Zone 2 Marathon Training

Watch, listen and read the full episode here

[00:00:00] I tried to run a marathon in zone two, slow controlled and chill, and it worked. Until it didn't. Here we go. Here's some of our paces. Oh, Darren. Three hour team right here. Don't choose, don't you? A lot of people struggle staying in it in the beginning, those first six to eight weeks because it's boring.

[00:00:19] Smashing up boys. Obviously it's up three hours, right? It's up 90 in the ah, we in the house. Another thing about we don't talk about zone free enough. That's a good work. Let's go. Well done. Thank you. Like a toenail? I think so. Oh. This is what happens when you take the Mone low heart rate method into a real marathon.

[00:00:41] No lab tests, no fancy voodoo, just me, my heart rate monitor, my watch and reality. Huge spoiler. Reality wins. It always does, but you'll learn a whole lot. From watching me trying to fight it. Good to see some smiling faces. You never know how long that'll last. Over 42.2 for Brenton, the guy that I've been coaching for the last six months, sub three hours was the goal.

[00:01:03] It's the marathon version of getting your black belt. Why are you so obsessed with the sub three hours? I don't know. It's a good question. I'm not really, not really a hundred percent why I'm so obsessed, but I'm sure like once I get

sub three then they'll be like, okay, we. 2 55 or something next. Yeah, it's stupid though.

[00:01:22] It's just an number. A hundred percent sub three tent today. Sub three or the medical tent. I think we got this man. For me, it was a chance to see if this run slow to get fast idea could survive 42 kilometers, 26 miles of real world suffering. And let's just say it got. Kind of complicated. Let's go. So lemme set the scene a bit.

[00:01:45] The morning was Crisp Small Town Energy, love Ballarat, Australia, right outside of Melbourne, Victoria. People in Puffer jackets. It was cold, it was about 50 degrees, maybe a little bit cooler. Uh, there was some rain, people had some coffee in hand. There was a buzz of let's get this done type of vibe. This has been six months of training for you, man.

[00:02:04] Let's do this. We got this, we got this, we got this start line chatter. I saw nerves, lots of nerves hiding under some people's jokes and whatnot. Really awkward smiles. And that first 10 K, six miles, absolute bliss pace was on point. Our heart rate's been locked in almost 15 Ks, 13, about eight, nine miles in.

[00:02:22] How you feeling? Brenton? Still feel alright? Pretty good. That's good. Yeah. Still that still feels easy. That's what we want. I think we're right at pace. Don't you? Don't you? One thing I found is a lot of people struggle staying in it in the beginning, this first six to eight weeks because it's boring.

[00:02:45] Gotta go slow load of ego, gotta walk up hills sometimes. Gotta start with run, walk. 'cause you spike your heart rate, but you hit that week four. See a little bit at week six. Week eight, start moving. I go to about 12 weeks. First time I did a 16 weeks know it's a bit much, but next time I won't do that again.

[00:03:06] Fast forward to about the 18 kilometer, let's say 11 mile mark for Americans out there and the sub three hour group, it felt like a moving. Party. It was rhythmic, steady, almost felt too easy. Jokes were happening, and for a moment I thought maybe this is really the cheat code. This whole zone two thing.

[00:03:24] How you feeling? Brenton? Feel good, sir? Good. We got reach you over here. We got the three hour pacer right here. How you doing, sir? Good brother. Hell are you? Good? Good. Cameron, how you feeling? I'm feeling good pacing this guy here. But you're pacing me. You're pacing me, pacing everyone with a pace drink. So if I die, stay with him.

[00:03:44] All right. But Marathons, love to humble you. Quick pit stop. If you're watching this, you probably want to fix your zone two right now. You wanna improve it? Cool. I made a free guide the 1% Better Runner Zone two, improve your Zone

two plan. It's a step-by-step simple, no fluff. You learn how to actually get faster at low heart rates without wasting months doing junk miles and kilometers.

[00:04:07] Why does it matter? Because zone two is your engine. You build it right? Everything else gets easier. Racing is faster. Recovery is faster. No burning out. Comes with a quick start guide, checklist, and the full training plan. Calendar, week by week, days, fueling tricks, et cetera, all tested by me, not just theories and a whole bunch of science to back it up.

[00:04:24] And when you download it, you'll get subscribed to my weekly newsletter. Also with short, practical stuff like VO two Max Temple runs and mental fitness stuff. Think of it as a running therapist in your pocket. Real twos make you better. No spam unsubscribe anytime. Hit the QR code right here to sign up the link below in the video description or the show notes if you're listening on the podcast player.

[00:04:45] Quick running science nerd moment. Zone two is your aerobic base. It's not a magic trick. It turns out my actual zone two ends at 161 VPMs. But I did a threshold test. A threshold like threshold test. Found out my zone two. Well, I thought it ended at 1 52 heart rate. It actually ends at 1 61 heart rate, which is crazy.

[00:05:11] So maybe I have an under training, I don't know, but I have a huge on two, which is really interesting. Again, is that MA Platoon? I don't know. My LT one is that sub threshold. And even Imma test, which Mike Trees, who's uh, co-host on here, who's been on here a bunch, he has the Imma test if Mone isn't working.

[00:05:29] Both those tests, both those guys didn't work for my Zone two. And here is the absolute kicker. If I used the straight Mone formula, my zone two would've stopped at 137. 'cause I'm 43 years old, minus a hundred and eighty one thirty seven Rich. That's not even the end of my zone one, I'm not even in zone two.

[00:05:46] It's crazy. So it's not helpful if you're trained up. And another thing about myone is you don't talk about zone three enough and, uh, sub sub-threshold training at like LT one, LT two. So I've been doing a lot of that, which is above my tune. That's been interesting the last year, year two, which is the Norwegian stuff, and uh, it's kinda like you're pulling the threshold versus pushing it up.

[00:06:15] Mafa Tune is a great starting point, but it's not the whole story. The more advanced you get the. The more you need proper testing. Yeah. This is like, you know, rich people problems sort of thing. It's like, oh yeah, what was, what was you, Darren, for being so fast in zone two. But it is a thing and sometimes Moit tone zone two doesn't work for everyone, so you need to make sure you are using the right one and testing and using different types of formulas to make sure your zone two is correct.

[00:06:37] And for me, this meant I had more to give in my training and also in the racings, but it also meant I was riding the fine line of where zone two ends and the. Uh oh begins because running long at zone two, it's totally different than running for 20, 40 minutes is zone two, so around 25 to 30 kilometers, that's 15 to 18 miles for the Americans.

[00:07:00] The party was over that pace. Party started. Thinning out. I was like, what happened here? The pacer dropped off. I was like, what's going on here? Things started getting weird. Legs got heavy. My heart rate was slowly creeping up. I was still in his zone too. Still in zone too, but it was like spiking on little Hills.

[00:07:15] How you feeling? Yeah. Feeling that? Sorry. He's feeling it. I'm feeling it. Alright, so we got 12 more Ks left. Less than that. Oh, this is when you gotta dig deep. This when the race starts. I had a little calf and hamstring twitch, which is a warning shot before the cramps and even my shins, they were like, Hey man, I'm tired too.

[00:07:38] Which I was like, wait, my shins are tied. What's going on? I was still pretending everything was fine. Spoiler, it was not the marathon. It taxes and takes over. Everything, and that's the game that you decide to play.

[00:07:52] So we're at 32 to 37 kilometers. That is 20 to 23 ish miles. This is the pain cave. A lot of people say the marathon starts at 20 miles, 32 Ks. So true. So true. You gotta get there. And then it's like, now you gotta hang on. All the cramps started properly happening, slowing down that pace. Even though my effort was pretty high, I thought.

[00:08:13] Absolute ego check time. I had the, it's time for a real talk moment with Brenton and I told him, look, we're slowing down. Sub three might not happen at this pace and 'cause we're just gonna gradually slow down. I don't wanna push you any further because you might blow up. So what do you want to do? I said, you're gonna still get your best time.

[00:08:32] If we, if we hang on here, I promise you, and that is still worth it. And he said, look, let's keep it here, and we will make sure that we can get to 37 38 Ks, which is about 23, 24 miles. And he was like, then we'll push it from there and see, you know, it's like, okay, let's see if we have more in the next 20 to 30 minutes.

[00:08:50] But you never know. So the goal shifted from. Go as fast as we possibly can to hold on. Don't blow up. Bit of damage control. But then Brenton started pulling ahead at about 38 Ks, about 24 miles, and I was like, whoa, what's going on? Looking strong. Brenton. Push through. Push through, buddy. I couldn't match him.

[00:09:08] I actually tried to go. Cramp happened and I was like, this, this ain't good. And at 41 Ks I was hanging on for dear life, and this happened all right. Less than one k. I blew up no 18 V. Even though I have a low heart rate,

[00:09:26] my body's not used to this. So what on mine we're done. Brent is up ahead, which is great. I think he's gonna get the best time, but I've cramped a million times. Still gotta train distance, even though with a little heart rate. Lots of winning lessons. Oof. And that's racing. That's the beautiful stupid magic of this sport of distance running.

[00:09:46] You can't simulate any of this in training. Huge. Crank 42. Gotta be joking me. Oh wow. Huge crank. So roll down. 50 meters a good one. Let's go

[00:10:07] job, man. That's all we have, man. Dude, that's. That's a three minute PR dude. That's like 53 4%. Man. I'll take that any day. Dude, you did great man. Boys get through. Yeah man. We got through. We made it. Appreciate you man. Thanks. Sweaty. Solid Pac too. Good. Good job man. Three hours, 50 seconds. It's all dude. Next one.

[00:10:30] Did I start feeling like my lose my hip Flexes? Yeah. And like legs it with my legs. That was the worst race I've ever done. I've got the best race. You going? Alright start. I saw you. Coming before I felt so good and then my mom not wanna, and then I vomited at 27 K. Oh, 27 is the worst. It's so, and it was too early.

[00:10:48] And then I caught for this one and then I was like trying to keep going and go. And then I just, every gel after I just came right back up Adam, I just, here we go. How'd you go? Three 14 baby. How you feel? You felt like fine. Like the whole thing? Nah, there was, uh, it was tough in the middle. 26 to 37. Good job boys.

[00:11:14] We didn't hit sub three, but Bretton smashed a three minute best time. Huge. It was actually more than three minutes. He was only 48 seconds off of actually getting sub three. So this is something that I actually didn't explain earlier, but I realized about a week before our race that we had been training to GPS watch Garmin time and Strava time, which.

[00:11:35] I knew that we would overrun the marathon 'cause everyone does. I started seeing a bunch of people doing the Boston Marathon and everyone's coming in at 42.4 Ks 40, 42 0.5 Ks, which is like 20, 26 0.3 miles, 26.4 miles. And I was like, hold on, we need to actually run about five to six seconds per mile faster than what we trained.

[00:11:54] I was like, if we actually wanna hit the time. So I told him that. He said, cool, cool, cool. Maybe that blows up. Maybe we should have been trending faster.

So a lot of things that 48 seconds, he actually, I, I did some research on his, his splits and I was like, oh my God, if he didn't slow down in the last four to five Ks, the last three miles, he actually lost about 40 to 45 seconds in the last three to four miles.

[00:12:17] So all he had to do was hang on and he would've actually ran his best time, which is crazy. The marathon race, there's so many more layers to it outside of training, and that means that he's ready. So I'm looking forward to seeing what he is doing in Gold Coast. And I, he, he's a man, he's a sub three hour marathoner.

[00:12:31] I'm gonna say that, but for me. I was only less than 1% off my lifetime best marathon. I have ran a sub three hour marathon and eight years later, so eight, that was eight years ago. I'm 43 years old, and I did that with way more life chaos, way more things happening. I probably trained about the same, probably smarter this time.

[00:12:49] Um, I would say that. I got injured before the actual race last time, so I'm making sure that I didn't get injured this time, but some other stuff happened. Zone two, it did not fail me. It built the engine and the marathon. It just demanded way more than I had on the day, as it always does. Alright, if you're still here, you're obviously serious about improving your running.

[00:13:09] So here's what to do next. Grandma, 1% better runner. Improve your zone two training plan, which you can hit the QR code right here or the link below in the show notes. It'll help you build a bulletproof aerobic base, which is faster and smarter. No junk miles, no dumb training. It'll help you mentally get through the beginning parts of zone two training, which is tough, and you'll sign up for that newsletter.

[00:13:30] So every week I'm gonna hit you with practical tools. Like I said, VO two max Tempo recovery hacks and a bunch of mental strength and mental fitness and some fun stuff. A lot of stories in there. No fluff, no spam, unsubscribe anytime. And if you wanna learn more about zone two running, you could check out the video below.

[00:13:45] Right here. Jesus. Whoa, buddy. Yeah. Oh, because I feel gross. Or what does it feel like? Does it hurt? Yeah. No, that's, oh, okay. Time, time, time. I'm obsessed with it as it's the one thing we can't make more of, but ironically, we as humans, we made the whole concept of time. Thanks for giving us your time by listening, watching or reading this.

[00:14:09] We love helping runners get 1% better each day. One step at a time and can only reach more runners by people like you sharing us out to runners like you. As I might have mentioned earlier in the episode, if you haven't already, you can get

a free step-by-step 30 day base training and habits guide to getting 1% better in Running and life each day by signing up for our email newsletter.

[00:14:29] Unlike other running videos and podcasts, we are not about the quick hack and fluffy motivational quotes. Instead, the 1% better runner focuses on how small daily habits ripple into broader life success, helping runners perform better. On and off the road, or the trail or the track, wherever you want to be doing your workouts.

[00:14:46] All in five minutes per week. This episode and all this content is produced in Sydney, Australia, and I'd like to acknowledge the Gadigal of the Your nation, who are the traditional indigenous custodians of this land. Much, much, much respects. If you wanna contact us about anything, email talk@dlakecreates.com.

[00:15:04] We're also on the socials, mainly Instagram and Strava. Right now, just search one Better Run or D Lake runs small steps now. Lifelong Impact later. Peace.