

## For top trail performance, catch your Zs

Probably my favorite part of getting ready for an outdoor excursion is the prepping and planning stage.

When you are planning, all the excitement and anticipation focus on all the positive aspects of the trip. That Murphy guy has not had a chance to wreak havoc yet so all is still right with the world.

Aside from all the deciding what to bring and where to pack it, is a more important issue. That issue is preparing your body physically for the trip. There are three elements to consider.

The first element is how we fuel our bodies. We all know about proper nutrition and have heard about it endlessly, ad nauseam, from every possible source. I know that if it tastes good, spit it out because it is bad for you.

The second element is our training or exercise program.



### Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Everybody has already heard, I'm sure, about exercise and its relationship to your outdoor performance. In theory, an adult should exercise at a moderate level 150 minutes a week, minimum. For those who want a higher level, it is recommended that 300 minutes a week with 150 being heavy cardio, like running.

The third element, and the topic of this column, is rest or sleep.

Proper sleep is often overlooked, yet is as important as the other two elements. Getting the proper amount of sleep requires a commitment to amending your lifestyle and incorporating an allotted amount of time for rest every day.

When I was a young man (not really all that long ago), I could get by with very little sleep. I could spend the weekend hunting, camping or fishing, sleeping very little, drive

home late, and get up early to be at work on Monday. If I tried that now, I would be compost for the roses.

The American Medical Association recommends a minimum of 7.5 hours of sleep each night for an adult. Many adults require 8.5 hours. Personally, 8 hours is what I need to be at my best. We all have a different metabolic rate and need to determine what amount of sleep works best and stick to it. Studies have shown that 73 percent of Americans do not get the minimum amount of needed sleep.

Take, for example, the person with a family and stressful job, which requires long hours, and who never gets enough sleep. Come Friday, they head to the mountains for a camping trip, after a full day's work. This person then stays up late at camp and hits the trail early Saturday morning. This is the recipe for disaster.

The physical effects of not enough rest are fairly obvious. Muscles and tendons can be painful, limiting your performance. You will most likely experience a reduction in strength and dexterity. A person will have a general feeling of fatigue and perhaps experience nodding off.

With a general decrease of physical abilities you might experience clumsiness, short guess a jump across a creek, or misstep climbing over an obstacle in the trail. Any of these could result in a fall, leaving you looking like last night's pot roast, or worse.

The most dangerous result of not enough sleep are the mental consequences.

Lack of sleep causes inattention and poor judgment, leading to bad decisions. For example, the Institute of Medicine estimates that 20 percent of all motor vehicle accidents are a result of driving drowsy. That's one million crashes, 500,000 injuries and 8,000 deaths annually in the United States.

Investigators have ruled that sleep deprivation was a significant factor in the 1979 nuclear accident at Three

Mile Island and the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl.

It was also determined that the grounding of the Exxon Valdez oil tanker and the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger were all due, in part, to lack of sleep.

Lack of sleep for an outdoor person can lead to bad decisions. With diminished mental acuteness you are more likely to take chances and not think clearly. Whether it is traversing a dangerous river, walking a loose-rock steep slope, or losing track of landmarks and getting lost, bad decisions can lead to an accident resulting in injury or death.

Let's say you have gotten yourself "location confused" (since so many of us hate the word lost). At the same time there is a weather front closing in.

You, being tired, decide to keep moving, even though you have no idea where you are, instead of trying to shelter up. This "bad decision" leads to you getting caught in the rain, developing hypothermia, and the abrupt cancellation of all your life memberships.

Getting the proper amount of rest is as important to your body as nutrition and training. Proper sleep habits require a long-term commitment and discipline. Start by establishing a bedtime and sticking to it, even when you are up camping or recreating. One good night's sleep is not going to make a difference.

Make the commitment to eat well, exercise and establish good sleep habits, as the benefits to outdoor people are endless. Besides, you don't want to end up with your own personal Chernobyl in the outdoors. Until next time, sleep well, and see you on the trail.

Mark Rackay is a freelance writer who serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcs-pi.org](mailto:info@mcs-pi.org)



Whatever your chosen outdoor activity, remember that sleep is an important part of physical fitness. Never underestimate the value of a good night's rest. (Submitted photo/Mark Rackay)

## Locals run with Olympians

I and about 50 other Montrovians did just that recently.

Perhaps I should say we ran IN a race with Olympic athletes. From teenagers to people in their 70s, there were a good many Uncompahgre valley locals, of all ages and body types.

Granted, the Olympic runners and their fellow elites were at the front of the pack, and pulled away from the rest of us as quickly as if they had been shot out of a cannon. Some of them were members of the U.S. Army running team, some were U.S. citizens born in Kenya and Ethiopia, and some were citizens of other African countries, including Zambia.

All of them seemed to radiate a joy and zest that rubbed off on everyone else attending. Their sense of being here in the Uncompahgre was best summed up in the comment of one of them who said, "I really am enjoying how genuinely friendly everyone is who lives around here."

It seemed as if the Olympic and professional runners had already put some distance between themselves and us before the crack of the starter's pistol had ceased echoing between the canyon walls in



### Outdoors

By John T. Unger

Sergina Bach, Anna Cummins, Rob Miller, Stephanie Soska-Ficco, Sara Plumhoff, Jeremy Dixon, and Kelly Yergenson.

Kelly, when asked about her thoughts on the race, noted that she has run it more than half a dozen times, and likes the fact that it is easy to get to such a beautiful course from her home in Montrose, and that it is well-organized and has excellent aid stations. She has a good perspective on what makes a good race, in that she has run many distance runs here and elsewhere, and has recently run fast enough times that qualify her to run in the Boston Marathon.

Next came Nicolas Taylor, Clark Oman, Brandi Anderson, Brittany Oldroyd, Shauna White, Aimee Quadri, Sarah Nielson, Amy Cook, Sherry Heinel, Dave Tobler, Megan Culmer, Meg Benasutti, Melanie Winkler, Jeremy Fox, Nicole Cushenan, Becky Patrone, Julie Stephens, Dave Perry, Heather Oman, Ambre Lopez, Emarae Garcia, Randall Raziano, Michelle Giroir, Sara Mitchell, Jennifer Dixon, Chauncey Edwards, Barbara Latham, Sarah Laidlaw, Linda Vanderpool,

front of the Ouray Hot Springs pool.

Other than these 20 elite athletes, however, most of the participants in the recent Mt. Sneffels Half-marathon were just average folks. You know them as your friends and neighbors, and they are the ones who teach your high-schoolers German language, P.E. and earth science classes, teach your elementary kids math, read your radiographs and MRI scans, handle your account at the credit union, and work for your city and county.

One of the first area runners was Jeff Rivera, followed by Amy Shelley, Stacey Bohman (second Masters female), the 14-year-old Zachary Oldroyd, myself, Jesse Long, Randy McKinney, Irene Durante, Halli Benasutti, Bryce Harman, April Gerhard, Ammon Leggett,



Seven of the world's fastest distance runners led the crowd through the streets of Ouray, a crowd which included more than 50 Montrose and Olathe runners and joggers. (Submitted photo/John T. Unger)

Valerie Good, Michelle Rugeberg Peelo, Gail Hook, Ninah Hunter, Kay Magruder, and Theresa Mandell.

Of her second place Masters women's division award, Stacey Bohman noted how rare it is to receive a cash prize for running a race, so she had been pleasantly surprised to take home the two hundred dollars that went with her trophy.

Ammon Leggett commented on the paradox of being in a race with almost 600 other runners, and yet the half-marathon course often allowed the feeling of solitude, as he experienced midway when no runners were

in sight ahead or behind him.

An especially valuable perspective from a local runner was that of Gail Hook. Several of us took home first-place age-group trophies, and the elite internationally competitive runners were wonderful to meet and interact with. However, I am just as impressed by Gail's observations. They carry great meaning about why so many "regular folks" choose to improve their fitness enough to enter such an event.

Gail said: "I do the half-marathon because I can. Six years ago I couldn't walk a mile and a half without getting

short of breath. Now I do it and I love it. While I'm out there, I enjoy cheering everybody on as they are passing me. I just enjoy being out there with all of the other people. Also, the entry fees all go to a special cause that I'm glad to support."

John T. Unger is a Diplomat of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians, with more than 25 years of practice in Montrose. The next time he races against Olympic athletes, he hopes to keep them in sight for more than thirty seconds. Ideas for future columns are welcomed at [sportsdocunger.com](mailto:sportsdocunger.com).

RIVER TUBES  
**KAYAKS**  
PFD'S  
**HELMETS**  
Cam Straps  
**DRY TOPS**

**PADDLE SHOES**  
Gloves Neoprene Socks  
**PADDLE BOARDS**  
**PUMPS**  
Dry Bags  
Splash Tops  
**PADDLES**  
River Clothing  
Kayak Accessories

END OF SEASON  
**WHITewater CLEARANCE**  
**3 DAYS ONLY!**

**20% OFF**  
**ENTIRE PADDLE SPORTS DEPARTMENT**

Cannot combine with other discounts.  
Customer will receive lowest possible price.

Valid thru 8/27/17

**10 SOUTH SELIG AVE**

**MONTROSE, COLORADO 81401**

**970-249-4226**