

TAKE PLUNGE FOR SWIMRUN SUCCESS

Entries have opened for next year's SwimRun UK Championships in Loch Lomond. The inaugural Inch by Inch SwimRun event took place in September and has provided the launchpad for two 2016 events.

On September 4, Loch Lomond will see the return of the longer swimming and running race, and a new shorter course.

The Championship Course will feature the a total of 8km of swim and 24km of running between and over 10 of Loch Lomond's islands.

The Short Course will total 3km of swimming and 10km of running around the Luss Inches and The Narrows. SwimRun UK is Scotland's newest and hottest endurance sport, inspired by Sweden's iconic Ötillö.

■ See www.entrycentral.com and swimrunuk.wordpress.com

PRIMAL EXAMPLE

UK cycle clothing brand Primal is made by keen cyclists for keen cyclists. The collections include shorts, tops, jackets and accessories for men and women and for mountain bikers and road riders.

One of the newest ranges is Frequency for women, including high quality and beautifully designed bib shorts and jersey. These can be combined with Primal arm and leg warmers or a long-sleeved jersey, for winter warmth.

■ See www.primaleurope.com



KIT OF THE WEEK



JACK WOLFSKIN WHITELINE 3-IN-1 PANTS

An exciting new product for Jack Wolfskin this season is their three-in-one winter sports trousers.

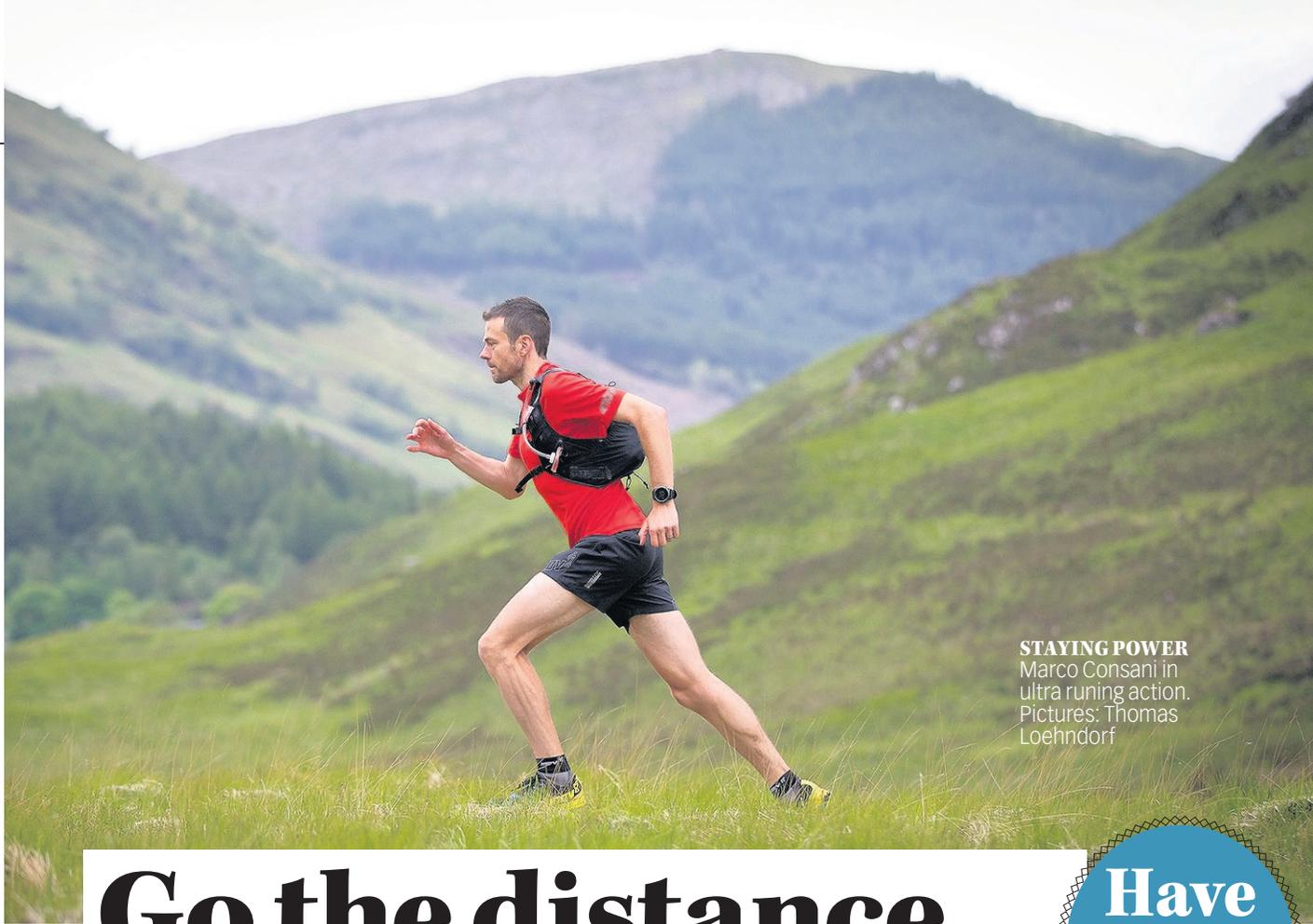
The Whiteline Texapore pants comprise

an insulated inner trouser fitted into a waterproof, windproof and breathable outer shell.

Already available as a three-in-one active pants, the new winter version is ideal for skiing and ski mountaineering.

The trousers can be worn separately or together and include features such as a long side zip on the shell trousers, adjustable hems and integrated gaiters.

■ They cost £240 in retail stores such as [Cotswold Outdoor](http://CotswoldOutdoor.com). Also see www.jack-wolfskin.co.uk



STAYING POWER
Marco Consani in ultra running action.
Pictures: Thomas Loehndorf

Go the distance on ultra challenge

Have you tried?



FIONA RUSSELL

Think you can run further than a marathon and fancy off-road routes? Ultra running is becoming more and more popular with lots of picturesque routes now organised in Scotland and beyond. On your marks...

ULTRA RUNNING

What is it?

Ultra running is the sport of long-distance running, also known as ultramarathoning.

Tell me more:

The standard definition of ultra running is any run or event longer than a marathon, or 26.2 miles. However, most ultra running races are at least 50km or 30 miles. Other standard race distances are 50 miles, 100 miles and 100km.

There is a series of ultra running events that last for specified time periods such as six hours, 12 hours, 24 hours, 48 hours and six days.

There are also ultra runs that extend the full distance of a long-distance walking trail, such as the West Highland Way Race or the River Ayr Way Challenge. In Scotland, a growing number of ultra runners are signing up to an increasing range of ultra events. The appeal is the goal of testing your running endurance, sometimes to the limits.

And it's not all about speed. The best know how to pace themselves to be able to run dozens of miles nonstop.

Marco Consani, 40, from Glasgow, one of the UK's top ultra runners, said: "I used to race reckless and push hard at the start but an ultra is a long way and if you go off too hard too early, it can be even longer.

"My coach also taught me to listen to my body, to analyse my performances and have a race plan. It's about racing clever and



STEADY ON Marco says the key to ultra running is not to start off too fast

taking things steadily, rather than being all about speed."

Who is it for?

Ultra runners can be older, younger, big, small, men or women. Most come to the sport via a traditional progression through shorter race distances.

Carol Martin, 47, from Bearsden, said: "I got into running after the birth of my third son nearly 15 years ago.

"I started with a 5k, then 10k, then half-marathons and then my first marathon around 2003.

"I ran marathons before discovering off-road running about six years ago when I started doing multi-day events.

"I then found out about the Scottish ultra races and I have never looked back."

Anything else to know?

Many ultra runners plan their race season over the winter. The chillier season is also when many runners build a good base for spring and summer events.

Taking part in cross-country events in the coming months also helps with ultra race

preparation. Marco added: "Running in Scotland in winter will prepare you for anything."

The training months are perfect for trying different foods and nutrition strategies to avoid stomach problems and cramps.

Carol said: "The best tip is small snacks and frequently. Different foods and gels work for different people so you need to find the right thing for you."

What kit do I need?

Lightweight and good quality are keys to many comfortable miles of being on your feet. Another key item is a rucksack or hydration pack - you need to carry spare clothes, such as a base layer or waterproof jacket, gloves, food and water.

When can I do it?

All year round and wherever you can find a pavement or trail.

Cost?

Free, apart from the kit. **Contact:** To find out more and for races, see www.scottishultramarathonseries.org, www.runultra.co.uk and scottishrunningguide.com

Advice and ideas

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk - you'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running, other outdoor activities and kit reviews.