

RUNNER'S WORLD

August, 2006

Who's running the world?

That's a question you may often ask yourself and if the 2006 *Runner's World* magazine survey is any guide then women are running the show.

In the third bi-annual survey it's quite clear that women are now the dominant sex with some 53.73 per cent of the 830 respondents being female. It's been a remarkable turnaround from our first survey in 2002 when 54.15 per cent of respondents were male.

While that turnaround is the most striking result from the survey the reasons for running remain remarkably the same from the 2004 survey.

And just like the rest of the population runners are ageing gracefully, the average age moving up from 38.80 years in 2004 to 40.84 in 2006. Some 23% of respondents have been running for more than 20 years, and close to 98% of them see themselves as runners for life.

Besides running, they're keen on cycling (44%), swimming (39%) and going to the gym (46%).

Our readers have kept pace with the innovations science has brought to running: 80% use a sports drink and a third of them take glucosamine supplements.

Some 87.35 per cent run because it keeps them in shape (88.26 per cent in 2004), 85.06 per cent run because it makes them feel good mentally (85.00 per cent – 2004), 59.40 per cent run to relieve stress (60.64%) and 58.19 per cent use running for weight control (58.78%).

In the shoe bin Asics still dominates with some 67.47 per cent of runners owning a pair, up from 60.19 per cent in 2004. Brooks remains a solid second with 26.39 per cent owning the brand.

The *Runner's World* magazine shoe surveys remain the most clear influence for our runners when they buying a pair of running shoes (45.54 per cent, up from 36.19% in 2004).

Overwhelmingly too (87%), *Runner's World* is the source they turn to more than any other for information about running events. And two thirds of copies are used by more than one reader in a household.

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Runner's World publisher Terry O'Halloran said that while the simple activity remains very much the same as 25 years ago when so many came into running it has broadened into a much more vibrant fitness activity.

“Back in the ‘80s it was mainly a group of blokes very intent on achieving a time or performance level, often in the marathon. Now it may seem a little softer with less emphasis on the marathon, however it’s now not so competitive but much more the core fitness activity that people enjoy and want to be part of their lives as they age gracefully in good shape.”

What’s different about men and women?

Women dominate in our major groups – the 35-39, 40-44 and 30-34 years. Only as the age groups pass 50 do the men come to the fore.

Why do women run? Very much for the same reasons as men although women rank “makes me feel good mentally” as their highest priority – 90%, compared to men (79%).

The second most important reason for women is “keeps me in shape” – 88% very similar to men (87%).

For the preferred racing distance, the shorter the race the more likely you are to draw a large female participation. In the past 12 months 55 per cent of women had entered a 10km, very similar to men (56%). However when it came to the half marathon only 42% of women had entered compared to the men’s 53 per cent.

Moving up the marathon 15% of women had entered compared to the men’s 24%. At the other end of the road some 43% of women had entered a 4/5km event compared to only 29 per cent of men.

In the past 12 months some 28% of women ran uninjured compared to men (23%). The most common running injury for both women (21%) and men (22%) was the knee.

When it comes to treatment, women were far more likely to seek the help of a professional health carer. They most frequently visited a physiotherapist (41%) – men (32%) and for both men and women everything else was in the distance. Interestingly men (43%) were far more likely to use self treatment than women (29%).

The 50-question survey was conducted among *Runner's World* subscribers and readers in Australia and New Zealand.

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2006 *Runner's World* magazine survey.

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