

IT'S GREAT OUTDOORS



Pounding the streets in winter can be a challenge for the most enthusiastic fitness fanatic. Marco Consani got round that by setting himself a challenge to run every day in December. Thousands of others have now joined his annual event.

When runner Marco Consani was looking for the motivation to keep running through the winter, he set himself a new challenge.

Marco, of Glasgow, decided he would run every day in November.

And he set himself a distance of at least three miles at a time.

The following month, his wife Debbie followed suit and that December the Marcothon was born.

Five years later, this simple month-long challenge annually attracts thousands of Marcothon devotees from across the world. And the founder is still as enthusiastic as ever.

Marco, a top ultra-distance runner, said: "That first year of the Marcothon, I was feeling a bit demoralised about

my fitness as winter arrived.

"I'd had a hard summer of running long-distance but had nothing planned for November.

"I came up with a goal to simply run a three-mile lap near my home and see if I could do it every day for a month."

Marco's improved fitness and morale over just a few weeks

inspired Debbie – who is also a champion ultra runner – to run at least three miles every day in December.

She said: "Three miles seemed like a manageable distance every day and to motivate others, I dubbed the challenge the Marcothon.

"Before I knew it, there was a group of runners equally eager to embrace the winter conditions of December 2009.

"In 2010, the group was added to Facebook and attracted more than 500 runners from across the globe.

"The following year, there were more than 2000 – and the event has kept on growing since then.

"It's so amazing how many people, from newcomers to international athletes, are keen to join in and run the Marcothon."

The Marcothon rules are simple. Participants have to commit to run every day in December, including



I'VE GOT WINTER ON

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FIONA RUSSELL

Christmas Day. The daily distance is a minimum of three miles or 25 minutes of non-stop running, whichever comes first.

Marcothon is not a competition – it's a personal challenge.

For Richard Cree, of Beith, Ayrshire, Marcothon is the perfect motivator for "December's darkness and cold".

The landscape designer said: "I spotted a friend talking about the challenge on Facebook four years ago and immediately thought it was a great idea.

"The winter months can be tough for exercising and so I decided to give it a try.

"Having a daily run to focus on and knowing that other people are doing the same and supporting each other on Facebook somehow keeps me going.

"I like to read other people's posts to see how they are overcoming the bad weather or busy lives.

"I've noticed that once people start, they don't want to let themselves down."

Helen Munro, of Alloa, will also be taking part in the Marcothon for the fourth time.

She has come to see the challenge



TEAM CONSANI
Marco and Debbie with their young son Cairn

as a "routine of winter". Helen, who works for Clackmannanshire Council, said: "It's such a great idea to have a challenge at a time of year when it's easier not to go out for a run.

"I really like the discipline of having to go out for a daily run, even on the cold and wet days and during the Christmas festivities."

The first Marcothon year was the

toughest, according to Helen. She said: "I did find it stressful planning when I'd run and fitting it around work and other commitments. In subsequent years, it's become easier and easier.

"It's just something I now do each day in December."

Helen also enjoys the opportunity to run with her husband John. The couple made the famous Glasgow