

A club providing running & cycling opportunities to the local community of varying abilities, which they can pursue for fitness and / or social purposes within a supportive, friendly atmosphere and where encouragement is given to participate in organised local events.

**Welcome to your fitness and wellbeing inspiration!**

After what feels like a lifetime in Winter Lockdown, we've survived with a host of virtual workshops, challenges and training programmes to keep us sane. And now, there's just an inkling of longer days and spring hopefully just around the corner.

Although there's now a glimmer of hope as the restrictions are reviewed and hopefully loosened soon, we're still very much in virtual and Covid secure mode... but when did that stop us?

**Here's some club inspiration to keep you Powered by Cake!**



## SCRCC: A Year in Review

In January 2021, the Club celebrated its first year with a much anticipated Awards Evening. Hosted on Zoom, due to the National Lockdown restrictions, it was no less special and our Club Chair, Victoria Bovill-Lamb presented a review of the year, and the much sought after awards.

It was amazing to see how far the Club had developed since those early days just a year ago when the founding members met on Steeple Morden Rec to start the Couch to 5k programme.

More recent members were surprised how a thriving and lively Club had developed so quickly in just one year, and many members old and new thanked

Victoria and the Club for the difference it had made to their year, especially through the pandemic.

Noting the progress so far, Victoria highlighted how the Club had developed its activities, including adding cycling in its name and strength and conditioning to its activities. Outlining ideas for 2021, she also added that she now only needed to get a few members swimming, and we could become a Triathlon Club!

The friendly and inclusive nature of the club had certainly helped it to flourish in its first year. Another great year is anticipated!

## In the spotlight

Do you have a story to tell, and event achievement to shout about, or would you just like to share a short autobiography to inspire other club members?

Here's your chance to shine. It's great for club members to be able to read about fellow club members. If you would like to send information, achievements or your story to be included in future issues, please email to [steeplechasersrcc@gmail.com](mailto:steeplechasersrcc@gmail.com) and it could be included in the next issue.

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## Spiced carrot & apple muffins

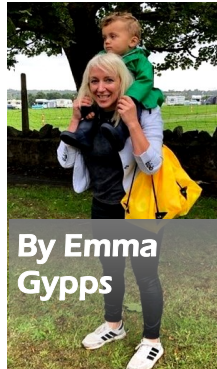
### Ingredients

100ml rapeseed oil  
 100ml natural yogurt (I used 0% fat)  
 50ml runny honey (preferably raw honey)  
 2 eggs  
 1 tsp vanilla extract  
 200g self-raising flour  
 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
 1½ tsp ground mixed spice  
 1 apple, grated  
 1 carrot, grated  
 50g sultanas, raisins, chopped nuts or seeds (optional)

### Method

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4 and line a muffin tin with 12 cases.  
 Mix the oil, yogurt, honey, eggs and vanilla in a jug/bowl.  
 In another bowl, combine the flour, bicarb, mixed spice and ¼ tsp salt.  
 Pour the yogurt mixture into the flour mixture and add the apple and carrot, as well as any extra ingredients you're using. Mix with a spatula until well combined, then spoon the mixture into the muffin cases.

Bake for 20-22 mins, or until a skewer inserted into the middle of a muffin comes out clean



Powered by Cake!



## Peanut butter & raspberry energy balls

### Ingredients

100g/ which equates to roughly 6 pitted medjool dates  
 2 tbs peanuts nuts or any nuts you have in the cupboard (not salted)  
 30g porridge oats  
 2 tbs peanut butter or any other nut butter, I used almond butter as its my favourite  
 2tbs freeze dried raspberries ( this is what I used but you could add chopped dark chocolate, ginger... anything really)

### Method

Place the dates in a food processor/ blender etc or cut up by hand, but as small as you can get them, so they can form a smooth (ish) paste

Add in the oats, nut butter, raspberries (or whatever you are using, you may not add anything as an alternative) pulse again or combine with your hands until well combined.

Finally add in the peanuts (any chopped nuts) pulse until they are combined or a consistency you like.



## Dates for the diary

### 9 January to 7 March

C25k programme

### 28 January to 15 April

Strength & Conditioning programmes

### 1 to 31 March

Virtual Cambridge Half Challenge

### 13 March

Baton Relay Challenge

### 19-21 March

Interclub Challenge

### 21 March

Mindful Yoga

Join the events advertised on the Facebook Group for more information.



### Are you a full member?

Most of the club events are covered in your membership fees, offering great value! If you're not a full member, why not join today?

Full membership: £20 per year

Associate membership: no charge

Please send bank transfer to the Club Account.

## What's happening this winter – SCRCC events updates

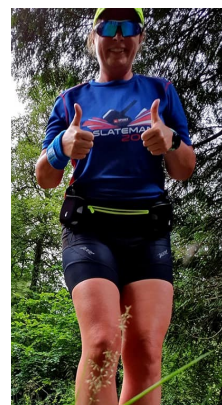
The Winter 'micro events' have hopefully been helping you to get through Lockdown 2021 so far. To kick the lockdown off, we created a wellbeing themed weekend of a virtual run without the use of technology, yoga, baking, a quiz and a resilient runner workshop. Further to this, we've had the SCRCC annual awards, virtual talks and presentations, strength and conditioning classes (including a new group starting!), a family bear hunt, more baking and Victoria adapted the C25K course to being virtual and COVID friendly. We still have lots of micro events to come with more virtual runs and challenges, more yoga and our special Friendship 5k and 10k Run to finish off February, where we will ask you all to contribute a small fee to our nominated charity, Homestart.

We will enter March by working together as a club in our first (informal) competition to show ourselves off and get ourselves out there. SCRCC is never about winning, it's the taking part that counts. We are an inclusive club and so everyone at every ability is encouraged to get involved in representing the club. There are a team of members entering the Cambridge Half Marathon Virtual Challenge Event for all of

March, which is aimed at local groups to compete against each other for various leaderboard categories. You do not need to run a half marathon to get involved in this as it's more about the accumulation of distance done as a team, within the month. Keep an eye on our Facebook Pages and virtually cheer our team on if you don't want to be a participant. On the weekend of 19 - 21 March, there will also be a virtual Interclub 5k challenge between us and two local running clubs : Fairfield Runners and Trisports running club. All abilities can get involved and further details will be published on the Facebook site. We also have more baking and more yoga (dates TBA). Don't forget that we also have a date in the diary for our first baton challenge of 2021 on Sat 13th March. This has always proved a popular event and we hope it will continue to be with also our new members joining in.

Lets see what restrictions are set to be lifted and hope that soon, maybe we can be a rule of 6 again (at least). This will influence what events we organise after March with some thoughts that we may see a 'LEJOG' in reverse challenge taking place! GOJEL will be getting from John O'Groats

back to Lands End and competing in small teams against each other. The mighty Pennines took the win last time and so who's up for a bit more friendly competition?



By Abigail  
Salter,  
Events  
Organiser





## A Guide to Zwift – the turbo / treadmill video gaming app



### Introduction

With the increase in club members using Zwift, now would be an ideal opportunity to provide more detailed guidance to allow you to make the most of this cool training app. There are other apps such as Bkool, Rouvy and Sufferfest, however Zwift is by far the most popular.

Zwift is a turbo trainer video gaming app that allows you to virtually cycle around 130 routes including London, Paris, the French countryside, Harrogate, New York's central park or the futuristic Sky Loop, climb a volcano or ride in Zwift's very own fantasy world – Watopia. The Jungle circuit is one my favourite routes, with long wooden swing bridges, waterfalls and caves with the Alpe du Zwift, a close second. Reaching virtual speeds of 70 kmph + as you descend from the top is not for the faint hearted!

The Zwift Academies (Run, Road & Tri) are structured training plans produced by experienced coaches, with various coaching tips flashing up on the screen during the session. There are plans for all abilities catering for 5k, 10k, half marathons and various cycling sportives. For those that have a turbo trainer and treadmill there is also a Duathlon race.

Turbo trainers are certainly a great way to keep cycling through the dark, colder months or for cycling newbies to safely practice cleated shoes / pedals and grabbing and placing back water bottles in the bottle cage.

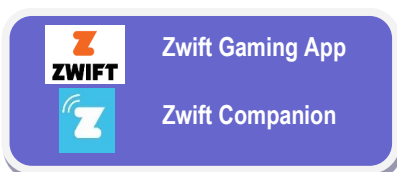


### Equipment

First, you need a bike! Any bike should do – mountain bike, hybrid or road bike. Next, you need a turbo trainer, ideally with Blue-



tooth capability so that it can connect to your mobile phone. Once you have this set-up, download the Zwift gaming app to your phone / tablet. Zwift currently offers a free 7-day trial with a monthly subscription of £12.99. You will also need to download the Zwift Companion free app. This complements the gaming app, allowing you to join organised group rides, races, review your performance data or training plans. You can even give 'Ride Ons'!



Zwift connects to other sites such as Strava, Suunto and Garmin Connect. The turbo trainer connects to the Zwift app via Bluetooth. You can then either watch it on your phone or, using a HDMI cable, connect your phone to a TV screen.

### Safe set up

It is important to make sure that the bike is securely attached to the turbo trainer. More importantly, do not raise the front wheel to simulate hill climbing – the turbo's resistance will change to take account of gradient changes!

### Correct Rider Position

Correct rider position is important to prevent knee and lower back pain / injuries. Unlike normal cycling, there is no rocking movement with turbo trainers, which can lead to tightening of the hips, glutes, hamstrings and restricted ankle dorsiflexion. One way to overcome this is to mount the turbo trainer on a wooden board with half tennis balls underneath – I kid you not – people are doing this! The more sensible solution is to stand up and move the hips or come off the bike completely and walk / stretch for a minute or two.

### ZWIFT in-game features

**Drops (based on your drops of sweat!)** – these are in-game credits that can be redeemed for items in the Drop Shop / Garage. The further you cycle, the higher

you climb, the more calories you burn, the more 'ride ons' received then the more 'drops' you will earn. You can then buy virtual bike frames (based on actual makes such as Specialized) and wheel



By Victoria Bovill-Lamb

sets. The number of drops accumulated is shown underneath your ride information i.e., distance, elevation, speed). To access the drop shop, start a ride, select menu and then click on the 'garage' icon to the left side of the screen. Once this window has loaded click on the Drop Shop icon.

**Powerups** – different icons will appear during the ride. The most popular are:

**Feather (lightweight)** – this reduces your weight by 10% for 15 seconds. It is best used on climbs, when weight matters the most.

**Van (draft boost)** – increases the draft effect by 50% for 30 seconds.

**Helmet (Aero boost)** – decreases air resistance making you more aerodynamic for 15 seconds. Best used at higher speeds on flat routes and descents.

**ERG and SIM modes** – Smart turbo trainers can run in different modes that determine how much resistance they apply when you cycle. The two most common are ERG and SIM (simulator mode). In SIM mode, Zwift software sends information such as rider weight, gradient and wattage to the turbo trainer, which will then try to replicate the "feel" of that virtual ride environment through its resistance on your drivetrain. ERG mode is very different in that it is the turbo trainers' job to make you hold a particular wattage. For example, your workout interval plan wants you to stay at 130 watts for 10 minutes. If you are spinning at a cadence of 90 and putting out 130 watts, if you slow the cadence to 60 the turbo trainer will quickly increase resistance, so you are still holding 130 watts.

**Continued on page 5**

## A Guide to Zwift cont'd

### Functional Threshold Power (FTP)

Here, we look at ways in which you can use your turbo trainer (or outdoor bike) to help you understand, measure, train and improve FTP. So, what is FTP? It is used as a measure of fitness. It is calculated by looking at the power you can hold for an hour, measured in watts per kilo divided by the rider's weight. The theory behind this is that you will need more power to go at the same speed, and less if you lose weight. You can manually measure FTP every four weeks to track progress however the beauty of Zwift is that it will do this for you. If the FTP goes up without your weight increasing, then your fitness is improving. If the number goes up and your weight has gone down (inc heart rate) then this is the ideal situation re fitness improvement. There are several smart scales that will automatically update Zwift with weight changes. If you are completing the test on the road then you need to plan a route that has minimum stops – the less junctions the better. This should be much easier to plan to use a turbo trainer! Despite it not pushing you to your maximum power output, the session should be very hard, with the 30-minute testing period requiring maximum sustainable power throughout. If it is the intensity that is putting you off, you should consider trying a ramp test alternative to the conventional FTP test. Zwift has a ramp test – after a brief warm-up, you will perform a series of one-minute intervals with the power increasing each time. Starting at 100 watts, every minute the power will increase until you can't turn the pedals any longer. Once you stop pedalling, the app will then calculate your FTP based on how far you reached in the session. It is a less demanding session than the 20-minute FTP test and will still offer a good idea of where your FTP currently sits.

**TIP :** Make sure you have a ready supply of towels – it really does make you sweat!

### 'Weight Doping'

Yes, this is a thing! As with all e-games comes the downside – hacking and cheat codes providing you with the ability to look like you are going full pelt around Central Park when what you are actually doing is nothing more strenuous than sitting idle sipping the finest Malbec whilst your Avatar does the hard work! 'Weight doping' is where you simply record an incorrect weight in the app profile settings. The lighter you are the faster you go. Therefore, it is important that you review your settings regularly or use a smart scale.

## A Return to Running... and Cycling

I'm Debbie Fisher and in January 2020 I decided I was not fit enough to ski in March and needed to do something about it. Up pops Facebook invite from Victoria to start the c25k. Shame about the skiing though, covid interruption brought a new reason to be fit.

Having run in a previous life I thought go for it, you can only embarrass yourself !!!!

I blame it on my sister, in the early 80s she persuaded me to join her in a the Kempston 8-miler and so it progressed to Bedford half marathon in about 1985. Training was early mornings before hubby went to work as we had two young children. I have to say that time still suits me as it really energises you for the day. I had the luxury of a long weekend up in the outer Hebrides to polish up my training for that.

What caused the habit to slide away was probably my next offspring.

Although I had stopped running it must be in the genes as both my daughters run and my grandfather used to run for Essex Harriers.

Crazy eldest daughter does ultra marathon!!

During 2019 I became horribly aware that my cardio was not what it should be, I had given up singing with phoenix and was doing very little activity

other than odd spells on the building site so Victoria's piece in the new year tempted me back to running, and then more cycling as well. The fitness level was a great boost and I find I eat less when I am fitter, sounds odd but hey-ho. Committing to the group is a great help as I am not well disciplined otherwise.

Despite the inclement weather it was a very enjoyable start in January 2020 and prompted a return to some level of fitness which I have endeavoured to maintain. It was great to make more use of my bike last summer and I did find I was more inclined to cycle than run when the weather is warmer. The challenges have encouraged me to get out more often, and I hope to up my running again now it is cooler.

Once we get my daughter moved into her new house I hope to find time for running again it has gone by the wayside lately.

You may see my hubby out running again as well, blink and you've missed him though as he runs a lot faster than me.



By Debbie Fisher



## How can “mental practice” improve your running?



Whatever stage you're at – the beginning of your Couch to 5K journey, planning your first 10k, half marathon, or just getting outdoors regularly to keep your body and mind healthy - mental practice or 'visualisation', can be such a useful tool. Obviously, this can be used on any sport, but we'll use running as our example. In fact, it's one of the most researched mental skills in sport and, given some practise, can really make a difference to your running and, when we can get there, events and races.

I remember decades ago reading about the Swiss Olympic Ski team who, whilst sitting indoors in their training centre, visualised skiing every inch of their races, imagining each and every turn, mogul, jump, bend, gate, start and finish points .. and how sensors picked up how each muscle responded as though they were actually completing the race! It's one of the best ways to exercise and condition your brain for successful outcomes and has also been shown to offer support when injured.

### What is Mental practice?

Mental practice draws on your imagination to create positive images of you as a runner. It's the process of using your all of your senses to mentally rehearse a skill you wish to complete and improve. Using the mind, you call up this imagery over and over, enhancing the skill through repetition or rehearsal, similar to physical practice.

"What you see in your mind's eye can strongly influence your beliefs and achievements," says Jerry Lynch, PhD "Our central nervous system does not distinguish between real and imagined events: it sees and accepts all images as if

they were real."

If we use the term 'visualisation' then we may assume it's just using the sense of sight, but to really benefit from this we need to use a combination of senses, visual (what you see), auditory (what you hear) and kinaesthetic (what your body feels) and add in extra one magic bullet, emotion ... how it makes you feel!

### How does it work?

The key here is that when you visualise, you actually stimulate the same brain regions as you would when you physically perform that same skill. Effective visualisation also fires impulses to the muscles, priming them for action. The more vivid the visualisation, the more effectively your brain primes your muscles to complete the same physical and technical action in real life.

### Why is mental practice so useful?

It helps you cope with new situations before you actually encounter them. It has also been shown to increase self-confidence, the ability to focus and concentrate as well improve both physical and psychological performance.

Therefore, by just using your mind, you can actually help your body physically prepare for event and races. At a time when these seem a way off ... let's make the most of the time we have!

### How do you do it?

The most important thing is to use all the senses and, for me I find adding a positive emotion really helps too. There's more, but that's essentially it.

1. Set aside 10-15 minutes when you won't be disturbed, find a quiet space, no phones.
2. Have an idea for something very specific that you want to imagine doing well in your running. For this example, we're focusing on good running form ... but it may be getting up a hill, it may be the final push of your 'long run', improving your posture. If you've entered an event (a bit of future planning!) it may be at the start area, surrounded by the noise and jostle of other runners and then getting into your pace. If you are entering a more technical event like a Duathlon or Triathlon, you can use this method to mentally rehearse transition sections.

**TIP:** the more specific and detailed you can be, the more effective this will be.

3. Effective mental practice can only happen from a place of relaxation. Close your eyes, take five deep abdominal breaths. Breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, to help you relax. If you can, try nasal breathing throughout your practice.

4. Relax and clear your mind of distractions

**TIP:** As much as you can, focus your attention on the breath and each time you find yourself distracted, bring your attention back to the sensation of the breath – how it feels going into and out of your body.

5. We are focussing on good running form ... so imagine yourself running down your favourite route – your road, over your local fields or paths. Be specific: See yourself moving with good posture, arms close to your sides, swinging forward and back in relaxed good form. Your feet lightly touch the ground as your legs lengthen into a smooth stride. Your breathing is relaxed and comfortable. You are strong and swift and you feel as though you could run forever.

6. Hold your focus for about 60 seconds, then pause for 30 seconds. Refocus your breathing and attention and then repeat. Each time you attempt this, increase your visualisation time gradually.

**TIP :** Use all of your senses here – what do you hear? If you're visualising an event, do you hear names being announced, the chatter of voices around you ... how does your body feel as your feet touch the ground? Do you feel sun on your face or a strong easterly breeze!

7. As with any new technique it takes time to learn, so try and build it into your training routine ... and see what happens!

8. You can also use this during a run to imagine yourself running the next part of your route, good if you're tiring or your motivation is dipping.

