

Introduction

Firstly let me say, that each person who has done this run has approached it in his or her own way. Suffice to say that there isn't necessarily a right or a wrong way. There are just different ways. What I have attached here is merely a basis of my own experience and doesn't necessarily suggest that it is right for you. I offer them merely as thoughts or ideas. Whatever you choose to do will be entirely down to you.

If you want to read my own account of what the run was like, for a donation to Josie's Trust, you can order a signed copy of my book 'Running across America'. You can do this by either going back to the web-site www.runningacrossamerica.com or you can email me with your full name and postal address to nick@runningacrossamerica.com

I also give powerful, illustrated talks all over the world about the run with all book sales and any speaking payments going straight to Josie's Trust. As I am more than prepared to help you, do you know some organisation or group that would like to hear and see what it is like to run across America? Just pay my expenses to get me there, let me collect donations for a copy of the book whilst there, and I'll deliver one of the most moving and inspirational talks you'll ever hear!

132 days on foot running 2851 miles across a continent, going through 4 time zones!

Before deciding to do it

Someone once said "until one is committed there is always hesitancy" This has never been truer than for something like a transcontinental run. Finding yourself stuck in the middle of a desert tired and alone is no place to find that really, deep down you never REALYY wanted to do this anyway.

Some soul searching beforehand will help reveal to yourself as you look in the mirror just why you want to do it and measure the extent to which you want to do it. A run of this magnitude is never going to be easy and the road ahead before you get to the start will be littered with obstacles and difficulties. It's not easy – nothing in life that's worthwhile never is. If you are not truly committed, then these difficulties will present the perfect excuse to give up!

So before doing anything, decide that you really WANT to.

Route

People have done this run from East to West and West to East. It's all a matter of course of personal preference, although I think that West to East is preferred to the other way round. As I say, it's down to personal preference. I tried to take into account the prevailing westerly winds, and not having the sun on my face in the afternoon.

My route took me as close to Interstate 80 as I could, although at times it took in highway 50 & 30. It went from Dillon Beach, Napa valley, Sacramento, Lake Tahoe, Reno, Ely, Salt Lake City, Laramie, Cheyenne, North Platte, Omaha, Des Moines, Chicago, Fort Wayne, Hubbard, New York

Planning

This was probably as difficult as the run itself. Well, almost! The things you need to plan for are seemingly endless. Prior to the run here are some of the things you need to plan:

Personal mindset

Route

Support crew

Training regime

Sponsorship

Having someone as a volunteer helper to organise things

PR & Publicity

Fundraising

Getting your own life in order to be away for a number of months!

I say 'some of the things' because there are bound to be many more depending on the type of run you are doing.

For the run itself:

Motor-home

Drivers

Fuel

Food

Insurance

Running equipment

First aid equipment

Funding

Other than doing the run itself, arranging funding was probably this biggest challenge of the whole operation.

So many things need paying for (see above list) and no matter how slow or fast you intend the run to take, you are looking at many £/\$000's

You could easily be looking at £1000 each for both fuel and food. This clearly depends on the number of people involved and the length of the run. If you are hiring an RV as we did, you need to be looking at anything between £7000-8000. Then of course there is everything else. To read more, order a copy of my book at nick@runningacrossamerica.com

Unless you are well off financially, you probably will want to seek sponsorship. If you can tie your cause into something that's topical or relevant to a large organisation, you may get lucky and have a company sponsor you to pick up all the costs. Your part of the deal could well be wearing clothing with their name on it, and agreeing to promote their company in a number of ways both pre and post run. If you cannot get one overall sponsor, then it's a case of picking one item of expenditure; let's say fuel and approaching a company, body, charity or association and asking them to take care of just that one item. In my own experience, this is more likely to be successful. But who knows!

Training

This depends where you start from in terms of your own level of fitness. You need to be fit enough for your body to sustain the most rigorous physical demands. We each have our own way, although I found it useful to have a written down plan for a whole 12 months. If you are like me, a relative novice and reasonably out of shape for something like this, then having a clear plan bring endless dividends to help motivation and measure success along the painful road to fitness. I would allow one year for a good fitness programme.

- ❖ I would generally start with low mileage (3-4 miles) running 3-4 times a week.
- ❖ After say 2-3 months, I would pick up the mileage to 5-7 miles running 5 times a week.

- ❖ I would do one long run on Sunday of 10 miles
- ❖ At this point, I would include cross training where possible with cycling or swimming.
- ❖ I would also make sure I had a gym workout twice a week.
- ❖ After six months, I would make sure I am running 8 miles a day, with one long run of 15 miles on Sunday and either one or two rest days
- ❖ After 8 months, the long runs would be 18-20 miles.
- ❖ I would aim to start running twice a day two days a week
- ❖ Visit the gym for a workout three times a week
- ❖ Near the start of the run, I would take more rest days than usual, say 3 days consecutively.

Publish the plan throughout your home and office – pin it up, put reminders, make it a screensaver, tell your friends and family so they can help and encourage you.

Food, fuel etc;

Sponsorship was going to have to be the key here. You have to budget for fuel - bearing in mind you will always use at least 50% more than you think you will with travelling backwards & forwards looking for rest areas, night stops etc;

Fuel charges may well vary from state to state, so it's worth doing a little investigating first. For food, it is best to bulk purchase wherever possible on things such as rice & pasta. Unfortunately, much of the food can only be purchased as you go along as it may well be perishable.

Weather

Whichever routing you opt for, I think it will be hard to avoid all the extremes. Whichever way you go, you'll have to go through desert, over mountains, and through cornfields.

Therefore, you can plan for very hot temperatures in the arid environment of the desert. Most of ours was 400 miles down highway 50 in Nevada. You can also bank on cold, icy temperatures as you go over mountains. In the Sierra Nevada Mountains, we experienced minus 12 degrees, and in the Rockies it was often frosty in June! To read the graphic account of these, order a copy of my book at nick@runningacrossamerica.com

In the mid-west, things get hot, humid & sticky. With the heat index in Nebraska & Iowa, temperatures soared to 112 degrees. Drink lots of water, get out real early on the road & wear loose running clothing.

Things to watch out for

- Wildlife
- Weather
- Unpredictability of some drivers whilst on the road
- Trucks & Rigs
- Mental depression
- Blisters
- Complacency
- Lack of belief
- Going too fast
- Trying to do too much each day
- People telling you it can't be done.
- Hallucinations
- Getting caught needing the toilet when there isn't one (buy my book and read what I mean! www.runningacrossamerica.com)

Things to be ready to enjoy

- Wildlife
- Weather
- People
- Views
- Breathtaking landscapes
- Once in a lifetime experience

- Life changing emotions
- Getting really fit!
- True sense of freedom
- Running in the footsteps of pioneers of the Wild West. Being a part of history.

To order your signed copy of my book, or if you would like me to give a powerful, emotional and life changing talk at your convention or meeting, contact me at nick@runningacrossamerica.com