



From wheelchair to treadmill in three weeks

Dear Reader

I could hardly believe it.

I was on my way home from Australia being pushed through Dubai and Dublin airports in a wheelchair.

I had been running on Thursday the day before we were due to travel home and woke up on Friday morning, just a few hours before our

flight out of Sydney, with a really sore heel. I thought I had aggravated a heel-spur, this had happened to me once before. On a pain scale of 1-10, I was at five, not ideal. I hobbled as I dragged myself and our luggage through Sydney airport and then onto the plane. By the time we were half-way to Dubai the pain score had risen to seven, maybe eight and I couldn't get my heel on the ground at all. I battled with my pride for another hour before calling for an airline steward and requesting assistance to get through Dubai airport on arrival.

Apart from getting myself home now the main thing on my mind was the possibility I was going to have to cancel the VO2 max test I had booked in with my coach Jordan for just three weeks later, on Friday 16th May. It wasn't so much that I couldn't do the test another time, or that I had added a day onto a work trip to London to do the test. It was the hundreds of hours I had spent over the previous eight months getting myself in shape for it.

Suddenly it was looking like it might not happen.

Since September last year I have been working towards this day with a high degree of commitment and intentionality.

The next day my heel wasn't any better and I got Jules to drive me to the local hospital. A nurse prodded my heel, and I stifled a scream. She told me it was an achilles tendon injury. She then gave me some paracetamol and anti inflammatories and told me it would probably take about three months to recover.

Not at all what I wanted to hear.

I came home on crutches and didn't take the tablets. I wasn't convinced about the diagnosis, and determined to do everything I could to be on the EAC treadmill for my VO2 max test in less than three weeks.

For the rest of that day, I didn't move at all and eventually messaged Jordan to let him know what was going on. During that day on the couch, I read an article about Alex Yee the Triathlon Olympic Gold medalist who was running the London marathon. Prior to the race, he had an opportunity to sit down with Eliud Kipchoge, probably the greatest marathon runner ever. Alex asked Eliud what one piece of

advice he would give him over any other. Eliud said, 'Just get to the start line.' Sitting where I was that Sunday, I liked that ... a lot.

Next day I could walk on crutches.

By Monday I had ditched the crutches and on Tuesday I limped into the gym to figure out what I could and couldn't do. Conor from Resilience gym was brilliant and helped me adapt my movements around the injury. If there was a chance of me making it to my VO2 test I would have to go easy on my heel, but I wasn't going to stop training and lose the fitness gains I had made.

For those of you who don't know me, training isn't a chore ... I absolutely love it!

I kept training. The pain kept easing. I stuck some orthopaedic felt round my heel with a hole cut out of it, so that the sore part of my heel wouldn't be in as much contact with the inside of my shoes. Last Friday I tentatively ran for 60 mins at Zone 2 on the treadmill. With no adverse reaction I repeated that on Monday. Again, no adverse reaction. I was back in business.

By the time you read this, the VO2 max test will have happened on Friday 16th May, which happens to be my 57th birthday. I will find out the degree to which my hard work and commitment has paid off.

I am sharing this all now because I am going to talk about the result of it whether it goes well or not and not sharing it was giving me too much of an option to not talk about if I didn't like the result.

On 12th September last year I had my first VO2 max test. You can read about my experience of it [here](#). The photo below was taken just after the test.



It went very well and my reading on the day was 50.4 ml/kg/min. In case you're curious, VO2 max is a measurement of the maximum amount of oxygen that an individual can utilize during intense or maximal exercise. This measurement is generally considered the best indicator of cardiovascular fitness and aerobic endurance.

VO2 max is calculated by getting on treadmill at 5km/h for five minutes. After that, every minute, on the minute the speed is increased by 1km/h. The test ends when you literally can't go another step and get off, jump off, fall off or collapse off the treadmill. Last time I completed the minute when the treadmill was going at 16km/h and got about 20 seconds into the 17km/h minute before literally collapsing off the machine.

The test in total only lasted for just over 16 minutes. The first thirteen minutes weren't too bad. I categorise the last three minutes as one of the most uncomfortable three minutes of my life. During those three short minutes, which felt an awful lot longer, my head was screaming at me to stop and somewhere else inside my head was screaming at me to keep going. Those last three minutes really are a head game.

My score put me in the top 2.5% of the male population for people of my age. Jordan was delighted and promptly set me a challenge to increase it to 53 ml/kg/min. A VO2 max of 53 is in the top 2.5% of men in their 30's.

Challenge accepted!

The last eight months has seen me gear my training towards making this target.

The routine has been ... strength training twice weekly, running at zone 2 for 60 mins twice weekly and doing some sort of high intensity workout once weekly to get my heart rate really high. For high intensity workouts, I have used the Norwegian protocol, which means exercising at as high an intensity as possible for 4 minutes, then recovering for four minutes and repeating that four times. There is nothing about the Norwegian protocol that feels enjoyable for me except getting to the end of it.

The combination of strength training, zone two training and high intensity training is designed to build VO2 max.

I am stronger and fitter than I was last September. I have also run more in the last eight months than the previous 8 years combined.

I have put the work in I have no idea how it will go on the day.

I will be working in London on Thursday and on Friday morning I will be at EAC HQ in Otford to do the test and find out whether my efforts of the last eight months have nudged my VO2 max the additional 2.6 points I am hoping for ... or not!

I will share the details next week. While I am clearly attached to the outcome, the result won't change anything. It will be a great benchmark for me as I set off on my next target which is to compete at a Hyrox before the end of the year. I'll be in the 50-59 Mens double category. The goal is to be competitive. The dream is to be on the podium and if not this time, then someday.

Much love



Peter McCammon
peter@pm-coaching.co.uk

PM Coaching

37a Bush Road
Dungannon
BT71 6QE
Ireland



You received this email because you
signed up on my website.

[Unsubscribe](#)