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DEAN KARNAZES RAN 50 MARATHONS IN 50 DAYS. TRY HIS WORKOUT ON pg 50

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RUN AWAY

By Michael De Medeiros,
Editor-in-Chief



Ultramarathon runner Dean Karnazes has run almost 100,000 miles since his 30th birthday. Think you can go step for step with, arguably, the fittest man in the United States?

What do you do at 4 a.m. when you're in your underwear and a pair of tennis shoes, stinking of tequila, miles from home in a 7-Eleven parking lot on your 30th birthday? For Dean Karnazes, you do what brought you to that point: run. What was Karnazes running to or from? It wasn't the tequila shots, the married woman flirting with him who didn't care that he had a wife at home waiting for him or the fact that he had just turned 30; on that night, he was running away from the life he had built and toward a new one that would catapult him to amazing heights. But, much like any new beginning, Karnazes had to walk before he could run. In this case, he walked to his San Francisco home. The simple act was profound for him. "I sat in that bar on my birthday with my friends and had reached a turning point in my mind," he says. Karnazes was met with one simple realization: "I wasn't happy."

It was a short walk, but the quick jaunt home didn't ease his mind.

"It's hard to put into

words exactly what was going through my mind at the time, but I remember just feeling like I needed to get out of that bar and out of the routine that my life had settled into," says Karnazes. However, that wasn't the only driving force behind his thoughts. "I remember thinking, I just want to run," he says. But before he ran, before he found the payphone in a convenience-store parking lot, before he had his reawakening, Karnazes had to make his way home. It was at that point that this pivotal night truly began: by stripping away office attire and lacing up a pair of tennis shoes that had been sitting in his yard to embark on a run that would end in a dingy parking lot but would ultimately change his life. There he stood, wearing silk boxers, an undershirt and tattered footwear that was most recently used for gardening. It was a bizarre sight. It was also the moment that would define his life thereafter. The runner was reborn.

And he ran. All told, Karnazes ran 30 miles in the wee hours of the morning until he found himself spent in a 7-Eleven parking lot in the quaint town of Half Moon Bay, California. He called his wife, who rushed to his side to bring him home, and passed out in the car on the way home.

This wasn't becoming of a successful corporate marketing director. This wasn't the Dean Karnazes people knew. But

Karnazes loved it. "After that run, my life really did change," he says. Indeed, the 30-mile pilgrimage to a convenience-store

EXCLUSIVE! Dean Karnazes' push-up workout and cardio plan will get you one step closer to maximum fitness!

Gregory James

telephone booth revealed that Karnazes wasn't an office-bound executive who reveled in reports and figures; he was a runner—a runner who hadn't actually run since he was a 14-year-old freshman in high school.

THE RUNNER

Looking back, Karnazes recalls that running was actually something that had been a big part of his formative years. "I used to run home from school when I was in kindergarten to save my mom the trouble," he recalls. Being raised in a working-class Greek-American family of five, Karnazes lived by a rigid code set by strict, hard-working parents—running home was his outlet and his first taste of freedom.

By seventh grade, Karnazes had bloomed into an impressive runner, so it was an obvious progression for him to join his junior high-school track team. Under the guidance of his gym teacher, Mr. Mactavish, an ex-military, no-nonsense, drill-sergeant-like coach, Karnazes competed in—and won—the one-mile state championships in Mount Sac, California. "After winning, Mr. Mactavish asked me how I felt," he remembers, "and when I told him I felt good, he told me 'If it felt good, you didn't go out hard enough; it's supposed to hurt like hell.'" Karnazes and his family moved later that year. "Those words were actually the last he ever spoke to me," he says, fondly recalling the gym teacher who pushed him by making him do endless sets of push-ups and pull-ups in gym class.

With high school on the horizon, Karnazes was looking forward to pursuing more competitive running championships. What really caught his attention was the cross-country running program run by Benjamin Cummings.

"I loved it," he recalls. "Coach Cummings would make us run wind sprints with the ocean:

We would run toward the water when the tide was retreating into the ocean and then have to run back to dry land when it was crashing forward—the point was to not get caught in the water." After winning another championship accolade, Karnazes retired from running when the cross-country program was thrust into the track program. "There was a different coach, the philosophy of the program had changed and it just wasn't fun anymore, so I stopped running," he says.

THE NON-RUNNER

With running seemingly behind him, Karnazes focused on his studies: He was the valedictorian of his college and graduated at the top of his class. From there, he earned a master's degree in food science and shifted gears into a business state of mind, which led him to a master's degree in business administration. Karnazes got married, entered the business world and succeeded, but he wasn't running. "During the years that I was in college and, eventually, the workforce, I remember feeling like my life was almost scripted," he

explains. "I was doing what I was supposed to do and I was supposed to be happy, but I wasn't."

Despite the many accolades he enjoyed as a very successful marketing director, including a company Lexus and several other performance-based corporate gifts, Karnazes grew to hate his life. "I dreaded Mondays and watched the clock on Fridays," he recalls. "I wanted out of there."



Achieving greatness in the running game takes serious commitment. Dean runs at least 150 miles each week to stay in marathon shape.

Jim Vernon

THE RUNNER'S MIND: DURING A RACE

"It runs the gamut (okay, bad pun). Depending on the duration of the run, it can range from trivial little things, like 'I need to get a haircut this week,' during shorter runs to having actual live conversations with God during longer multiday, sleep-deprived hundred-plus milers. During these protracted runs, you can have some of your most lucid thoughts ever, followed five minutes later by a semiconscious delirium where you're drooling on yourself."

THE RUNNER REBORN

Though it had been 15 years since his last run, Karnazes washed away what had become a life he didn't want and reclaimed his passion: running. "Running 30 miles on my 30th birthday—3.8 miles more than a standard marathon—was like being born again," he recalls. "I finally had my outlet back; I finally had my freedom back." But this freedom wasn't without limits. "I knew I had to keep my day job so that I could feed my family and pay my mortgage," he says. So, Karnazes kept working, but little things began to change: He ran every chance he got. "I'd run a few miles before work, some more after work—any chance I'd get, really," he says.

Averaging at least five miles each day, Karnazes felt like he was more than just a casual runner. During this time, he came across a group of runners who were training for the 50-mile Gibson Ranch ultramarathon in Sacramento, California. A 50-mile run—almost double the length of a regular marathon—immediately piqued his interest. Karnazes entered the race and remembers: "I felt like I was going to collapse at mile 40, but I finished and was told that, because I finished the run in less than nine hours, I qualified for the 100-mile Western States Endurance Run." It was an ultramarathon where he would eventually amass 11 victories and subsequent Silver Buckles (the prize given to the annual winner) for sub-24-hour finishes—a streak he started on his first try in 1994.

The accomplishments began to pile up. Karnazes was quickly distinguishing himself as a truly great endurance runner—all while holding down a rather demanding and stifling full-time gig as a marketing director. "I finally came to the realization that I needed to commit myself totally to running, so I spoke to my wife and told her what I said to my buddies in the bar on my 30th birthday: 'I just want to run,'" he says. "And she was completely supportive. To this day, my wife and two children continue to be my support system, driving me through every mile I run."

THE BEST RUNNER

Fully committed to endurance running, Karnazes began amassing achievements at a pace more akin to a sprint than the long haul he was used to. Racing and competing around the globe, he sometimes ran ultramarathons on back-to-back weekends on different continents. He competed as a one-man team in the 199-mile Providian Saturn Relay 10 times, won two Emmys, was named to several halls of fame, ran 350 miles in 80 hours and 44 minutes without stopping (not even for sleep), was integral to the American Ultrarunning Team World Championships, ran 149 miles in 24 hours on a treadmill and even swam across San Francisco Bay. If it was a contest that an endurance athlete could take on, Karnazes was up to the challenge—and, more often than not, he was at the front of the pack. At this point, there would be few people on the planet that would contest that

he was truly one of the fittest men in the world—and perhaps one of the fittest men that the world had ever seen.

One of the biggest achievements during this stage of his running career—at least in the world of running—was winning the Badwater Ultramarathon in 2004. Why was it such a jewel in his crown? The Badwater is a 135-mile trek through Death Valley in July (with temperatures usually surpassing 120°F) that nearly ended his running career—not to mention his life. The first time he ran the Badwater, he collapsed in the middle of the night at mile 75 from extreme dehydration, severe electrolyte imbalance

THE RUNNER'S MIND: BEATING FATIGUE

"Some people recite mantras, while other people count footsteps. Personally, I like engaging in the exhaustion and fully living the experience. Bring it! I welcome the discomfort and fatigue, embrace it and celebrate these feelings, delving right into them headlong. To me, that's part of the conflicted appeal of long-distance running, and I don't want to be distracted when the pain sets in by not focusing wholeheartedly on it."

and acute involuntary muscle spasms. He was rushed to safety and, with medical care, survived but could not run again for several weeks. It was a valuable lesson—one that would pave the way to besting future challenges.

The zenith of his running career came in 2006, when Karnazes embarked on a truly remarkable journey that would have him run 50 marathons in all 50 states in 50 consecutive days. Only a presidential hopeful could come close to meeting such a nationwide tour. His tour began at the Lewis and Clark Marathon in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 17, 2006. Since marathons are usually only held on weekends, Karnazes was able to run the course of a marathon in each state on any day of the week under the watch of an official race director (see the "50/50/50" sidebar on page 55 for a complete listing of this formidable accomplishment).

But just because there wasn't a true marathon happening didn't mean that people weren't running with him. "I was running the course and people would show up and run with me for parts of each marathon in each state," says Karnazes. "The story took off and we had media every morning—most days, I'd wake up at 3 a.m., do a radio or television interview promoting the run for the day, hit the course, run alongside enthusiasts in the city, finish my 26.2-mile goal for the day, get on a bus and arrive in the next town to begin the cycle all over again." The journey ended at the finish line of the New York City Marathon on November 5, 2006, which he wrapped up in a tidy three hours flat. The event may have finished, but the run did not. "We didn't have any airline tickets booked, so I just figured I'd run home," he says casually, not mentioning that he lived across the country in San Francisco. "I was planning to get home in January, but by the time I got to St. Charles, Missouri, on December 15, 2006 [more than one month after the New York City Marathon], I stopped and went home to be with my family," Karnazes happily recalls. "I hadn't really had any quality time with them for more than three months, so after running for 1,300 miles from New York, I caught a flight from Missouri and went home to be with them for Christmas."

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 57

50/50/50

Dean Karnazes completed 50 marathons in 50 states, in 50 days—that's 1,310 miles! Below are his marathons and finishing times (hours:minutes:seconds).

1. 9/17: Lewis & Clark Marathon Half Marathon, St. Charles, MO (3:51:13)
2. 9/18: St. Jude Memphis Marathon, Memphis, TN (3:49:08)
3. 9/19: Mississippi Coast Marathon, Waveland, MS (4:34:00)
4. 9/20: Little Rock Marathon, Little Rock, AR (4:14:46)
5. 9/21: Wichita Marathon, Wichita, KS (4:23:13)
6. 9/22: Des Moines Marathon, Des Moines, IA (4:06:33)
7. 9/23: Lincoln Marathon, Omaha, NE (4:15:34)
8. 9/24: Boulder Backroads Marathon, Boulder, CO (3:48:23)
9. 9/25: Casper Marathon, Casper, WY (3:54:12)
10. 9/26: Deadwood Mickelson Trail Marathon, Deadwood, SD (3:53:34)
11. 9/27: Fargo Marathon, Fargo, ND (4:16:22)
12. 9/28: Montana Marathon, Billings, MT (3:56:44)
13. 9/29: City of Trees, Boise, ID (4:08:51)
14. 9/30: Seafair Marathon, Bellevue, WA (4:07:52)
15. 10/1: Portland Marathon, Portland, OR (3:44:12)
16. 10/2: Mayor's Midnight Sun Marathon, Anchorage, AK (4:27:18)
17. 10/3: San Francisco Marathon, San Francisco, CA (4:08:22)
18. 10/4: Maui Marathon, Maui, HI (4:26:40)
19. 10/5: Desert Classic Marathon, Surprise, AZ (4:45:16)
20. 10/6: Valley of Fire Marathon, Overton, NV (4:06:55)
21. 10/7: St. George Marathon, St. George, UT (3:20:04)
22. 10/8: New Mexico Marathon, Albuquerque, NM (4:09:58)
23. 10/9: Route 66 Marathon, Tulsa, OK (4:17:36)
24. 10/10: Dallas White Rock Marathon, Dallas, TX (4:12:20)
25. 10/11: Baton Rouge Marathon, Baton Rouge, LA (3:59:27)
26. 10/12: Rocket City Marathon, Huntsville, AL (4:15:27)
27. 10/13: Marshall University Marathon, Huntington, WV (4:09:17)
28. 10/14: United Technologies Greater Hartford Marathon, Hartford, CT (3:29:28)
29. 10/15: Boston Marathon, Boston, MA (3:59:27)
30. 10/16: Breakers Marathon, Middletown, RI (4:14:12)
31. 10/17: Portland Marathon, Portland, ME (4:12:37)
32. 10/18: New Hampshire Marathon, Bristol, NH (4:14:13)
33. 10/19: Stowe Mountain, Stowe, VT (4:19:03)
34. 10/20: Cleveland Marathon, Cleveland, OH (4:12:34)
35. 10/21: Grand Rapid Marathon, Grand Rapids, MI (4:06:03)
36. 10/22: LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon, Chicago, IL (3:28:19)
37. 10/23: Twin Cities Marathon, Minneapolis, MN (4:22:06)
38. 10/24: Green Bay Marathon, Green Bay, WI (4:07:26)
39. 10/25: Tecumseh Trail Marathon, Bloomington, IN (4:45:21)
40. 10/26: Otter Creek Marathon, Finchville, KY (4:16:48)
41. 10/27: Georgia Marathon, Atlanta, GA (4:08:00)
42. 10/28: Bank of America Marathon, Tampa, FL (4:09:41)
43. 10/29: Marine Corps Marathon, Arlington, VA (3:37:27)
44. 10/30: Kiawah Island Marathon, Kiawah Island, SC (4:23:37)
45. 10/31: Triple Lakes Trail Marathon, Greensboro, NC (4:18:12)
46. 11/1: Baltimore Marathon, Baltimore, MD (3:49:40)
47. 11/2: Delaware Marathon, Wilmington, DE (4:02:58)
48. 11/3: Philadelphia Marathon, Philadelphia, PA (3:57:17)
49. 11/4: New Jersey Marathon, Long Branch, NJ (4:09:02)
50. 11/5: ING NYC Marathon, New York City, NY (3:00:30)

THE 4 DESERTS: 155 MILES PER RACE



Composed of a series of multiday races in the hottest, driest, coldest and windiest places on earth, the 4 Deserts is arguably the most arduous physical challenge that any man has ever faced.

Photos provided courtesy Racing the Planet



THE RUNNER'S WORKOUT

Modified from a program that Dean Karnazes learned from a friend who is a United States Navy SEAL officer, his primary workout—something that he and his friends have dubbed the “Dean routine”—consists of six small plans done with little rest between sets. Each plan focuses on a specific move (push-ups, pull-ups, crunches, dips, squats and leg raises). He performs six circuits each day. All of this is coupled with running 15 to 25 miles in the morning at about 70% of his racing speed and another seven to 10 miles in the afternoon at nearly race speed. Karnazes also uses the ElliptiGO 8S—a high-performance cross-training device that combines the handling and maneuverability of a road bike with the cardiovascular intensity of outdoor running—for alternate running days to give his joints a rest. (For more information on this low-impact, high-intensity cardio machine, visit www.elliptigo.com.)

THE PUSH-UP PLAN

EXERCISE	REPS
Push-up	20
Triceps push-up	10
Spread-eagle push-up	10
Shoulder push-up	10



SPREAD-EAGLE PUSH-UP

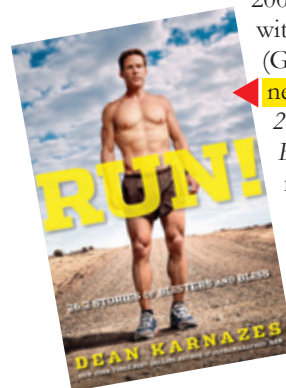


SHOULDER PUSH-UP



Low-impact cardio with the ElliptiGO 8S

After running 50 marathons in 50 states in 50 days, Karnazes’ celebrity rose, but his schedule didn’t slow down. He mixed appearances on *Letterman* with running on all seven continents twice. He penned the *New York Times* best-seller *Ultramarathon Man* (Tarcher, 2006) and followed that up with another top seller: *50/50* (Grand Central, 2009). A



new book, entitled *Run!*

26.2 Stories of Blisters and Bliss (Rodale, 2011), is set for release on March 1. Karnazes hopes that it will “deliver some great stories, great motivation and real-world tips for anyone,” exactly what most would expect from a man named one of *Time*

magazine’s 100 most influential people in the world in 2007.

But writing didn’t replace running. In fact, after running all 50 states, Karnazes looked for a new challenge and found it in 2008 with a race known as the 4 Deserts. This was no ordinary run. Composed of a series of multiday races in the hottest, driest, coldest and windiest places on earth, the 4 Deserts is, arguably, the most arduous physical challenge that any man has ever faced. Each seemingly impossible trek goes on for 155 miles. The locations span the globe: the Gobi desert in China, the Sahara desert in Egypt and the Atacama desert in Chile, culminating in the last desert in Antarctica. To qualify to run in Antarctica, you have to finish two of the first three. Karnazes was the first to finish all four in the same year. “It was like I was in another world: The Atacama has never had rain, the Sahara reaches temperatures of 135°F, the Gobi has the most unpredictable weather in the world, and Antarctica is the coldest place on the planet,” he says.

Was winning this contest his greatest achievement? Karnazes will tell you that his personal best running moment was “running a simple 10K race with my daughter on her birthday.”

THE RUNNER'S FUTURE

Now 47, Karnazes has known the roles of aspiring runner, corporate executive, marathon runner, best-selling author, husband and father and served as an inspiration to many. Today, he continues to juggle many of those titles with a relatively new one: activist. “I look around our country and the entire developed world and see how people have lost sight of how important

5 Questions with Dean Karnazes

How many miles would you estimate you’ve run in your life?

“Probably approaching the 100,000-mile mark.”

How many miles have you run today?

“So far, about 30—but I’m heading out for another run in a few minutes.”

How many shoes have you gone through in your running career?

“Not sure in my career, but I go through about 20 to 30 pairs a year.”

Do you keep them?

“Hell, no. If you saw what they looked like afterwards, you wouldn’t either [laughter].”

Do you still have the shoes from the run on your 30th birthday?

“I only wish. Little did I know the direction my life would take at the time. The last thing on my mind then was saving those stinky things [more laughter].”

he says. Following a plan with several different varieties of push-ups (see “The Push-Up Plan” on left), chin-ups, pull-ups, parallel bar dips, squats, calf raises, knee raises and oblique crunches, Karnazes is a firm believer in body-weight circuits. “I do my circuits six times a day and run a couple of times each day as well,” he says. He also doesn’t sit. “My desk is set at waist level—I’m on my feet all day.”

THE FINISH LINE

After nearly two decades of running around the globe and amassing far too many accolades to number, Karnazes hasn’t lost the desire to run. “My last finish line will be in a pine box,” he jokes. “I’m a firm believer that an ordinary person can train to do extraordinary things.” His running career is a testament to that thought. What’s next for, arguably, the fittest man in the United States? “I could tell you, but I’d have to kill you,” he says with a laugh. At the close of this interview, Karnazes simply stated: “Really, I just want to run.” **MF**

Gregory James (push-ups)