MAP
RUNNING COACHING

THE TESTING GUIDE FOR RUNNING PREPAREDNESS

THE RUNNING PREPAREDNESS SCORE

Five domains. Clear benchmarks. The objective tests and standards that tell you exactly how prepared your body is — and where to focus next.

01 HEALTH	02 PHYSICAL	03 TRAINING	04 RECOVERY	05 PERFORMANCE

THE DATA TELLS YOU WHAT TO FIX. NOT YOUR PACE.

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The Running Preparedness Score (RPS) is a proprietary readiness assessment. It is not an injury-prediction tool, and it must not be read as a percentage probability of future injury. Category boundaries described in this guide are working product classifications and remain subject to ongoing validation.

Some tests in this guide involve maximal or near-maximal effort. Do not attempt a maximal test if you currently have pain, are returning from injury, or have been advised against vigorous exercise. Where a test is unfamiliar, build up to it sub-maximally first and stop immediately if you experience pain, dizziness, chest tightness, or any other concerning symptom.

Always seek the advice of your doctor or physiotherapist with any questions about your health or your ability to train, and never disregard or delay seeking professional advice because of something you have read here.

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START HERE

Most runners have felt it: a niggle that won't quite go away, a plan you're not sure your body can handle, or the sense that you're guessing at your own readiness rather than actually knowing it.

My name is Emmanuel “Manni” Ovola — running coach and physiotherapist. For over 15 years I've worked with runners moving from injury back to performance, including athletes chasing the Boston Marathon. As a runner myself, I've run a 2:45 marathon and completed 5 of the World Marathon Majors, Boston among them. My approach is simple: coach the athlete, not the event — a holistic view that meets you where you are and looks at your whole lifestyle, not just your mileage.

THE PROBLEM

The reason so many runners plateau, get hurt, or never quite trust their body is that most training plans focus purely on mileage and pace, but miss whether the runner's underlying capacity — strength, mobility, recovery, aerobic base — is actually ready for what's being asked of it. Previous injury remains one of the most consistently identified risk factors for picking up another one, and yet most runners return to the same training approach that got them hurt in the first place.

5

DOMAINS OF PREPAREDNESS ASSESSED, NOT JUST YOUR MILEAGE

6

OBJECTIVE PHYSICAL TESTS BEHIND THE SCORE

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TEST, DON'T GUESS

The principle is simple: use in-depth testing across health, physical capacity, training load, recovery and performance to build a full picture of readiness — not just a training log.

Most coaching relationships never go this deep. Plans are adjusted on feel, or on whether last week's mileage “went okay” — without ever checking the physical capacities underneath the numbers. That leaves runners training against an unknown.

Preparedness isn't a one-off check either. It's a continuous process — reassessed every 4–6 weeks so you can see genuine change (68 → 74 → 81), not day-to-day noise. It shows you exactly which domain is holding you back, and whether what you're doing is actually working.

In summary: this data gives you a clear, evidence-informed roadmap so you can train harder, for longer, with far more confidence in your own body.

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WHAT THIS GUIDE IS

A roadmap of the five domains behind the RPS. Each domain has specific checks, a purpose, and a benchmark you're working toward. You don't improve your preparedness by following a generic plan — you improve it when the data shows the underlying deficit is fixed.

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

- ✓ You're training for a goal race and want to know your body can actually handle it.
- ✓ You've had a niggle or injury before and don't want a repeat.
- ✓ You don't have clear objective targets across strength, mobility and aerobic capacity.
- ✓ You're increasing mileage and want to know if your body is keeping up.
- ✓ You're coming back from a break and want a real read on where you stand.
- ✓ You know the power of tracking data to find bottlenecks and train smarter.

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FIND YOURSELF ON THE MAP

The only way to truly know your preparedness is to complete the assessment. You may find you're further ahead in some domains than others — your weakest domain should be the main focus of your training.

01 **HEALTH & SYMPTOMS**
Rule out red flags and understand any current pain or restriction before anything else is tested.

02 **PHYSICAL CAPACITY**
Test the strength, mobility, elastic power and aerobic capacity your running is built on.

03 **TRAINING CAPACITY**
Check whether your current running is consistent with — and appropriate for — your goal.

04 **RECOVERY**
Sleep, fatigue and how well you bounce back between demanding sessions.

05 **RUNNING PERFORMANCE**
Your current fitness and pace exposure relative to where you want to get to.

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WHAT A TEST IS NOT

Most runners have had something called an assessment, but it's usually a quick chat or a general screen. Useful, but not enough to actually change your training.

- ✕ “Does that hurt?” — pain is information. It is not a measurement.
- ✕ “How's training going?” — a feeling is an opinion, not a number.
- ✕ A generic plan with no personal baseline to compare against.
- ✕ Comparing your splits to a training partner's.
- ✕ Increasing mileage because a plan says week 6, not because your body has shown it's ready.

A TEST MUST BE FIVE THINGS

1. **Objective** — it produces a number you can track, not a feeling or a nod.
2. **Measured against a standard** — compared to an age- and sex-specific reference, set before you test.
3. **Standardised** — same protocol, same track, same warm-up, every time.
4. **Maximal and rested** — full effort, tested fresh, not tacked onto a hard training week.
5. **Safety-screened first** — health and current symptoms are checked before any maximal test begins.

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PHASE 01 · EXIT CRITERIA BELOW

HEALTH & SYMPTOMS

Goal: confirm it's safe to test and train at full effort.

WHO SHOULD DO THIS?

Anyone starting the assessment. This domain is always checked first, before any maximal physical testing takes place. Why: pain and red-flag symptoms change everything else. If they're present, testing pauses and clinical review comes first — no numerical score overrides that.

CHECK	STANDARD	WHAT IT PROVES
Safety screen (chest pain, fainting, breathlessness, medical clearance)	Any positive response → pause for health review	Safe to test at maximal effort.
Current running pain	None, or stable and not worsening	Training can proceed as planned.
Symptom pattern (worsening, altering mechanics, missed sessions)	Scored /6, capped and reviewed	How much symptoms are already costing you.
Previous injury & recurrence	Scored /4	Your single strongest risk indicator.

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PHASE 02 · EXIT CRITERIA BELOW

PHYSICAL CAPACITY

Goal: measure the strength, mobility, power and aerobic capacity your running is built on.

WHO SHOULD DO THIS?

Runners cleared on the health screen. Six field tests, standardised and video- or device-verified where possible. Why: mileage exposes weaknesses it doesn't create. If the underlying capacity isn't there, more running just finds the weak link faster.

TEST	STANDARD	WHAT IT PROVES
Single-leg heel-rise endurance	Reps vs. individualised expected value	Plantar-flexor / calf endurance.
Hip-abduction 1RM	Relative to bodyweight	Hip strength and stability.
Single-leg knee extension (5RM)	Limb Symmetry Index (LSI) vs. 90% threshold	Quadriceps strength and limb symmetry.
10/5 repeated jump (RSI)	Reactive strength index	Elastic ‘bounce’ capacity.
Knee-to-wall lunge	cm vs. age/sex reference	Ankle mobility.
Cooper 12-minute run	Distance → estimated VO2max	Aerobic / cardiorespiratory capacity.

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PHASE 03 · EXIT CRITERIA BELOW

TRAINING CAPACITY

Goal: confirm your current training is consistent with, and appropriate for, your goal.

WHO SHOULD DO THIS?

Runners with a stated target — 5K through marathon, return-to-running, or general fitness. Standards are relative to that goal, not identical for everyone. Why: a runner training for a marathon and a runner returning after months off need completely different benchmarks — preparedness is judged against your own demand.

MEASURE	WORKING SCORE	WHAT IT PROVES
Running consistency, previous 8 weeks	0–4, by % of planned sessions completed	Foundation reliability.
Current frequency vs. goal	0–4	Enough running to progress safely.
Current weekly volume vs. goal	0–4	Volume matched to your target.
Longest-run exposure vs. target	0–4	Distance tolerance for race day.
Recent progression / load stability	0–4	Whether recent changes were sustainable.

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PHASE 04 · EXIT CRITERIA BELOW

RECOVERY

Goal: identify whether sleep, fatigue and recovery are supporting — or quietly limiting — your training.

WHO SHOULD DO THIS?

Every runner. This domain looks for modifiable factors, not a sleep or fatigue diagnosis — persistent, unexplained fatigue is flagged for health review separately. Why: the best training plan in the world underperforms if it's built on top of poor sleep and unresolved fatigue.

MEASURE	SCORE	WHAT IT PROVES
Typical sleep duration	0–3	Baseline recovery capacity.
Sleep quality	0–3	Whether sleep is actually restorative.
Perceived recovery before runs	0–3	Readiness to train, session to session.
Persistent fatigue	0–3	An early flag before it shows up as a niggle.
Recovery between demanding sessions	0–3	Whether hard days are truly being absorbed.

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PHASE 05 · EXIT CRITERIA BELOW

RUNNING PERFORMANCE

Goal: understand your current fitness and pace exposure relative to where you want to get to.

WHO SHOULD DO THIS?

Runners with a specific time or performance goal. This domain is kept separate from preparedness — being slower than your target is not the same as being unprepared. Why: preparedness to train and proximity to a performance goal are two different things. A runner shouldn't score poorly here just because the goal is still a way off.

MEASURE	SCORE	WHAT IT PROVES
Recent race / performance evidence	0–2	A real, current fitness data point.
Performance recency	0–2	Whether that data point is still relevant.
Current fitness vs. stated goal	0–2	The size of the gap to close.
Exposure to goal pace / intensity	0–2	Whether you've actually practised race effort.
Ability to complete current key sessions	0–2	Whether training is landing as planned.

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FIND OUT WHERE YOU ARE

Included in this guide is the thinking behind the RPS. But like all testing, this data is only useful when it's run properly and interpreted by someone who knows what to do with it. That's the RPS assessment with Manni.

WHAT YOU GET — £129.99

The full testing battery. run to protocol — health screen, physical capacity, training, recovery and performance, standardised and recorded.

Your RPS. 0–100, with your readiness category and your Running Injury Risk Profile.

A 1:1 call with Manni. to go through every number — what it means, what's holding you back, what happens next.

Your priority actions. the specific, individualised things to work on before your next reassessment.

BOOK IT IN IF...

- ✓ You started reading and realised you couldn't name your own targets.
- ✓ You've had generic advice but no structured plan aimed at your actual weak point.
- ✓ You've plateaued and don't know why — or you're running but don't fully trust your body.
- ✓ You want to chase a goal race without breaking down along the way.
- ✓ You're returning from a break and want an honest read on where you stand.

FIND OUT WHERE YOU ARE — BOOK YOUR ASSESSMENT

THE DATA TELLS YOU WHAT TO FIX. NOT YOUR PACE.

The physical tests are done remotely over video with Manni, from any gym you have access to.
Not ready yet, or prefer to work 1-1? Apply at manniathletephysio.com/work-together

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