Ultra-marathon Man does have a human side, you just need to go back to the genesis of his obsession. At the age of 30, with a glittering corporate career bolstered by an MBA and a peruse of the carbo-loaded table, we’re away. A medic tends his wound and I introduce him to that – I’ve got a story to get, a job to do.” Technically, so does he – he’s paid to be here, to run as a publicity machine. A medic tends his wound and I introduce myself as the village idiot who wants to run alongside him for a short stretch: “How far’s the next checkpoint?” he asks anyone in earshot. The chorus of answers from assembled fans, as though making a great offer to a noble but not easily impressed king, is typical of the Karnazes factor. He gathers an adoring crowd wherever he goes. People cheer him on. “I’ll be honest, I’ve got nothing left. Not sure I can go on. Just need some sleep.”

He’s hurting. You can see it in his face. “I’ll be honest, I’ve got nothing left. Not sure I can go on. Just need some sleep.”

Ten minutes later we stop to inspect Dean’s wound. “Smashed my knee on a rock.”

“You nearly missed the halfway point. Time to switch engines, Dean. The answer to his checkpoint question is 11km. I suggest that perhaps he push on for a ‘meagre dozen’ so we can chat. Something clicks, and for a beaten man about to sleep, a gear changes. A glint flashes in his eye, the sparkling All American teeth flash and, after a pause of the carbo-loaded table, we’re away. For Dean, 11km is a cinch. For me, on no training – not to mention no breakfast – it’s a marathon.

Kilometre 54.5

One of the world’s best-known ultramarathoners says he wants my quads. For an instant I’m flattered, but he’s simply drawing from the thought of refueled thighs. How my chicken legs could possibly provide any mental comfort I couldn’t tell you, but my inflated ego now believes I can crack this 11km.

Ten minutes later we stop to inspect Dean’s bulging calves as they correlate with what looks like a million maggots running their
Kilometre 67

Television do not count as performance enhancing in the sport of ultra running. Sitting in a café near the Blue Mountains’ famous Three Sisters, the only thing that sets us apart from the other customers is the running shorts and hydration packs hanging off our backs. In Dean’s book, pacing yourself legitimately includes stopping all together and if you’re going to stop, there may as well be choc chip cookies and macaroons involved.

Perhaps it’s the caffeine, could be the surreal nature of discussing our kids over a cuppa while mid-race, or maybe the promise by Dean that, despite a serious lack of handrails we delve into a wilderness not typically experienced by daytrippers. It’s a 600metre-plus drop to the damp forest floor, a 600metre-plus drop to the damp forest floor, a 600metre-plus drop to the damp forest floor, a 600metre-plus drop to the damp forest floor.

Running/walking the entire distance together

4-8 person relay team:

running/walking different stages in pairs

2-4 person endurance team:

Solo endurance runner

Enter either the 100 mile or 100km events as: "categories"

Imagine 4 marathons in 48 hours! Choose your challenge in support of Mind – the 100km Emtree Corporate & Team Challenge or the 100 mile Alpine Skyrun, both open to teams and solo participants. Be part of this challenge and commit to as little as 15km in a relay team or up to 160km as an endurance runner.

The Mind Alpine Challenge will test you to the limit as you traverse some of the toughest and most exposed areas of Victoria’s stunning Alpine National Park and push your personal limits. Whilst you will be doing it tough, your efforts will be supporting Mind’s clients who work hard every day to rebuild their lives, as they recover from mental illness.

Categories

Event schedule

To register visit www.mindaustralia.org.au

 Druids
grotto

The course was tough... and we navigated the highest mountains in Victoria... I had my doubts at moment... But there was no way I was going to quit!

Jessica, first female to compete the 2009 Alpine Challenge
ENTRY NOW OPEN

Don’t miss out on the most exhilarating new running event in 2009

From the creators of the Tough Bloke Challenge comes an event guaranteed to be the most fun you’ll have with your pants on!

The MUDRUN is a cross country run with challenging natural and muddy obstacles set amongst one of the most picturesque valleys on the NSW Central Coast. Just one hour’s drive from Sydney, the course will traverse beautiful native forests, grasslands, creeks and, as the name suggests – mudflats!

Runners of all ages and abilities can participate in the MUDRUN’s full 12km course or 6km half course.

NSW CENTRAL COAST
5TH DECEMBER 2009

Kilometre 86
A common notion among marathoners is that you hit the physical wall at kilometre 32. By my count, for me, that’s now. Yet even if I wanted to I can’t stop – we’re still 5km from the next and final checkpoint. Between us and the finish is nothing but dense bushland, gorges, rivers and enough anguish to bond them all. As the breakdown baton has long passed from Dean to me. The barrier between us, ebbing and flowing for most of the trail, has run dry. Dean has shed his human skin to reveal one of steel. It’s the flip side of many extreme athletes. Personable, approachable day-to-day, but get them in their zone and you’ll encounter a cold, even arrogant alter ego. Dean is no different. Reviewing Dean’s book, John Medinger [who is also a friend of Dean’s] writes: “The most serious flaw is that he initially comes across… as overly egotistical. He crosses about being ‘ripped like a prize fighter’ and having ‘less than five percent body fat’. Deeper into the book he becomes more self-efficacious, but the initial impression remains. This is ultimately ironic because in real life Karnazes – while hardly lacking in self-confidence – is caring and genuine.”

Kilometre 95
The mental wall strangles you at 40km, after which, they say, every kilometre in a marathon feels like the first forty. ‘They’ obviously haven’t done a marathon over mountains. 5km to go. It may as well be 50km.

Dean knows he’s escaped the sting of failure. Feeling the pull of the finish line he pads off ahead of me. My sense of comradeship pushes me to stick with him but he’s gone. Dean’s not covering them now and I’m positively hating them. My jog recedes to a stumble, which falls submissively to a hobble. No one in front, no one clomping past. Dean’s not coveting them now and I’ve melted into all too human mode. I plod. I throw my limbs forward. A ridge. I’m positively hating them. My sense of comradery pushes me to stick with him but he’s gone. Dean’s not covering them now and I’m positively hating them. My jog recedes to a stumble, which falls submissively to a hobble. No one in front, no one clomping behind. The only signs that I’m not completely lost is the little reflective ribbons that mark the trail. The reflective ribbons rise up. One foot. The next. Forward. A ridge. I’m moving toward something. It’s as though I’m in a dark tunnel with a bright light at the end. There’s a giant gate in the middle, bathed in light. Strange. It’s like a blow-up castle. Oh it has a giant gate in the middle, bathed in light. The next. Forward. A ridge. I’m moving toward something. It’s as though I’m in a dark tunnel with a bright light at the end. There’s a giant gate in the middle, bathed in light. Strange. It’s like a blow-up castle. Oh it has a giant gate in the middle, bathed in light.

Kilometre 100
Cramps shoot up my legs just as I collapse over the line. Where’s Dean? I’m here for an interview. Already tucked up in his luxury hotel room as it happens. I hope he’s having nightmares about an idiot journalist’s quads being transplanted for his.

When I’m pushing and I’m in pain and I’m struggling to go on, in that struggle I think something wonderful happens, a magic. I’m never more alive than moments like now.

www.outer-edge.com.au
Have you got what it takes?

Kilometre 100
GOING TO EXTREMES

When I’m pushing and I’m in pain and I’m struggling to go on, in that struggle I think something wonderful happens, a magic. I’m never more alive than moments like now.

www.outer-edge.com.au
Have you got what it takes?