

(TC: 00:00:00)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Hello and welcome back to another episode of The Food Medic podcast. I'm your host Dr Hazel. Alright, this is the running episode. So, many of you have messaged in to ask that we cover running and I have the perfect guest to help me out with this. Emma Kirk-Odunubi is a very good friend of mine, but she knows more about running than many coaches I've spoken to due to her unique experience and background. So, Emma's a footwear expert and graduated sports scientist who has been in the running industry for over fifteen years. Day to day she coaches treadmill classes at Third Space and on a one to one level works for a variety of sportsmen and women seeking to crush their running goals with her and her partner's business BulletProof Athletic. Emma is a running biomechanics nerd who matches the perfect footwear to the individual runner and takes pride of being known as a trainer geek. She's also an avid runner herself and big into CrossFit and uses her knowledge as an S&C coach and a trainer at Trace Life LDN to educate the runner on injury prevention, techniques and form. Honestly, we cover everything in this episode from where to begin as a new runner, how to build up speed, how to build up distance, finding the right trainers, and why strength training should be included in every runner's programme. Grab a notepad. Let's chat running. (advert plays 01.22-02.20) I just want you to start by telling us more about you. Obviously you and I are very good friends so I know you quite well. I know you personally and professionally, but for the people listening, who are you and what do you do?

(TC: 00:02:32)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, my name is Emma Kirk-Odunubi. I am a, where do I start, instructor, first and foremost, so, I teach at some of the gyms called Third Space, around London, focusing on treadmill classes, strength conditioning and also just informing people about running generally. My background is I used to be a footwear buyer for a place called Profi (ph 02.58) where we looked at gait analysis and running and focusing on injury prevention through the use of strength and conditioning work, insoles but also running trainers as well. And then if we keep going back, have a degree in sports science focusing on all the biomechanical side of things from running and all that jazz. So, science-y basis, but yes, rolled into some of the fitness fun side of stuff, because that's where I really have a passion for.

(TC: 00:03:27)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes absolutely. And your experience is so niche as well, like, you know, when it comes to footwear and gait analysis which I think there's obviously lots of really good S&C coaches out there and PTs, but your experience with runners and specifically is why I wanted to get you on the podcast and chat about this. And you and I, I mean, you helped me with my own running journey, so-

(TC: 00:03:55)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: I remember it well.

(TC: 00:03:58)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Which wasn't that long ago.

(TC: 00:03:59)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: No.

(TC: 00:03:59)

Dr Hazel Wallace: So, for background it was, like, New Years 2020 and I was, like, 'Emma, I want to start running.' Obviously I was quite fit and healthy, but I just had this mind block, and I was like, 'I want to just run 5K comfortably.' That was my goal. Emma was like, 'Okay, I'm just going to take you there and we're going to run in intervals.' So, we'd do, like, one minute on, one minute off, jogging and then running. And we built up pretty quickly. I think it was, like, over six to eight weeks I was running 5K really easily.

(TC: 00:04:29)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Yes, no, I remember you were in your own stride. So, you will probably say everyone does, but when you kick start, once you realise that you can actually do it, that positive-, even after just one run, you were like, 'Okay, okay, I think I can do this.' And that's the power of it simply.

(TC: 00:04:46)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Absolutely. So, that was January 2020. And then January 2021 we ran our longest run together which was 25 kilometers.

(TC: 00:04:56)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: It's amazing.

(TC: 00:04:57)

Dr Hazel Wallace: It was amazing. It was incredible how far it's come. But you must find that with a lot of people in that, like, it's more psychological in that, like, I can't do it, I can't do it mentality?

(TC: 00:05:09)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Definitely, and for me that's one of the things why running is so special. So, like, my own story as such getting into running, I actually really found my love of it alongside trying to get out of a very bad mental head space. So, my love for running actually came as I was battling grief and depression. So, I used it as a tool to, kind of, go right, what can I control in my life right now? I can control my runs. And when I went out and ran I almost processed all the thoughts that were going on, all of the things that I was struggling with, and then came back and felt that euphoric feeling, like, I've managed not only to achieve something for myself in this but actually process stuff that I was trying to get through in my head. So, yes, as you were saying, in terms of, like, that success and achievement, as I mentioned, even just one run, doing that and realising, 'Oh, wait a minute, I can actually do that.' Like, you don't have to wait ages. You just finish the run and you're, like, 'I did the run, amazing.'

(TC: 00:06:04)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, absolutely. And I think what you said there in terms of, like, it came to you at a point in your life where you really needed something and I think for a lot of people around lockdown it was, like, one thing that we could all do because it was outside and in our control. And so we see, like, this huge surge in runners and a really big interest. So, for someone who's a completely newbie, where should they start?

(TC: 00:06:32)

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Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, first thing I would say is to realise that just by literally putting on a pair of shoes that you can run in and taking a step outside the door, you've already made that decision that you're a runner. Right. You've already decided in your head that's where you're going to go, that's what you're going to do. Now for a lot of people this could be as simple as one minute on running, and one minute off. Now that run doesn't even have to be a run. If you're really brand new to any form of exercise and you're, like, 'Right I need to get out and start going.' It could be a one minute really fast walk, and a one minute gentle walk. And then what you do week on week is you slightly elongate the running or fast walking segment of that. So, you will then do the week after, you can either do two minutes of running, one minute off, or you can then just extend the amount of blocks that you do. So, simply put, if you do five times one minute on, one minute off, that's ten minutes total. Then the next week you're like, 'Okay, I felt alright with that.' So, you might then add on an extra minute of running. So, you end up then only running twelve minutes. And so week on week if you keep building that, by the end of six weeks you're doing twenty minutes in intervals and then you can start to make the choice, 'Right okay, now if I can do twenty minutes of intervals, can I run for ten minutes non-stop?'

And slowly that confidence will build and my biggest bit of advice, which is why I did it with you, is trying to find somebody who maybe even you can run with, because that will really help you to kick start that feeling of running and understanding how it feels. Because it can be scary. I 100% understand that for a lot of people.

(TC: 00:08:03)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, I think what a lot of people do, especially what I found I do is I panic and then I can't control my breathing. And what was really useful with running with you is we were speaking the whole time, which can be, kind of, stressful in itself, but it teaches you to regulate your breathing.

(TC: 00:08:22)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: It's my biggest bit of advice for beginner runners is trying to do that. And people look at me and are like, 'Are you sure?' How am I supposed to breathe and talk and make my body run, like, what happens?' And as you said, when we talk naturally day to day, we don't have to stop and think about our breathing. It naturally adjusts to how you're speaking. So, if you imagine as you're running and you're trying to talk to someone, even if it's a really slow-, it doesn't have to be a hard run, I think people see the word run and we imagine these Olympic athletes, like, sprinting down the track. No. Run is just anything that's a little bit more of a pick up than a walk, right. So, it could be a really gentle steady little trot, but you're holding a conversation the whole time, and yes you'll gain that confidence from doing that.

(TC: 00:09:04)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, absolutely. And so when someone has built up to say, 5K, which is I guess a lot of people's middle of the road goal, how do you go beyond that? How do you get to 10K? How do you go to a half marathon?

(TC: 00:09:20)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: It is a really good question because after lockdown I had a lot of people message me about this and ask me, 'Right I've done the coach to 5K, I've even done it twice, because I wanted to try and build stronger. Now, where do I go? I kind of feel a bit lost.' And my biggest advice thereafter is then if it's

not already part of your training, try and either go along to a run club of sorts, saying, you know, 'I can run that 5K, this is where I'm up to.' They will do really small little runs, community orientated as well, that you could do. Other things as well is even reaching out to coaches that can give you advice on what that next step could be. So, it could just be again (TC 00:10:00) you know what 5K distance feels like, the next time you go out maybe you try and go a little bit further than 5K. You go 5.5K and then you still follow the same pattern. So, I would say my biggest advice there is not to do too much too soon. People think, 'Right I can do 5K, I'm just going to keep running hard all the time.' Add some variety in. Don't always go for the distance constantly. Pull it back, enjoy the run, don't always try and keep pushing and pushing. But ultimately, yes, to build up beyond that distance you're going to want to add the small little increments so that you don't get injured and don't end up running too much, and obviously that's when some of the strength work comes in as well.

(TC: 00:10:40)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Absolutely, which we'll get onto next. And then, so, obviously a lot of people distance is a big goal for them, but the other thing for some people is speed. And, you know, when people have been sharing on their stories that they're getting whatever time, there is a lot of people trying to get, like, sub twenty minute 5Ks which is just super fast. And, like, some people are getting that. That's amazing. But for a lot of people that is very daunting. But if you are at a certain time on your 5K and you want to bring that down a bit, what would be the best thing to include in your training to increase the speed?

(TC: 00:11:20)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, this is again one of my favourite questions, and in order to run faster you have to run slower. Now, that probably sounds really counter intuitive but what it means is you have to have a base level of aerobic fitness. So, a base level basically that is very comfortable, what we were just talking about before, that conversational paced running, right, that you feel really easy and you can do. But in order to push and grow that top end ability of our speed what you're going to then need to do is add in speed work. So, simply put those intervals that we spoke about at the start where we go, you know, that's how you're going to start running, that's how you can also get faster. So, you could have a very steady state pace that you run at, and then for a minute you're going to push harder. Now, you're not necessarily an all out sprint, but just a noticeable acceleration change where you're pushing for an extra minute and then coming back down again. Now, speed intervals are a really great way that we can play with the body to not only challenge it, but then also start to get it used to being comfortably uncomfortable, is what I like to use. And ultimately doing that over time and adding progression, be that increasing the time frames you're running hard for, or, decreasing the amount of rest you're getting, that's what's going to help you get faster over time.

And as I said, it means that the sessions where you run hard, you run hard. So, you might have one session a week where you're going to give twenty minutes all out effort. You might have then another session a week where it's just a twenty minute steady run. But the main thing is variance and variability in your training is going to help with getting you faster.

(TC: 00:12:59)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes. And you teach a lot of treadmill classes, do you think they can be helpful in getting that speed up because you're doing a lot more sprints and intervals and things like that?

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(TC: 00:13:09)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Yes, massively. And I personally use treadmill a lot. From a mental standpoint you can, kind of, see the workout and tick it off as you go. So, I say, I'm actually at the minute recording some speed interval workouts, and what's great about them is, one, you don't have to think about them because you're being told what to do, and also you can see how far you have to go. If it's a time frame you can literally see the clock in front of you, and so it almost acts as, there's your finish line. And I know that a lot of people sometimes struggle especially out on the road doing speed interval sessions because you, kind of, can't see your finish line. You're going loops round a park or something, you know, like, 'Okay, when am I stopping?' Whereas, on a treadmill there's a set time, there's a set space that you go to and then you can stop and recover. And, yes, I think a lot of the-, what am I going to call them, running purebreds, really don't like treadmills and I don't like that. I feel like a treadmill is a safe space for people, especially inside a gym, especially in those winter months as well. So, for me, yes, if you're brand new to speed work, start doing it on a treadmill. Start playing around on treadmills and, you know, maybe test yourself. One minute faster than you think you can go, one minute slightly slower, back to you normal pace.

And just see how that variance feels in the body, if you're totally new to feeling a different pace. Because I know a lot of people are just used to going out at one pace and staying with it.

(TC: 00:14:36)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, and it's so easy to fall into that pattern. This is a slight side note, but this week I've seen you speaking about curved treadmills versus, like, standard treadmills. What's the difference there?

(TC: 00:14:47)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, curved treadmills, they look cool firstly, and the way that they work is literally, it's powered by you, right. So, as you make that initial contact with your foot on the belt, it allows it to pull underneath you and get you to actually activate your muscles a little more. So, there's some research out there, they try and find out the exact number but I don't think there is. Around, they're saying, 20% more effort is required to run on these treadmills because of how they make you move and how they make you utilise and use the energy that you're creating. So, my advice if you are going to give a curve ago as a treadmill is, one, be prepared to slow your pace down, and with that, think about your form more. Because what's great about that treadmill is you can literally feel how you're moving with every step. So, with each step you might want to run a little bit taller. You might want to feel how you're pulling your heel up to your glut. All those kind of things you'll be very much more aware of on a curve than on a traditional. Now that's not to say there's anything wrong with a traditional. Traditional treadmills are still great, still allow you to set speed and run at a faster pace, but instead of your body moving the belt and causing that to happen, you're almost trying to keep up with the belt on a traditional treadmill. (advert played 16.02-17.22).

(TC: 00:17:22)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, good to know though because I do see, like, a lot more of those treadmills popping up at gyms, even if it's one or two in addition to the standard treadmills, and you will a few people, kind of, they're not so sure about it, they step on, get off. So, it's good to have a little bit of an overview there. The other thing I wanted to chat to you about which I've used in the past is heart rate

zone training. Quite a few people are interested in this and I think because, you know, like, watches like Garmin and things like that make it really easy for you to stay within a heart rate zone. Can you talk a little bit about that and maybe where this might fit or who it might be beneficial for?

(TC: 00:18:02)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Yes, definitely. So, heart rate zones are really great just across all training generally really. There can be a lot of variants in terms of, you know, where you sit and where your maximal zones are, and say the traditional is based off of 220 minus your age, is going to be your maximum heart rate, right, and then you will be down in bracketed zones all the way up from 90% to 100% all the way down to, kind of, 50% is your zone one as they call it. So, what you want to be able to do to have a really, you know, strong level of fitness, I guess, is to be able to fluctuate between these zones pretty easily. So, you want to have a mix of training in that top end zone where you're pushing super hard, so, those 90% to 100%. But for running, do you know what, a majority of your runs want to take place between the 60% to 80% is where I would say. For those that know that in heart rate zones, it's usually the green to yellowish, sometimes even blue as well. So, for me personally, I have definitely played around with it a lot in my own training. There was a time period definitely where I would always be in the yellow zone which is just one below that top zone, right. And I would struggle to run and hold a consistent pace in that. And that in myself caused me to go, 'Hang on a minute, I'm supposed to be knowing what I'm doing, I'm supposed to be moving really easily. Why is this stressing my body out so much?'

So, it actually got me to assess how much I was training and how much percentage of effort I thought I was giving versus what my body was feeling. And it was a really great way for me to tune in with my body more and almost take my eyes off of the clock because generally, as we, kind of, mentioned before, we're a very comparative generation I feel. No matter what it is we're always, like, 'Oh, what did they do in that time? Oh, what did I get?' Etc, etc. And heart rate zones just totally demolishes that (TC 00:20:00) and gets rid of it, because it's your heart rate and it's how you're moving. Right. So, it takes the ego out and chucks that out the window. So, for me now, when I'm going on my runs, if I know I need an easy run, I don't want any more than 30% of that run to be in that yellow zone now. So, I slow my pace right down. Sometimes I take a look at the number and I'm a little bit scared of how slow it is. But then I'm, 'No Emma, you're working in that steady easy zone, this is the zone that's going to help build your endurance to make you stronger and give you overall a better element of fitness.' Because yes, don't get me wrong, I adore running, but I just love generally feeling fit and well. So, yes, I'm going to focus on the zones for my runs and make sure, you know, I get segments of the red zone, I get little few of the yellow.

But ultimately if I have an overall strong capacity, it allows me to be able to participate in any fitness that I want to do. So, if you're interested, 100% look it up. Look up where your max heart rate zone should be and maybe even work out your zones. As you mentioned, like, Garmin have the monitors now. You've got MyZone, you've got Polar. There are so many different ones out there, and also they're becoming more affordable which is great. But also totally understand that for some people it's just, like, heart rate zone's, what? I don't need that kind of thing as well.

(TC: 00:21:19)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Absolutely. And I think, yes, if you just want to run recreationally, you're not really bothered, then it's fine. But I think also, it's interesting, if you're running and, you know, you're just

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going out on a casual run, you're doing it a couple of times a week, and then you check your heart rate and your heart rate's up in, like, the high-, you're working at say, 90% of your max, that is not good for you to be doing that all of the time. That's, kind of, a constant stress state, and I know, you know, in the last couple of months I've been injured, and so I'm coming back to running and my heart rates are going up super high again because this is something that I'm out of practice with, so, I'm having to go back and do those lower zone training. And you do feel like you're almost walking, you're going so slow. But, like, it's just an indication of where your cardiovascular fitness is at as well.

(TC: 00:22:11)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Absolutely.

(TC: 00:22:12)

Dr Hazel Wallace: So, it's just it's interesting, but it's not essential.

(TC: 00:22:15)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Yes.

(TC: 00:22:16)

Dr Hazel Wallace: And, so, I just brought up the injury, which lots of people have experienced. There are so many common running injuries, and when I put out a question box to say that we were coming on here to chat about running, I mean, every second question was, like, I've injured this, can you help with this, blah, blah, blah. And, so, obviously we can't cover all injuries, but I think it would be interesting to cover off maybe two of the common things that come up. So, for me, I injured my tibia or my shin, and long story cut short it's akin to shin splints. And you and I have spoken about this a lot. I actually had an assessment with Emma recently and we, kind of, figured out what was happening there. So, let's just take shin splints as a common problem. How do they happen? How can we avoid them? What to do if it happens.

(TC: 00:23:13)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Yes, and I even hold my hands up, I feel like any runner that has gone through any sort of build or learning to run has had some form of shin pain. But simply put, shin splints as you mentioned, is a term that covers all shin pain. The reason it happens is simply put, you have a muscle that runs through the front of your shin, but obviously you've then got a muscle on the back of your leg which is your calf, or two calves, we'll go very simple. If you're loading up when you're running and your calves are getting tight which they will because they help your foot to push and drive off the ground, your shins will naturally overload. So, your shins will continue to take the stress and over time that stress can start to actually cause the little muscular tissue to slightly pull away, and that's where that pain and that shin splint sharpness that people talk about comes from. So, that's like one version of shin splints. There can be many other types where it presents on the shin. We could be here for a while, but I'm just going to say it's that for now. In terms of why they happen, so, firstly I mentioned, when we run we use our calves a lot. So, as you land on the foot you use your big toe joint and ideally a second toe as your main strongest levers to then push you off of the ground.

You've got muscular tissue that attaches underneath the big toe joints that actually wrap around and insert on the inside of the calf. So, you think about it, if we're limited or not able to push off of the toes as well as we possibly can then your calves are already going to wrap up more tension and that's going to cause more tension in the calves which is then going to offset onto the shins. So, that's a really classic one. And that could be for two reasons. One obviously you might have guessed, if that big toe joint is stiff, right, then you're not going to be able to push over the top of it and be able to generate the power so the calf will tense up. Flip it the other side, it can actually also be if your big toe joint is too flexible, because what you want when we push off the ground is some sort of tension, a little bit to help you then propel through. So, if that toe joint is very mobile, or you're hyper mobile naturally in your joints, you might find that your toes are super flexible which means you're not actually able to engage the foot more to plant and drive off the ground. So, therefore again, the calves get over worked and they end up getting tight which then offsets onto the shins. So, they're, kind of, I'd say the two very common reasons why people get them, and many of you might be thinking, why toes? And it's the most overlooked, I must be honest, the most overlooked area for so many injuries that that's why especially shin pain, it's the first thing that I look at. And I did with you didn't I?

(TC: 00:25:54)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, and I had a stiff toe.

(TC: 00:25:59)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, yes, that is the first thing from that perspective. Now, in terms of, you know, how can you treat them, as such, I think the first thing to look at is the shoes you're running in. That would be my biggest advice. If the shoes that you're running in aren't right for you, and by right, I mean, you know, not holding your foot in a comfortable way in terms of is your foot slipping around the shoe loads? Is your foot, you know, feels uncomfortable when you're running in the shoe? That in itself can cause your body to move in a different way around that discomfort and then cause you to use your feet in a different way. So, first things first, gait analysis, which is going into independent stores, seeking out people that know about running gait and getting them to have a look at what shoes you're in, is the biggest bit of advice I can give. The shin pain is, I'd say, 60% of the time from people I've seen, is the problem. The next thing is then strength and conditioning work. So, working on strengthening these calves that we're using a lot. Working on, you know, getting some toe mobility if we're stiff. Working on strengthening up the foot if we're too mobile. All those, kind of, little things. And then obviously looking further up the chain. Yes, I always look at the feet, but we can't ignore the hips and the gluts which I say you can probably-, everyone talks about gluts in running as being really important, but for me the foot comes first and then you look at the other areas.

Yes, I think that pretty much covers shin stuff. Oh, the last one is going to be gait changes. So, gait techniques. So, when you hear about how you should run, there's a term that is used quite a lot in the running world and it's called cadence. Simply put it is a foot turnover. So, think about it, if you're running on a treadmill at let's say 8Ks an hour, if you run in a minute you might turn those feet over 90 steps per foot, alright, in a minute. But what you could also do is run a little bit slower and take less steps but still run at the same pace alright. So you might then take 70 steps, your cadence is then going to be very much lower but you're still running at the same pace. So when we have a low cadence we're actually impacting the ground slightly more intensely than if our feet are turning over quicker. So sometimes when you're getting shin pain

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it can ultimately be an impact related injury as well. So if you're adding more force with each step because the steps are slower that can be a reason why shin pain occurs. So looking at your cadence and upping it or looking into how you can up it is also a really good thing to take a look at.

(TC: 00:28:42)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes really good. And I want to come back to the strength training for runners because I think that's also something that people kind of put strength training and running in separate categories but they should go hand in hand.

(TC: 00:28:51)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Amen.

(TC: 00:28:55)

Dr Hazel Wallace: And the other common thing that comes up is knee pain and I think there's also this, like, misconception that, like, running causes knee pain and that's just, like, or damages your knees and that's not necessarily true but there can be knee related injuries. So where should someone start if they're starting to get a niggly knee?

(TC: 00:29:14)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So first things first if your knee is niggling and to be fair I should have said this with shins, if you have sharp pain any time when you're running that is prolonged stop. Just stop. It's not worth it for what could happen longer term. So take that first and foremost you're not a failure for stopping, it's nothing wrong that you're being smart for stopping. Once you've then kind of got home, have a look at it, see how it feels and then again, look at the shoes. How old are your shoes? Are they brand new? If they're brand new have you have them fitted? If you've had all of that and that's all ticked off, okay next thing you're going to look at is in terms of if they are brand new are they right and aligned with how your knees are moving? So this can get complicated but I'm going to try and (TC 00:30:00) simplify it. When we run our feet will naturally pronate, it's a natural movement that our foot does to help shock absorb. Not every body has that same type of pronation at foot level, some might be a little bit more so than others, some might even be what we call super-nate which is in the other direction so your foot lands and then actually the forces go the opposite way. So if that's what's going on at foot level, great. When people fit shoes sometimes all they focus on is what's happening at the foot, that's always a big no no.

You always want to look at the knees as well. In biomechanics world when I was working at Profeet and with podiatrists we always called the knees the slave joint because if anything above or below isn't working or functioning well, the knees will indicate to you and give you a sign whether that's pain, whether that's movement, or discomfort. And what can sometimes happen is even if a foot is slightly say pronating and rolling in, someone's knee might actually be doing the opposite and might actually be slightly having what we call a slight varus so out to the outside. So what could be happening is that you're in a shoe that is stopping your foot rolling and bringing you support there but might actually be increasing the forces going out at the knee. So this is why for me again back to that gait analysis making sure that whoever has fitted you understands how both the foot and knee interlink because that can be a key reason and a lot of the time I see people with knee pain it can be because someone has fitted them for the right foot function but not for what's going on at the knee. So that's another huge one from a shoe perspective but in out and out knee pain

other things that could be a function is a lot of us nowadays especially if we're working home and things like that the glutes are getting super tight just from sitting or from not, you know, walking about day to day commuting.

A lot of us are going back into it totally appreciate that but sometimes we're still walking to work and then sitting at a desk. So when we then go out and run our glutes aren't switched on or awake to help stabilise the body so again as I said before the knees are the slave joint right, so if those glutes aren't able to stabilise that pelvis and that body as we're moving the knees will take the extra stress. So that's where, you know, you can get the classic things like IT band syndrome where it links to actually the pain that is coming in the front of the knee, it feels like when actually it's probably starting up by the hips. So they're all linked and this is why I always love to use the analogy and say you probably know as a doctor the body is like a treasure map right, there's loads of different keys that you've got access to. You can be, like, 'oh that's what's moving there, that key might work'. If it doesn't you then go on to the next. And that's why as I say I always start with the foot because that's the first key I go to. If that one doesn't unlock it okay let's go up to the next body part, let's go hip, let's bypass the actual area of pain and look somewhere else.

So if you are struggling with knee discomfort and I know a lot of people who, you know, I've worked with clients even who we've gone yes that's definitely it and they come back to me and go 'it was it until about 10k and then it wasn't' and so it's trying to find the little intricacies that, you know, your body is hiding basically. So yes ultimately knee pain, firstly look at your feet then start to look at the hips and then ultimately that wonderful word strength is then going to be a big part of it too.

Advert at 00.33.22-00.33.55

(TC: 00:33:55)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes absolutely and I guess, you know, you can reach out to physios who can help you figure out that.

(TC: 00:34:01)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Definitely.

(TC: 00:34:02)

Dr Hazel Wallace: But like you said you can go to the best physios and sometimes it can be really tricky to figure it out. And so that brings us on nicely to strength training for runners, you know, where should they start. I guess for like a lot of us, you know, we live in this bubble in London and we strength train in addition to running it's just part and parcel but for some people running is all they do and for those people what exercises or movements would you like to see them including?

(TC: 00:34:30)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: I think my biggest one especially for runners is single leg work. So anything where you are lunging or you are side lunging or single leg bridging. Anything like that is going to be paramount and the reason being if you actually think about it and stop and think about when you run you're only landing on one leg at a time, and when you land on one leg at a time you're putting about three to four times your body weight of force is coming back out of the ground back into your legs, right. So if we're not even

strong enough to stand and balance on our leg for 60 seconds without shimmying side to side how are we going to expect our body to absorb and utilise and function under the forces when we run. So the first one that I give to so many people if they don't do specifically foot strength is when you're brushing your teeth in the morning and evening stand on one leg, 60 seconds on the right leg, brush your teeth, 60 seconds on the left leg. It's an activity we do every day so you can't tell me you're not going to remember and especially after this, hopefully you won't, and also you're going to more than likely be barefoot and also you're going to be moving your upper body to brush your teeth. So if you're doing that you're naturally adding a little bit of stability work that the ankle has to do by standing on one leg, and you're just helping to get that proprioceptive function firing in the feet as well.

It then, trust me, after about 40 seconds you'll start to feel it maybe in the knees a little bit, in the glutes a little bit as well. So, that's a really easy-, if you do zero strength work whatsoever, and you're like, 'Where to start?' Morning and evening brushing your teeth standing on one leg is honestly the biggest one and I give that to two six year old kids that I've seen all the way up to 80 year old adult that are still running that are like, 'What can I do?' And, then finding ways to put it into your day to day, maybe you get back from a run and before you take your shoes off you say, 'Right I'm going to do a set of lunges on each leg.' Just simple little things that you can start to build into your routine that doesn't mean, you know, I've got to get the weights out, I've got to do this warm up, I've got to do this stretch before I get into the actual session. Doing things like that can be great and I mean, there are now little work outs coming out that are ten minutes long. There are a quick little strength sessions you can add on, and my biggest advice is just trying to do something that will naturally, seamlessly fit into your day to day routine. Because, then you're more likely to stick to it.

(TC: 00:36:56)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, and so we talked a bit about finding the right trainers, and I get asked this all the time, I'm sure you get asked this all the time. I find it really hard to answer because I feel like it's such a personal preference but it's also it's very specific to the type of runner you are and the type of feet you have and your anatomy. So, for me Adidas boost works. It's got like, a huge cushion but that suits me and my feet but it wouldn't suit everyone. So, what kind of checklist should they have in their head when they're looking for a new trainer?

(TC: 00:37:31)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, when you're looking for a new shoe first thing's first is size. So, I always talk about, you know, in our day to day every day shoes size is very different to then the shoes you'd wear for running. So, when you run, your foot as it lays on the ground it splays out, and as it splays out it needs to have a little bit of room to be able to do that. So, when you're in your trainer, standing up with a little bend in your knee, you want to have about a finger to a thumb's width off the end of your longest toe. That's going to allow you to have enough space for your foot to wiggle about, but not too much space that you feel like your foot is swimming. If you are, by the way, right on the end of your shoe, go up at least a whole size if you feel your toe pushing right on the end. If you've got a tiny bit of space but it's not a finger, go up half a size. Because, brands now all do half sizes which is great so we can play around. The other thing with that is not to worry if you've got one foot bigger than the other. I'd say of the thousands of runners I've seen I've probably genuinely only seen about twenty people who have exactly the same size feet. Always go for the bigger foot, so that's the, kind of, first key thing. The next is to see what your actually comfortable in. So, as you mentioned feet are all different sizes, so you're going to have brands which will naturally be shaped to

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try and accommodate these sizes. So, you know, there are only X amount of brands out there in the world, but there's how many of us with how many different shape/sized feet? So, it is not going to be a precise fit straight away unless you're lucky. But, you know looking out there some brands are going to be made for more narrow feet. So, traditionally Asics might be a little bit more narrow, or you know, you might have a slightly wider front of your foot where you struggle with width. Whereas there are brands out there no that do width fittings, your New Balances, your Brookes. Those kind that will have dedicated shoe wise for the wider foot.

So, you're going to have these variances it's why I say, if you don't seek out someone like myself, going to an independent running shop is so important because those guys have that knowledge. And, the more that you can detract the stress off of you from trying to make that choice and put it in the hands of someone who knows what they're talking bout, that'll put your mind at ease because yes, there is so much information out there on the internet. And, we all try and look and search and is this going to be the right one? My mate's got that shoe, they say that's great, should I run in it? And, yes (TC 00:40:00) I always like to use the analogy of glasses. When you go and get glasses you might get the same frames that someone gets but you're not going to get the same lens, because you've got completely different eyes. And, the same goes with the feet, you might go the same brand that your mate has, but it might not be exactly the same shoe because they don't run how you run. So, comfort is the biggest key and if you're not comfortable in that shoe you're not going to run in that shoe. Yes, getting a gait analysis, be it online, be it in store with somebody, that's going to help take away that stress from you and then you can just worry about having fun running.

(TC: 00:40:37)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, that's good advice and it's so tricky to get this across on an audio platform but what are some of the staples in your warm up and cool down that people should be doing because that's one question that crops up quite a bit. And, there are so many great videos out there of people doing that but I think a lot of us are skipping those really key parts which also are leading into, you know, worse recovery, increased injury rate and things like that. It's almost as important as the run itself.

(TC: 00:41:05)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: No, I 100% hear that and I think one movement that I utilise a lot across any of the classes I teach or even use in my own warm up is starting in some sort of downward dog. So, if you start in a plank position then you shift your hips high to the sky with your legs nice and straight, right there you're going to get into your hamstrings as a nice little stretch to start. You can then peddle your calves a little bit to get into the calves so we can start to wake those up. And, then if you shift those hips forwards and come into an up dog where your hips are towards the ground we can open up through the hips a little more. Even looking over the shoulders as well you can start to push into each hip a little greater. And, that just moving in and out of those two positions five or six times is just going to slowly start to open up space, and I think for me that's a really, as you said over audio, is a really easy one that you can envisage and see yourself doing. And, then lastly at the end is just some little activation stuff. So, we always talk a lot about, you know, mobility in warming up, not the activating, the waking up of the muscles. So, one that I do constantly in my classes and have done since day dot is I get people to do explosive jump squats. Five, six repetitions, taking rests between each one wakes up the calves, it shoots the glutes on and open the hips powerfully. And, it even braces the core as you jump to drive out of the ground. So, doing that is a real nice one to do

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before you head out on a run and then another one which you can do pretty easily is walking on your toes. Walking on your tip toes, again a nice little calf activator just to get those little muscles firing and realising they're about to be used rather than just opening the door and running straight out. Just trying to keep it simple going from like, down-dog up-dog flowing, and then into those, sort of, tip toe walks and jump squats is something just really easy you can tick off your list and then be like 'Cool, I'm out the door.'

Don't get me wrong, if you've got time to go through a full ten, fifteen minute warm up there's research out there it will help to benefit and reduce your chance of injury risk because the muscles and body are primed. So, if you have the time, do seek it out but if you don't just ticking those small ones off the list is going to be better than doing nothing at all. And, trust me, you'll actually feel a little bit more ready for your run as well.

(TC: 00:43:24)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, you feel so much so much better in you run, especially now that we're going into winter and it's a bit, like colder and it takes a little while for your body to defrost before you go into that run. And, it's also like sending your brain a message like we're going to run now so get ready. Yes, I like that. And, then for cooling down what kind of things would you like people to be stretching out afterwards?

(TC: 00:43:50)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: So, definitely your glutes, getting into those. So, a really easy one from a standing position, just bringing one leg and one foot onto the opposite knee, hold onto something and just sit down into your glutes. So, keeping the tall and then you just find that space because even if you haven't felt them you will definitely have been using them, so that's a really important one. And, then of course calves, they're going to have been utilised a lot in your running so again, back in that down-dog position. You can peddle those calves out, give them a hold a little bit this time. So, now as we're cooling down you can have a few more static stretches where we just hold rather than keep moving through. And, if you're out on the road and you want to stretch before you go in, a really good one is, and I remember we used to do it, hanging our feet out of the doorsteps. Like, just as we finish a run having a little catch up at the end, just hanging your heel off the bottom of the road paving or your front door step for eight to ten seconds. And, then once you're then there, a little bend in the knee just so you can get down into the bottom part of the calf as well. So, switching over left to right, and for me they're one of the key areas. Yes, hip flexors, massive one as well, just grabbing your foot and pulling it to your glute. A real easy one for the hips, making sure though, as you do that you squeeze your glutes so that you open up that space of the hip flexor otherwise it's very easy to sit in a bit more lazy position where your shoulder are hunched over instead of extending and opening your body up. So, I'd say they're my three go to for sure after I finish a run.

Again, if you've got time there's awesome little videos out there on YouTube and things where it's like seven minute cool down after your run but I also appreciate we are very busy humans, and I hold my hands up. Sometimes I literally run in the door, I'm in the lift, I'm doing like my little calf stretches and then I'm walking into the front door and I'm in the shower, and I might be giving myself a little hip opener. Like, it's literally like I have no time.

(TC: 00:45:45)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Shower stretch.

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(TC: 00:45:46)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Right, exactly, shower stretch, and I say it in my classes as well, I'm like, 'Guys, if you need go and do some shower stretches go for it.' But, yes like just finding areas and ways you can build it into routine, as I say, if that is right when I stand in the shower I need to give my legs a little stretch, then that becomes part of your routine. So, yes they'd be my go tos.

(TC: 00:46:06)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Yes, absolutely you know, I like to kind of give myself a good talking to like, 'Hazel, you're not fifteen anymore. You've got to stretch.'

(TC: 00:46:15)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: We feel it.

(TC: 00:46:18)

Dr Hazel Wallace: We are feeling it and you feel it more the next day when you don't stretch, it's like trying to get up from a chair and you're like, my hips are really feeling that run. That was such an informative podcast, we've gone through so many questions but we finish the podcast with three big questions which I want to go onto next, and I'm so excited to hear your answers. So, the first one is what is the number one take away you want people to take from this podcast?

(TC: 00:46:45)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: I think it's that no matter your age, ability, wherever you are in your fitness journey, whether you're right at the beginning or you feel very accomplished, you can run. Right, a lot of people are like, 'Running's just not for me.' You can run. Anyone can begin running, whether that's a little two minute trot, whether that's running a marathon, right? Anyone can do it and you don't have to enter races to say that you run. You don't have to, you know, post the biggest and fastest time. If you take time out of your day to put your trainers on, lace them up and head out of the door, then you're a runner. So, I just want to encourage people that it doesn't matter what level of experience you have or don't have.

(TC: 00:47:28)

Dr Hazel Wallace: I love that. Question two, if you could go back and give your eighteen year old self one piece of advice, what would it be?

(TC: 00:47:36)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: What a question, Hazel. I think to not be afraid of what I truly am would be mine. We spend a lot of time, I'd say especially-, I sound really old now, kids of today. But like, thinking what's that person going to think, or is this the right thing to do? Am I going to fit in by doing that? You're just going to waste time not being able to find who you truly are and what makes you happy if you're wasting it by trying to please other people.

(TC: 00:48:04)

Dr Hazel Wallace: So true, I love that one. And, finally what is one book that you recommend everyone reads and why?

(TC: 00:48:12)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: It's one that I'm actually-, there's two.

(TC: 00:48:15)

Dr Hazel Wallace: You can go with two.

(TC: 00:48:15)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Okay, two, so currently I'm listening to David Goggins' audiobook and it's just so motivational daily to hear what he does and how he's overcome so much and it gives me that little kickstart to my day hearing, you know, he's done some crazy run or something that I couldn't possibly imagine. So, for me it's a great book because you see him and you think, 'He's just worked a bit hard.' No, his life has been incredible, and the amount of stuff he's had to go through and overcome is one of the most incredible stories I've ever heard. so, for me that's a really inspiring one. And, then the second is Happy Sexy Millionaire by Steven Barlett, absolutely love it. It just goes against everything that everyone says you know that when you think you've achieved something and you become CEO of your company that you've just hit the crème de la crème. And, he's actually like, 'Well, you haven't' and it's the stark reality of realising the simple things in life are actually the most important and some absolutely amazing quotes throughout that book that I think I will happily read again and again. A very good book.

(TC: 00:49:28)

Dr Hazel Wallace: That's a good one, amazing, well I mean after this I'm sure everyone wants to know where to find you and also if they can book in with you and, you know, you're doing programmes now as part of Bulletproof Athletics. So, where can people find you and all of that good stuff?

(TC: 00:49:46)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: All the good stuff, so on Instagram it's Emmakirkyo is where you'll find me specifically. As Hazel said I can do online foot consultations, which was great. I set it up in lockdown and (TC 00:50:00) was chatting to people from Sweden to the Caribbean islands and it was just amazing. So, yes access for everyone via that, I also do in person analysis as well if it's something people are looking for. And, then with my partner we set up Bulletproof Athletic which is basically trying to empower people using running but also combining strength work as well to become their best running selves, whatever that looks like for you. And, the most exciting thing, audio runs which we are launching end of this year. So, in terms of those speed runs we were talking about I've been recording busily away audios that you can jump on a treadmill and go through a speed session with. So, yes lots of exciting things coming, yes you can find us at Bulletproof Athletic as well.

(TC: 00:50:46)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Perfect and so by the time this episode comes out which will be early 2022 that should be available for people to tap into.

(TC: 00:50:53)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Yes, it definitely should be. All the information will be there.

(TC: 00:50:56)

Dr Hazel Wallace: Amazing, well thank you so much for giving me your time today.

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(TC: 00:51:00)

Emma Kirk-Odunubi: Absolute pleasure.

(TC: 00:51:01)

Dr Hazel Wallace: I'm sure we'll have even more runners this new year. Okay, so hopefully you're coming away from this podcast feeling inspired and motivated to lace up and get outside for a run. Emma honestly was the driving force behind my own running journey and believed in me when I did believe in myself so I want to pass on the baton and tell you guys at home that you can be a runner too, and that you got this. So, thank you so much for tuning in today, make sure to subscribe so you're first to hear about any new episodes and if you would like to submit a question quick reminder to send any questions to Ellie@thefoodmedic.co.uk. And, finally, if you are enjoying the show please consider leaving a five star rating and a review so we can keep doing what we're doing and reaching as many people as possible. That's all from me, and I'll see you again next time.