WITH FRIENDS

This is a statistic with some big numbers, which filter down to one thing: running with others helps to develop the running bug. Nearly two-thirds of runners who run with other people do so on a regular basis. 39% of regular group runners have increased how often they run in the last 12 months compared to 28% of solo runners.



17% of Group runners were also more likely to 'love' running than solo only runners (11%). That's partly why RunTogether, a platform for running groups to promote and manage their runs – developed by England Athletics – has grown quickly over the past 2 years with 2,325 Running Groups registering, over 170,000 runs created, 116,000 runners registered (87,500 women), 1.14 million bookings taken and 655,000 attendances recorded.



In addition, the number of England Athletics Affiliated Running Clubs has increased by 300 over the past 10 years. As you can see – big numbers!

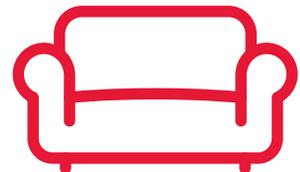
### 6. RUNNING MAKES YOU HAPPIER



It's all positive; runners and the public as a whole recognise that running is good for your mental health. Running appears to become more important for emotional health and wellbeing as we get older (63% of 11 to 15-year olds agreed with this, whilst 77% of those 35+ agreed). Two-thirds of runners agreed they do so for relaxation and stress reduction (64%). Plenty to think about, I'm sure you'll agree.

### 7. RECOGNISING WEAKNESSES

Interestingly, and despite the huge growth, many of us still feel that running is 'too hard', 'boring' and even those of who run regularly agree, with just 15% of runners saying they love it! Again, something for us to recognise and debate.

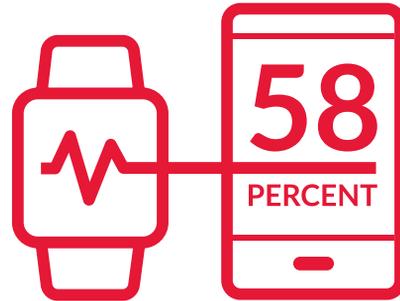


## 8. RUNNING IS JUST PART OF THE MIX

Very few people just run. On average someone that runs twice a month will also participate in two other activities on a weekly basis. The more regularly one runs the more other activities they take part in. People who run with other people are more likely to participate in other sports too. Football, gym, walking, cycling and swimming are all popular with runners.



## 9. TECH TRENDS



Gone are the days of a stopwatch, your wristwatch or clock by the front door! The rise of technology means 58% of runners are now using some form of technology whilst running – a trend that has only really started in the last 10 years. More regular runners and runners who also run in events are more likely to use technology.

## 10. WE'RE SPENDING MORE

And not just because things are more expensive! Runners are willing to invest time and cash in their sport like never before, meaning the average annual spend on running kit and equipment is £100 – a number which significantly increases the more dedicated you become.



# WHAT IT ALL MEANS...

Although the running market has grown and there are opportunities to help it to grow further over the next decade, the market faces some challenges to make sure continued growth actually happens.

England Athletics runs a nationally representative market research tracker of the running market, which has now captured data from nearly 50,000 people since May 2016. We have used this data alongside information from Sport England and other partners to identify five key areas we believe the running sector needs to focus on, to ensure the next 10 years are as positive as the last.

## 1. IT'S SLOWING DOWN

### WHAT THIS MEANS:

Over the past 12 months there are signs that the 7 million regular runners is plateauing.

### STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

The goal is to recognise why: unrealistic goal setting, lack of planning, injury and kit choice all contribute to drop-out and can be addressed. Plus, we need to understand why runners want to take up the sport – perhaps as a personal challenge, or the need to find reassurance and balance; it could be holistic wellbeing and escapism, or the alleviation of guilt – continue to focus on what people want. Our goal is to make running appeal to those that are considering it.



## 2. SOCIAL BARRIERS

### WHAT THIS MEANS:

Running is still dominated by those on higher incomes and despite its ease of access, still has a way to go become genuinely inclusive.

### STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

Put simply, more needs to be done to make running acceptable to everybody; cost is an issue, but the lack of groups and location also plays a role.



### 3. CONNECTING PEOPLE

#### WHAT THIS MEANS:

43% of potential runners 'do not have anyone to go with', while 50% of those who run alone would like to run with other people and 40% of those who run informally with other people would like to join a group.

#### STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

Capitalise on great initiatives such as parkrun and RunTogether. The mental health benefits are proven and people are more likely to stay running if they start running with others.



### 4. ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

#### WHAT THIS MEANS:

Becoming more sustainable is a challenge for everybody.

#### STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

Think about kit and where it comes from; promote running as an efficient way to commute; get behind environmentally friendly initiatives such as water provision at races. Runners are reacting well to this so it's a perfect time to move forward.



### 5. PERSONALISE THE JOURNEY

#### WHAT THIS MEANS:

People want something that feels personal to their running journey.

#### STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

Personalised guides, training plans, nutrition/injury prevention advice and expert coaching are all potential opportunities for the market.



[www.englandathletics.org/insight](http://www.englandathletics.org/insight)



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