

Run7on7 Talks Running with Linda Quirk:

COACH'S CORNER

R7O7: Linda, what's different about running at 55 than say 25?

LQ: As I get older the major difference in my running is that I am a bit slower and have to take more precautions to avoid over training. All those years of pounding the pavement have begun to take their toll, which makes me prone to injuries. I still feel the same enthusiasm and, at times, I forget that I am 55. My body, however, definitely lets me know that I'm not 25 any more.

R7O7: How did you go about finding an Olympic trainer like Keith Brantly to help you prepare for seven marathons? What would you recommend to others who may be looking for a trainer in their area?

LQ: Luckily, Keith came to speak at one of my triathlon club meetings. I had a triathlon coach for eight years in California and originally spoke to Keith about training my daughter-in-law. As I began to move away from triathlons to marathons, I asked Keith to coach me. He was right here in Jacksonville so it made it easier to connect to his running expertise and superior coaching. Keith has been very instrumental in getting me ready for my seven continents endeavor and I don't believe that I could run all of these marathons successfully without him.

For those looking for a coach in their area, I recommend talking to your local running clubs, stores and triathlon clubs to seek out advice and possible connections. Be sure to meet and speak with any that interest you. Make sure their coaching philosophies and style are compatible with your goals and running level.

R7O7: Are you able to eat whatever you want now that you're burning so many calories? If not, what sort of dietary restrictions are you on?

LQ: Everyone's metabolism and dietary needs are different. I have to be very careful not to starve myself or over eat. So, I eat five small meals a day in order to increase my metabolism. For me, burning a lot of calories doesn't mean I can eat whatever I want. Actually, it's quite the opposite. I eat a balanced diet of carbohydrates, protein, good fats and fiber. Most of my diet now is plant based.

I will eat chicken, however, while here in the United States. When traveling abroad I will be bringing a large part of my nutrition and will strictly adhere to plant-based foods.

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R7O7: How are you avoiding the aches and pains associated with running?

LQ: Aches and pains are inevitable when you're running this many miles. To help minimize the pain, I have a physical therapist working on my legs and back at least once a week. I also use ice when needed, stretch a lot, and soak in Epson salt baths after long runs, which helps breakdown the lactic acid that builds up in my muscles.

R7O7: How often do you run? How far do you go?

LQ:

I run six days a week and the mileage varies depending on my training schedule. On the average I run around 35/40 miles per week. I also cross train at least three to four times a week on a bike and work out twice a week at the gym.

R7O7: Do you listen to music while you run? If so, what tunes are motivating you right now?

LQ: I listen to music when I train. I have everything from country and rock to marching band music on my iPod. I switch it up depending on my mood and the length of the run. If I'm doing tempo or interval training, I usually refrain from using my iPod so that I can concentrate solely on the workout and my heart rate.

R7O7: Is mile 26 still as tough as it was when you first started training or does it get easier as you train?

LQ: Actually, mile 26 is the easiest and most exciting because you can see the finish line. Where it really starts to get tough is more around the 20-mile mark.

R7O7: For a lot of people, there are those days when their feet feel like lead weights and they just know they can't make it through the next mile. Do you ever get like that? If so, how do you keep going?

LQ: Sure, there are quite a few days when I am physically and mentally tired. The way I keep going is to think of my goal and how, without the training, reaching that goal wouldn't be possible. There are those rare days that I just know I can't get into it and stopping is the best thing to do. I definitely wouldn't risk injury for a few training miles.

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R7O7: How much weight have you lost and would you recommend training for a marathon as a way to lose weight?

LQ: I have been running for so long now that my weight is not an issue. That being said, running was what I started to do in order to lose weight in the beginning (some 34 years ago after the birth of my first child.) I highly recommend running to stay in shape, but be sure to consult your physician before beginning a running program.

R7O7: Do you do other things beyond running each day to train? If so, what's a standard workout like for you?

LQ: Yes, I will usually do my running workout first and then either go to a bike workout and/or gym workout. Swimming is also put into my routine as well. A typical day would be to run seven miles, first five easy and the last two at a 8:15 pace. Then, later in the afternoon, I either get on my Velotron and ride a rolling course for one hour and/or head to the gym for a one hour strength workout. Again, all of this changes daily, with some days easier than others.

R7O7: What advice would you give to somebody at your age who has never run an organized race and is thinking about running a marathon?

LQ: My advice would be to first seek out someone to help guide you in setting up a workout schedule. Take it easy, be patient, and start slow. Have fun running some 5K's, then move up to the 10K, half marathon, and finally to a marathon. Remember, it is a process and at our age it needs to be fun!

R7O7: What is Keith consistently working with you on?

LQ: Pacing, pacing and more pacing. I tend to get excited and start out too fast. We work a lot on starting out slow and saving it up for the last six miles. I haven't quite mastered it yet!

R7O7: Will you run an Ironman competition again?

LQ: If you know anything about me, it that's I never say "never." I will always leave the possibility open as I truly enjoy Ironman, so anything is possible. Maybe Kona, HI again when I'm 60!!!

R7O7: What's next after you've run all over the world?

LQ: One never knows. Right now I am enjoying the adventure and soaking up every moment of it. Somewhere in this year I am sure other opportunities will present themselves. Check out Run7on7.com to be the first to know!