Running & Technology

Some of you may already be aware of Breaking2. This was Nike's sub-two hour Marathon project recently attempted in Italy. Although the project failed by a mere 26 seconds, Eluid Kipchoge managed to run the Marathon in a record breaking 2:00:25!! This incredible feat would not have been possible without the amazing technology that is offered to athletes today.

 Of course, most of us are not elite athletes like Kipchoge, but there are still an abundance of tools available to the 'average' Joe. From shoe design, to sweat-wicking clothing, to wearables that monitor distance, speed and heart rate - "we have come a long way baby".

There was a time when all you really needed to know was your shoe size, now shoes take into consideration HOW you run and provide you with 3D foot prints, hex lugs, rock shields and guide rails. Clothing with thermal base layers can keep you on the road during our harsh Illinois Winters and wick away sweat with cool, light-weight, snag-resistant fabrics during the hot Summer days. The options are limitless and fun!

Becoming a better runner no longer has to be a guessing game. As technology continues to advance the gadgets do too. Companies across the world have created products that allow you to track, measure, compare and analyze every aspect of your running metrics. Running watches and fitness trackers are increasing in popularity with Garmin Forerunner, Fitbit Surge , Polar M400, Nike & Apple , to name a few. The tech industry expects sales to reach $2.4bn by 2019!

Not interested in a watch or tracker? How about a free app for your ever-present phone? I started my 'late-in-life' running enthusiasm with an app called 'Mapmywalk' (or run, bicycle ride, swim, even dog walk) This free app offers distance, time, speed and challenges to help keep you motivated, all the while playing your favorite work-out music. For the new person looking to participate in their first 5k, there is the C25K app (Couch to 5k). My fitness pal extends beyond tracking your activity to also counting your calories, water intake and sleep habits.   All you have to do is go to your app store and search for free fitness apps, there are choices for every type of fitness enthusiast.

Many of you that have grown with our local Reagan Run can see how technology has changed from stop-watch timing, to shoe tags, to bib timing and start mats. While we have kept the original fill-out flyer, we also offer multiple sites to sign up and get information.   Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have helped this event grow in popularity by aiding in the ease of sharing our experiences while keeping that home-town, home-grown community spirit. The Reagan Run really is a race to come home to.

We hope to see you there, with your ear buds, phones, ipods, Garmins, Nike watch's, compression gear and tech shirts - or without.

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