

NEWS

Humans
Could Run
40MPH

PHOTOGRAPH: GATORA/DEACTION IMAGES

It could be possible for human beings to run as fast as 40mph, a new study suggests - that's more than 10mph quicker than the world's top sprinter, Usain Bolt.

According to research recently published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, human limbs can withstand more force than previously thought, which means we could, in theory, be capable of running much faster.

Scientists used a high speed treadmill to record data on runners using different gaits and even hopping and running backwards as fast as they could.

They found that the ground forces applied while hopping on one leg exceeded those applied during top-speed forward running by over 30 per cent and the forces generated by the active muscles within the limb were roughly one and a half to two times greater when hopping.

The researchers say that top running speeds are set by the contractile speed limits of the muscle fibres in the legs and their work shows we're capable of running much faster.

"Our simple projections indicate that muscle contractile speeds that would allow for maximal or near maximal forces would permit running speeds of 35 to 40 miles per hour and conceivably faster," co-researcher Matthew Bundle of University of Wyoming said.

The paper, 'The Biological Limits to Running Speed are Imposed from the Ground up', was inspired by Bolt's record-setting performances.

Honour for Heart Runner

Charity runner Paul Willgoss, 38, from Bootle, Merseyside, was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the New Year Honours.

Paul was born with a hole in the heart but hasn't let it stop him tackling a series of demanding physical challenges. He is currently half way through a 12-month, 1,000 kilometre fundraising run. Last year he completed the Great North Run, the Greater Manchester Run and the Liverpool 10km. He aims to raise £1000 for the Children's Heart Federation.

He recently took pride of place on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, running "on the spot" for almost a mile in 60 minutes dressed as a giant broken heart.

Paul said: "It's truly humbling to receive an award like this. When I first got the letter from Palace I couldn't believe it and kept waking up in the night to check it to make sure it wasn't a dream.

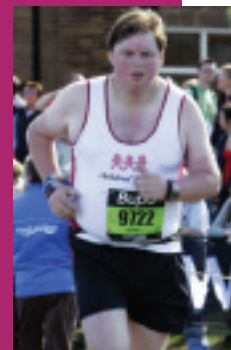
"When I was growing up I don't think anyone thought I would be running marathons, so it just goes to show that you can't let people's perceptions of your limits hold you back.

"I'm really looking forward to the investiture at Buckingham Palace, not least because it will be a chance to take off my running shoes for a bit."

A complicated series of problems with Paul's heart meant he was expected to die before his 16th birthday. He had to undergo seven hours of open heart surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital as a three year old and was excluded from most sports at school.

Despite the fact that he still faces a series of annual medical checks and must take medication daily, Paul is determined to live a full and active life and to complete the rest of his 1,000k running challenge.

For updates on Paul's progress and details on how to support his fundraising visit: www.walkingforheartkids.blogspot.com



MOGG'S MARATHON WITH MR VIRGIN



First-time runner Sharon Mogg will be taking on Sir Richard Branson in the first Virgin London Marathon in April after winning virginmoneygiving.com's 'Run with Richard' competition.

Sharon from Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan aims to raise at least £2,000 for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust after being inspired to take up Marathon running by 12-year-old son Keelan who lives with Cystic Fibrosis.

The 40-year-old mother's story was the most inspiring of hundreds of entries assessed by virginmoneygiving.com's judges in the nationwide competition.

Sharon said: "I am delighted to be running the Virgin London Marathon with Sir Richard.

"I have never done anything like this before and want

to make Keelan proud of me. I know he will be running the Marathon himself as soon as he is old enough to enter."

Fundraisers who use virginmoneygiving.com can personalise their pages, send out email alerts and manage the different events they might be taking part in. They can include their own content and messages for their supporters as well as linking their page to social networking sites.

virginmoneygiving.com is the official sponsorship website of the Virgin London Marathon, Royal Parks Half Marathon and Sony 'Run to the Beat'.

To sponsor Sharon go to virginmoneygiving.com/sharonmoggcf