Athletics: Want running tips from an ultramarathoner? Sign up for ActiveSG's running clinic

Running and strength and conditioning coach Liew Wei Yong and other experts will be covering topics like how to train effectively. PHOTO: LIEW WEI YONG

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PUBLISHED 14 MAR 2022, 7:30 PM SGT

SINGAPORE - Liew Wei Yong grew up playing many sports like football and basketball, but found it hard to keep up with these team sports once she and her peers began working.

She then decided to give running a go in 2004, when her workplace encouraged staff to participate in the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon.

But despite her athleticism, the start of her running journey was tough as she initially struggled to complete 2km runs. However, she gradually increased the distance of her efforts and after completing her first marathon that year, she started taking on even longer distances.

The 41-year-old has even competed in ultra races in the Gobi and Sahara Deserts that spanned 250km and is now a running and strength and conditioning coach.

While most of her clients are already avid runners, Liew also has plenty of advice for those who are just starting out.

Among her tips:

1. Run at your own pace

"A lot of times, it's peer pressure because your friend can run 1km in four or five minutes and you want to chase after them, but get so tired. Just start slow and at a comfortable pace, you can also listen to music when you run."

2. Take baby steps

For those just getting started, tackle 1km runs thrice a week at first, before increasing the distance gradually. The golden rule is to increase the distance by no more than 20 per cent each week.

3. Remember strength training

Strength training is key to improving one's running performance and exercises that strengthen the lower limbs, quads, hamstrings, glutes and hip flexors are recommended.

4. Breathe right

"We tell the runners to breathe from the diaphragm and not so much from the lungs. If you keep doing shallow breathing, you actually raise your heart rate, which isn't very effective."

Those keen to learn more from Liew can sign up for a running clinic on Saturday (March 19) that is a part of the ActiveSG Sport Series. The series is an initiative by Sport Singapore to help individuals learn more about various sports through events and activities.

Liew will be among other experts such as ActiveSG Athletics Club long-distance head coach Steven Quek and its short-distance head coach Melvin Tan, who will be covering various topics like how to train effectively and prevent common injuries.

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The series is part of SportSG's wider "Bring Sport Back" plan to ramp up and cater to the increasing demand for sport following two years of disruption caused by the pandemic. The $20 million plan was announced in Parliament last week by Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong as part of his ministry's budget.

Also part of the 'Bring Sport Back' plan is the inaugural TTX Festival across 14 locations island-wide on March 19 and March 26 by the ActiveSG Masters Club.

TTX is a modified form of table tennis with portable tables, larger balls, non-rubber bats and a modified set of rules to support recreational play.

For instance, the TTX ball weighs more than the average table tennis ball and possesses the best possible flight features under windy conditions. To complement it, the hard racket blade offers better control over the heavier ball, making it an easy-pick-up and perfect for players of all ages and abilities.

To find out more about the running workshops, go to this website.

To learn more about the TTX Festival, visit this website.

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