



Ricardo Riskalla is one of Australia's leading Fitness and Health experts. Contacting Ricardo is the first step to living a healthy lifestyle.

[VIEW SITE >](#)

Saved by the BELL

BAZAAR's Eugenie Kelly trades in her sugar addiction and unused gym pass for sprouts and weird-looking weights in a brave quest to get marathon ready.

Ever had one of those stressful days where you consume such a large amount of high-calorie/high-cholesterol/high-carb crap, your body hits the wall and screams, "Enough"? Mine was the second day of Rosemount Australian Fashion Week last April. Vegemite on Turkish toast for breakfast. Followed by a skinny latte. Another skinny latte. Two mini pastries. Sushi. Another skinny latte. A chocolate brownie. A Kit Kat. A bag of Haigh's Speckles (embarrassingly enough, attached to a CV from someone after a job at BAZAAR and obviously aware of my chocolate addiction). Topped off by bangers and mash for dinner. And I call myself a beauty and health director.

Despite having joined a plush gym that boasts more French chandeliers than members, I had nothing more than a pitifully poor attendance record to show for it. I don't get off on choreographed, repetitive classes. And treadmills make me feel like a hamster.

I'm not alone, either. Members are departing health clubs in droves: the summer edition of the 2007/2008 Sweeney Sports Report states that there's been a decline in gym memberships since their peak in 2005. Back then, 35 per cent of the population claimed they participated in gym workouts; now it's 30 per cent and still falling. Running, on the other hand, is booming. The 2008 City2Surf had a record field of 70,000, closing entries two weeks prior to the event. Likewise, the Sydney Running Festival last year saw entries in its marathon event almost double 2007's figures, while its half-marathon field increased by nearly a third.

Inspired, I decide that's what I want to do. Be exposed to natural sunlight. Feel the breeze on my skin as opposed to having the life sucked out of it courtesy of icy air-conditioning. And have time whiz by, rather than obsess over the clock during a spin class. I need to learn how to run. And so I enlist the services of Ricardo Riskalla, the go-to guy for models, actors, marathon competitors and Olympic rowers. Thankfully he also trains mere mortals.

Our first rendezvous takes place at 5.45am in a harbourside park on a bone-chilling June morning. Riskalla's welcoming gift? Three raw food cookbooks (one by Charlie Trotter — Chicago's answer to Tetsuya Wakuda) and a sprout machine. Apparently I'm supposed to soak everything from buckwheat to legumes in this stack of Tupperware-like containers.

Raw foodists believe "sprouting" (soaking seeds and grains so they'll germinate) makes them even more nutritious and digestible. "Avoid cooking food, since all of its enzymes are destroyed after three minutes at boiling point," warns Riskalla. "You also need to have two tablespoons of flaxseed oil every day, avoid dairy, try to eat only organic and skip the caffeine and alcohol." The lecture continues. "Eat five serves of vegetables and five serves of fruit a day. Try not to get your protein from animal sources. And dust off your juicer — you're going to need it."



The afternoon brownie fix is supposed to be substituted with a few raw cacao beans embedded in a fresh date. Fabulous. So later I flick through one of the books for another sweet-treat idea. *Raw Food Real World* by New York chefs Matthew Kenney and Sarma Melngailis (the Brad and Angelina of the vegan world) suggests coconut water. Fast-forward to two weeks later in London, where I discover it's the health cocktail du jour among the British beauty-editor set.

But back to that initial workout ... as a former gym junkie turned time- (and sleep-) deprived mother of two toddlers, I'm now at my most unfit, ever. I ponder how I'm going to get toned without any weight machines, but then Riskalla hands me what looks like something only a Bulgarian shot-putter could love. It's a kettlebell: a cast-iron weight that looks like a cannonball with a handle. "The Russians call it *girya*," says Riskalla, chucking the 12-kilogram version at me. "You can use them for squats, rows, presses and swings, dead lifts — and even bicep curls."

Sure, kettlebells are classified as a hot fitness fad in the US right now, but unlike other trends, their ability to build lean muscle and shed fat is legendary. Just take a squiz at the rippled Matthew McConaughey or budding triathlete Jennifer Lopez, both fans. It's basically strength training, cardio and stretching wrapped up together: just try swinging one between your legs, throwing it up to chest level, then swapping hands and repeating it on the other side and you can feel the kilojoules vaporise.

Stretching is a large component of Riskalla's sessions, and for someone who has always stupidly skipped out of class early in order to snare a vacant shower cubicle, my hamstrings practically weep with pain. The weirdest motivational technique suddenly pops into my head: I channel Romanian mother Constantina Tomescu who is my age and won the Beijing Olympic women's marathon event. Slightly weird, I know, but hey, whatever works.

As the weeks fly by, dragging my butt out of bed for regular 6am workouts becomes habit. My editor is gobsmacked when I tell him I've given up the Country Trader-decorated gym in favour of my spider-infested garage and Riskalla. But then there's that virtuous feeling that I'm exercising outdoors and not frittering away precious time watching a machine tell me I've burnt the equivalent of a mandarin in calories. And for the first time ever, I really feel motivated enough to run for more than five minutes.

The trick, according to Riskalla, is pace. Go hard and fast and you'll last 100 metres. We start with a Cliff Young shuffle. (Memo to Generation Y: Cliff Young was a 61-year-old Victorian potato farmer whose slow-paced lope won him the Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon in 1983. His efforts attracted media attention, worldwide fans and a bride half his age.)

That old hare-and-tortoise theory actually works, as I discover a month later when I enter my first run, the 14-kilometre **Continued page 192 ►**

BAZAAR *buylines*

continued from page 127

Milan, in the small town of Crema. Here, all Mineralize powders begin as a “dough” made from finely milled sericite, mica and talc (a blend of 77 minerals in total) that undergoes a bio-fermentation process to create a yeast-extract base. Jojoba oil is added to give a creamy, moist conditioning texture. The “dough” is moulded by hand onto a small round terracotta tile and baked for 24 to 48 hours in a special oven (like a giant pizza oven). The powders then cool for 24 hours, during which time the terracotta tile allows for the water in the formula to evaporate, creating the light, airy texture that has makeup artists calling the product “16-year-old skin”.

Backstage at Etro’s spring/summer 2009 show, Tilbury tells me she’s just requested the entire Mineralize Skinfinish colour range for her personal makeup kit. “The baking process from this one little factory leaves the skin looking really velvety and gorgeous.”

But perhaps the most glowing recommendation comes from acclaimed makeup artist and M.A.C.’s vice-president of global makeup artistry, Gordon Espinet, backstage at Blumarine’s spring/summer 2009 show: “It looks like skin but it just makes skin look so much better.”

Having watched some of the world’s most beautiful models sit in his chair and examining their skin both before and after being “mineralized”, I would have to agree. ■

continued from page 128

City2Surf. Sure, it’s disheartening when a pack of Elvises sprint past you, but you just have to assure yourself you’ll take them out on Heartbreak Hill, the steep two-kilometre stretch from Rose Bay to Vaucluse. Amazingly, I make it without stopping.

Running a race like this is on par with childbirth: once the event’s over, you forget the pain of labour. Riskalla sees my moment of weakness and pounces, encouraging me to enter Sydney’s half marathon — a 21-kilometre race starting at the Harbour Bridge and finishing at the Opera House. Stupidly, I agree. Bloody endorphins.

My training sessions leading up to it are meticulously timed and strictly scheduled to limit the risk of injury. Sessions run anywhere from 30 minutes up to two hours. For longer stretches (your body only stores enough glycogen to generate between 1500 and 2000 calories of energy), carb loading isn’t enough: I need extra fuel. Riskalla puts me on to my best find ever: energy gels. Tucked away in the vitamin aisle of the supermarket, each sachet is a shot of fast-acting fructose that builds your energy levels back up, while your muscles absorb the maltodextrin. Electrolytes stabilise your hydration levels and caffeine kicks you into fifth gear. And they’re legal.

Another motivational must-have is the iPod, for diversionary tactics. Because it’s your brain, not your body, that’s the problem when you’re running. My head continuously plays little mind games with me. “You need to lose five kilograms.” “Why did you eat all those mini Toblerones?” “You’re a seriously crap runner.” And then there are those episodes where even a pounding Kanye West track can’t save you. Like the time a magpie swoops to attack the back of my head. I suspect the residents of that particular picket-fenced street are still to recover from my outburst of expletives.

Yes, I eventually completed my half marathon. And yes, there were more incidents as harrowing as that magpie moment. Like that one millisecond where a cluster of Olympian-like Kenyans streamed past me (they were in the full-marathon event on the other side of the road, but we shared bitumen). And the final five kilometres, when your body is so tired you know that if you stop and lie down, you won’t get back up. Then there’s that final stretch, where every 50 metres you pass yet another competitor sitting in a pool of their own vomit (literally). But that moment I cross the finish line at the Opera House (cue uplifting soundtrack), I honestly feel as if I’ve achieved a momentous goal.

My James Bond-like Polar watch beeps to report that I’ve just burnt a whopping 2428 calories. Hobbling on my way home, the pain and fatigue already melting into my muscles, it’s like I’ve come out the other end of another gruelling labour. Twelve months until the next Sydney Marathon, I ponder. Start training now and surely you’ll be able to handle 42 kilometres? Bloody endorphins ... ■

For more on Ricardo Riskalla’s fitness programs, visit www.rawfit.com.au



Pretty Perfect,
page 157.

adidas by Stella McCartney: 1800 801 891; www.stellamccartney.com;
www.adidas.com.au
adidas Originals: 1800 801 891; www.adidas.com.au
adidas watches: enquiries to Fossil, 1800 818 853;
www.fossilaustralia.com.au
Alexander McQueen accessories: from a selection at Cosmopolitan Shoes,
(02) 9362 0510; www.alexandermcqueen.com
Alexander Wang: from bloodorange, (02) 9357 2424;
www.bloodorange.com.au; www.alexanderwang.com
alldressedup: from Jean Brown Robe; 1800 253 882;
www.jeanbrown.com.au; www.alldressedup.com
Antipodium: (02) 9698 9907; www.antipodium.com
Armani Collezioni: from David Jones, 13 33 57; www.davidjones.com.au;
www.armani.collezioni.com
AJ Armani Jeans: (02) 8233 5853; www.armanijeans.com
Armani Privé: (02) 8233 5853; www.giorgioarmani.com
Arnsdorf: enquiries to M.A.P, (02) 9662 1655; www.arnsdorf.com.au
A/X Armani Exchange: (03) 9600 4888; www.armaniexchange.com.au
Aurelio Costarella: (08) 9228 0373; www.aureliocostarella.com
Autore: (02) 9283 3998; www.pearlautore.com.au
Azzedine Alaïa shoes: from Cosmopolitan Shoes, (02) 9362 0510.
Balenciaga accessories: from Cosmopolitan Shoes, (02) 9362 0510;
www.balenciaga.com
Bally: 1800 781 851; www.bally.com
Balmain: from a selection at Land’s End Store, (02) 9331 2656;
www.balmain.com
Bassike: (02) 9974 2664; www.bassike.com
Becker Minty: (02) 8356 9999; www.beckerminty.com
Boss Orange: (03) 9474 6310; www.hugoboss.com
Botkier: from Jean Brown Gallery, 1800 253 882; www.jeanbrown.com.au;
www.botkier.com
Bottega Veneta accessories: from a selection at Cosmopolitan Shoes,
(02) 9362 0510; www.bottegabeneta.com
Bruno Frisoni: from a selection at Belinda, (02) 9380 8725;
www.belinda.com.au; www.brunofrisoni.com
Bulgari: (02) 8257 1000; www.bulgari.com
Bunda B Boutique: (02) 9261 2210; www.bunda.com.au
Burberry Prorsum: (02) 9238 0978; www.burberry.com
By Malene Birger: enquiries to Higgovale, (02) 9327 3377;
www.bymalenebirger.com
Cacharel: (02) 9931 8888; www.cacharel.com
Calvin Klein Performance: www.calvinklein.com
Canturi: 1800 883 883; www.canturi.com
Cartier: enquiries to Richemont, 1800 888 918; (02) 9235 1322;
www.richemont.com; www.cartier.com
Cerrone Jewellers: (02) 9569 8922; www.cerrone.com.au
Chanel: (02) 9233 4800; (03) 9671 3533; www.chanel.com
Chloé: from Jean Brown Robe, 1800 253 882; www.jeanbrown.com.au;
www.chloe.com
Chloé accessories: from Jean Brown Gallery, 1800 253 882;
www.jeanbrown.com.au; from Miss Louise, (03) 9654 7730;
www.misslouise.com.au; www.chloe.com
Chloé sunglasses: (02) 9428 1500; www.chloe.com
Christophe Coppens: from Cose Ipanema, (03) 9650 3457;
www.christophecoppens.com