



Desert Marathon Training - ultramarathon tips for beginners, 2nd edition: Preparation for the Marathon des Sables

Dr Phil Harley

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Possibly the most detailed guide to the MdS in print today: So you want to run an ultra-marathon? And why not? Like the *Marathon des Sables (MdS)*? What is it like to run marathons, every day, in the Sahara, for a week?

There are sandy desert races all around the world to test your body mind and spirit. All in breathtaking scenery far away from the daily hamster wheel we usually live in.

This book is about how to go from zero to hero. By an ordinary family doctor who runs ultra marathons for fun, just to see how far and how fast an ordinary runner can go. Not an elite, but he brings medical know-how to help you prepare for your first desert marathon.

An arthritic turtle in slow motion – he surged past ...

You've just run, stumbled and staggered forty miles in the last couple of days and the sun is beating down. The rays seem to pierce your skin and it feels like your organs are starting to glow. Your pack chafes your shoulder and the red raw skin is somehow slippery. You wonder if it is blood.

The back of your t-shirt is a sodden wet toad. You kick yet another small black rock as it skitters away like a scarab. Cursing, you feel the stinging pain of the blood blisters under your nails. Part of you vaguely wonders if it might be a Thursday. You never could get the hang of Thursdays.

Just as you start to close in and gain ground on that old looking French chap just up ahead, his deep tan, grey hair and the wrinkles of a loosely fitting birthday suit, the slope increases. Like a leather back turtle he surges forward. You raise your eyes to chance a look. Sweat beads sting and partially obscure the path ahead winding out of sight. Meandering up and away between two alien looking outcrops of ancient orange rock.

The wind whistles down the dusty gap like a hot hand pushing you backwards. Just for malevolent fun it funnels dust eddies at your eyes to make them all gritty. You gulp another swig of water past sun baked rimy lips and vaguely wonder why you still feel thirsty despite drinking litres of the stuff. You think about chomping down a salt capsule and try to remember if it time to eat yet.

The slope gets the better of you and you lapse back into a walk. But that's not too bad. You tell yourself that each painful footstep is taking you ever closer to a large inflatable teapot and a lovely cold shower. Actually there isn't going to be a shower. Just a square of hot dusty carpet on a rather lumpy desert floor.

Page up and buy now!

Review: By MarkH - Published on Amazon.com Format: Kindle Edition In the now infamous words of an ex US Defense Secretary "There are things we know that we know, these are 'Known Unknowns'. There are things that we now know we don't know; i.e. 'Unknown Unknowns'."

Having personally been there, let me advise you that the last place on earth you want to start discovering

about 'Unknown Unknowns' is in the middle of the Sahara Desert in 50c and this book is stuffed full of practical advice, tips, anecdotes and preparation wisdom that you simply don't get from other books about the Marathon Des Sables (MDS) or endurance running and you'll never find out until you actually do such a race yourself.

It's an easy and enjoyable read and the authors amusing and self-deprecating style is itself a excellent model for the mental preparation and mindset required for anyone who is aspiring to successfully compete in one of the sternest of physical and emotional tests.

I should also declare a small interest in the content as I was one of the competitors that Dr Windross helped recover from the final days race exertions and if I can pass on a small tip of my own; getting teamed up in a MDS tent with two doctors and five other positive minded people is probably one of best ways to get you through what will undoubtedly be a demanding week !

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