

# Why are more people running marathons?

Training to run 26.2 miles is a vigorous mental, physical and emotional test period -- yet more people young and old are going for it.

The theme that I see a lot is people are using running as a way to get through something, it could be grief over a loss or the everyday stress of raising kids

Training for a marathon demands structure, discipline, and commitment. Everybody who trains for a marathon has moments of challenge, moments of pain, moments where they wonder how it's going to go.

The prospect of running the race promises a profound sense of control that may be especially appealing to those coming into adulthood. Rather than traditional markers of adulthood, marriage, ownership, children, running an intense race might do.

Participation in the Boston Marathon has ticked upward across the races' more than century long history. About 30,000 runners signed up for this year's race, compared with only 140 men in 1924 when the marathon first started.

Finish times have also increased, suggesting people who are older, less fit and less experienced are still securing a bib, despite the races qualifying time requirement. Running a marathon can offer a sense of purpose responsibility, self-esteem and identity formation, according to Kevin masters, University of Colorado, Denver professor who's researched marathon participants for decades.

It offers community, the satisfaction of reaching a goal, and lessons about your body and health. While running, people also think, and it can lead

them to solve tricky word problems or remember people they miss and decide to reach out, Master said. A marathon can help participants to reorganize their lives. Even eating becomes interesting because you can't really slam down a big burger and then go out and run 10 miles, Masters said.

Running is free and doesn't require a gym membership, but training for a long race possesses some economic barriers. Training requires time, access to trainers and good shoes, and park or track options for long runs.

The bottom line: making it to the marathon starting line is an accomplishment, the culmination of much perseverance and resilience. The actual day of the race is more of a celebration.