



## Two Men, 3,000 Miles, One Country: Running Across America

**Marshall Ulrich and Charlie Engle are running across the country. Here, FITNESS asks why and how.**

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### **A Record-Breaking Run**

I find it tough to even run a mile on the treadmill, so running for an entire day is just out of the question. I know I'm not alone on that one. So when I learned that two men were planning to run for 45 days straight, I thought "that's just madness." But nothing short of being taken away in an ambulance will stop Marshall Ulrich or Charlie Engle from running across the country this summer.

"I want to make people aware of how magnificent we are as a nation and that we have so many things in common outside of the current war and political debates," says Ulrich. Both Ulrich and Engle want to challenge their bodies; they're world-class athletes who have done multiple ultra-marathons and adventure races. But they also want to discover the real United States of America and reintroduce the country to the world.

Their ultimate cross-country road trip begins August 8, 2008; Ulrich and Engle will attempt to break a world record by running from San Francisco to New York City. The journey will be filmed for a documentary called *Running America*. Volunteers from all over the United States will join Ulrich and Engle, as they go from coast to coast and town to town to find out what America and Americans like you and me are all about. The idea for this record-breaking run came after Charlie Engle ran across the Sahara to raise awareness of the water crisis in Africa in February 2007. Engle started thinking about what he could do to benefit America. "I'm worried about our problem with childhood obesity," he said, "so I wanted to bring attention to that not by telling people what to do, but by showing commitment to the cause."

Marshall Ulrich, who raced with Engle in Vietnam and Fiji, said that since there is a deep history of ultra-running in America, "why not explore and bring out stories, pick a route that goes through small towns and meet extraordinary people that make up the United States?"

Ulrich and Engle will run from San Francisco to New York, stopping in several towns along the way to find out what each town is known for, what special events are celebrated in that town, and -- of course -- where they can get a good meal.

Find out if Charlie and Marshall will be running through your town

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&msid=100263218254991178788.0004481b0491417b2c319&ll=39.181175,-111.049805&spn=10.502586,24.147949&z=6>

## How They Trained

To prepare their bodies to run almost 70 miles a day for 45 days, Ulrich started strength training in October 2007 and then worked to improve his balance, coordination, and speed. He runs about three hours a day during the week, and six to 12 hours a day on the weekends, gradually adding hours each day to build up his training.

Engle takes a more general approach. "I bike, swim, kayak, and do yoga," he says. "The goal is to get to the starting line healthy and from then on battle to stay in shape." He also runs every day for about three hours and six to eight hours on the weekends. He advises people that "time is more important than miles. It's easier to say 'I'm going to run for 90 minutes' than say 'I'm going to run 20 miles.'"

But just because they've both run marathons of more than 100 miles in the past doesn't mean they're not nervous now. They've suffered minor injuries like tendinitis and cramping while training, but Ulrich says it's good that the injuries are happening now and not during the run.

To keep his joints healthy and prevent more injuries, Engle relies on yoga. "It's out of my comfort zone and I'm not pretty to look at when I do yoga, but it's effective in maintaining my flexibility," he says. "My legs feel good, not creaky."

## Staying Motivated

Ulrich and Engle are soliciting volunteers to keep them energized during their cross-country trek. They're looking for volunteers who are local residents -- up to five for each mile of the journey -- and who can give them inside information about the communities they're running through. Runners of any age, gender, ethnicity, or physical shape can sign up to join them.

Interested? Volunteer to run with Marshall Ulrich and Charlie Engle

<http://runningamerica08.com/>

When not talking to volunteers, they'll have their iPods to entertain them. "The goal is to not have a negative thought in my head," Engle says, "because once that thought gets in, it's hard to get out."

Engle and Ulrich will also have tons of support from their friends and family, who will be there along the way to cheer them on. They'll also be advocates for Engle's and Ulrich's health, acting as their voices of reason if it ever gets too dangerous to go on.

Engle wants to have "a running conversation" with the volunteer runners about what it means to be an American today. "Everyone has a different definition," says Engle. "I hope I get answers that will surprise me. I want to remind people that there is no stereotypical American anymore, that we are truly a diverse country. Though our country is going through struggles, I'm optimistic to see a positive outlook."

## Become a Volunteer Runner

If the thought of running long distances is daunting to you, like it is to me, you can relax; you don't have to be a marathon runner to join Ulrich and Engle. At a pace of about 12 minutes per mile, just about anyone can run and talk with them. Volunteers sign up to run a mile but can run for as much as they'd like.

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By running across the country, Ulrich and Engle want to show the uniqueness of America. Whether it's the Rocky Mountains, the Great Lakes, or the pond you and your neighbors swim in every summer, they want to highlight the diversity of the American landscape and they want you to see it along with them. So get out and cheer them on!

Keep track of Charlie and Marshall's exact route and sign up to run with them and be in the documentary at the link below.

<http://runningamerica08.com/>

Marshall Ulrich's Playlist: Music for Running Across America

<http://www.fitnessmagazine.com/workout/music/celebrity-playlists/marshall-ulrich-marathon-running-music/>

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