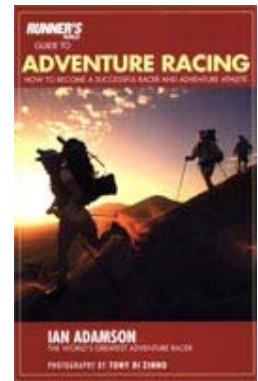


Extract from Guide to Adventure Racing by Ian Adamson

FANCY FOOTWORK

How to cover ground quickly when on foot

... your foot-travel skills may be the most important in your arsenal of talents. Television shows depict adventure races as grueling suffer fests, with teams of bickering athletes hobbling slowly forward on bloody and blistered feet. This image is not too far from the reality for a large number of teams; however, it needn't be this way



Conditioning

People often ask how some competitor's feet can look so good at the end of a long race when most racers resemble a hamburger. The answer is very simple: conditioning. The human body is incredibly good at adapting, be it heat, cold, altitude, endurance, or physical load...

... there's a delicate balance to conditioning your feet. You need not train the full race distance with the full amount of weight on your back. The resulting damage and necessary recovery from such a long "training" session far outweigh the benefits ...

... to build time on your feet, schedule low-intensity sessions into your training program. For example, try a long day hike once a week in the mountains at a social (conversational) pace. Since long races can include foot sections that last over 20 hours, aim to hike comfortably over a weekend for this length of race.

The second part of the conditioning puzzle involves load. Inevitably, you will end up carrying much more in the race than you anticipated. As a rough guide, the best teams with the lightest equipment in a long multi-day race will have packs as heavy as 30 pounds. Loads are lighter for shorter races, with lightest packs weighing around 10 pounds for 24 hour races. Sprint and stage races still require you to carry some sort of small pack, so it's a good idea to become comfortable wearing your pack for all races, long or short. You should train with a pack at least as heavy as the one you will wear in the race.

The third piece of the conditioning puzzle involves terrain. If you train on rough, uneven surfaces, you can make up serious ground on these same surfaces during a race as poorly prepared teams tear their feet apart...

Tips and Tricks

Maintenance of your feet during a race is critical to prolonging their well being. Apart from putting in the time on your feet, there are a few other tricks that will prolong the endurance of your feet in a race. The top four (4) most important things to do for your feet while racing are: keep debris out of your shoes, keep your feet lubricated, keep your feet dry and elevate your feet when resting. To maintain foot health during a race, you need the right shoes, socks and foot care accessories (e.g. lubricant, blister prevention).

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