

LAST SUMMER WHILE visiting family in Maine, I ran unfamiliar roads early one morning wearing a GPS to measure the route for my wife, who was going out later. I couldn't help glancing at the pace feature on the watch, however, which looked appropriate when I started out slowly, but as I warmed up and sped up, seemed to stay surprisingly slow. I sped up more, but could barely edge the pace faster on the GPS. True, the route was hillier than usual for me and it was humid, but surely I was going faster than that at this level of effort. How out of shape am I, I wondered. I sped up more.

At the turnaround, I enjoyed the view over the bay, then headed back with renewed vigor. Still, the GPS told me I was running 30 seconds per mile slower than I would have predicted. I must be dehydrated from the flight, I told myself. On the long final downhill, I finally managed to lower the pace on the GPS. As I staggered into the hotel, I looked at the watch more closely, and discovered I had been reading average pace the whole

time. Thus what I thought was my final pace was actually the average for the run, including the stop at halfway, and the top pace for the run on that final downhill was nearly 2 minutes per mile faster than I had planned to run that day.

The moral of the story is that I should have trusted my inner sense of pace rather than the watch. Even were the data correct, I shouldn't have sped up beyond the planned

effort level of the run. This is the argument of **LORRAINE MOLLER'S** article in this issue: that we need to learn to listen to and trust our bodies. Moller advocates doing workouts without any external feedback to relearn these skills, but during the conversations we had discussing the article she acknowledged that watches and GPS and heart rate monitors can be useful, if they reinforce your skills at self-monitoring rather than replace those skills. She advocates using such devices after you've started to tune in, with their data providing additional information on what you're learning from your body, such as, "OK, this morning a threshold effort is 6:35 per mile with a heart rate of 155."

One phrase Møller said stuck with me: "You have to view the data from your devices as information, not a judgment." This seems to strike at the heart of the issue. The problem isn't with the technology, it's with our interpretation of the data the technology gives us. Too often I treat every run as an indication of my fitness, seeking reassurance on every run, sometimes every mile, that I'm the runner I hope I am. Given the smallest feedback that I'm not, I tend to believe that data before I trust the feedback from my body and my years of experience. At worst, this leads to overtraining, injury and burnout. At the least, it ruins a lot of good runs as my focus changes from running well to berating myself or making excuses.

This may be one of the key psychological differences between elites and the masses: Elites know that they're good already, and can relax and run — fast, slow, in between, paying attention to their bodies' messages on that day, that mile. Ditching the watch and following Moller's workouts may be the first step toward that mindset.

Another way elites are different is that they have access to the latest, greatest technology when it comes to sports med. We take a look at some of these new toys in our sports med package (and discover that those of us who can't afford them needn't be too jealous), learn from a podiatrist about new, more effective surgeries and visit a lab that might be able to help you fix pestering problems through detailed gait analysis. While technology might get us into trouble at times by distancing us from our bodies, any technology that helps us heal and run better will surely be welcomed by all. **BT**

CONTRIBUTORS



A native of Central Massachusetts and a resident of New Jersey, **ABIGAIL LORGE** is a graduate of Columbia, where she captained the cross country and track teams. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times* and *Tennis* magazine. She has covered five Olympics for NBC, most recently the 2008 Beijing Games, where she was a track and field producer. Unlike the working women running in the national marathon championships she profiled in her story for us this issue, she is rarely awake at 4:45 a.m. On researching their story, Lorge commented, "I was struck by the fact that all of the women I spoke with have a treadmill in the home and do a significant portion of their mileage on it, both because it's a time-saver, and because sometimes it helps them avoid the heat or the cold or the darkness. We don't usually associate treadmills with 'serious' running, but both **WENDI RAY** and **LAURIE KNOWLES** have done speed and hill workouts on their treadmills, while **HEIDI WESTOVER** has run more than 30 miles in one stretch on hers."



BRIAN FULLEM was an all-state cross country runner in high school in Utica, N.Y., and ran in the Millrose high school mile. While competing for Bucknell University he ran 8:50 for 2 miles and 14:25 for 5K. Post-collegiately, Fullem competed for the Westchester Track Club and captained three winning Hood to Coast relay teams made up of Bucknell alumni. Today, he treats runners and others as a podiatrist in Tampa, Fla., where he recently moved with his wife, Annemarie, a DIII All-American and school record-holder for 1500m at Hunter College, and their two children. Fullem's articles on injury treatment, rehab and prevention are perennial favorites on *runningtimes.com*. For this issue, he suggested a piece on foot surgery, commenting, "In my practice I rarely suggest surgery unless all conservative treatment has been exhausted. People are often afraid of surgery but with newer techniques and approaches it is rare that my patients are not back on the road completely pain free after surgery."



JONATHAN BEVERLY
Editor-in-Chief