**Training/Health snippets**

**The Senior Runner**

**Special Concerns for The Senior Runner:**

If you’re over 60, exercise can make your life better and more enjoyable. But that said, there are some special concerns for the senior runner. Deal with these sensibly and you could be running for many years to come

Bone and Joint Health: Bone mass peaks when we’re in our early 30’s and generally slides downhill after that – the rate of which includes many factors including diet, genetics and hormone levels. Bone density declines dramatically in post-menopausal women, due to the lack of the female hormone oestrogen, which both aids the body’s absorption of calcium and slows loss of calcium from the bones. Weak bones are more vulnerable to fractures. Compounding matters, broken bones are more serious for elderly people than the young. Healing takes longer, and the resulting inactivity can take a toll in other areas, setting off a chain of disabilities. As we age cartilage also tends to deteriorate

*What to do about it:* First of, it is a falsehood, long since disproved, that running damages the bones. In fact, running protects against the decline of bone mass. That’s because bone, as well as muscle responds to the damages you place on it with a conditioning response, toughening and hardening in reaction to stress. If you’re a long-term runner, the chances are your bones are now healthier for it. And if you’re adhering to a strength-training program, it will pay double dividends since it also counts as a weight-bearing activity, thus providing a protective effect on bone density

Another way to protect your bones is to eat a diet of healthy foods that are high in calcium. Milk, cheese, yoghurt and other dairy products are the best sources. Tofu, dark leafy vegetables, tinned salmon and sardines are also excellent choices. For extra insurance, you can drink juice that is fortified with calcium and take a daily supplement that contains calcium