

'HOW I
BUILD MY
BODY'

STEPH TWELL

MEET THE ELITE

Steph Twell is a middle- and long-distance runner whose Olympic experiences include running the 1,500m in Beijing 2008, the 5,000m in Rio 2016 and the marathon in Tokyo 2020. A former World Junior Champion, she is also a Commonwealth Games medallist, multiple World and European finalist, and the Scottish National Record holder for the marathon, running 2:26:40 in Frankfurt in 2019.

CARDIO

'I train every day of the week, and four days out of seven I will train twice a day by doing either a run and gym session or two runs. I will schedule in a rest day every three weeks when I am trying to build my mileage, or every two weeks if I am doing more high-intensity training. This roughly equates to about 15-20 hours of training a week, depending on which distance I am focusing my goals on. My week revolves around two interval sessions, one threshold run on a treadmill and one long run. The rest of my week is made up with aerobic easy running. I love to run



Twell's next goal is to break the Scottish National Record for a marathon again



outdoors, and like to mix my environments to ensure variety and allow my body to respond to different surfaces. Finding softer trails also means I look after my body and reduce the incidence of injury. One of my runs each week is on the treadmill – this makes me accountable to my pace. I use it for mental focus, and it also means my biomechanics gets used to a smooth rhythm. I love session days, which can involve a hill session and a tempo run, or multi-paced work similar to the equivalent times I want to race at, or faster.'

STRENGTH

'I have two strength and conditioning sessions each week. One focuses on the fundamental movement skills and low-level plyometrics of running, and the other is more force development and strength focused. I then have "homework" rehab, which I complete once or twice a week and it takes 20-30 minutes. This will include low-level core work or, at the moment, lots of plantar fasciitis rehab work.'

NUTRITION

'My food philosophy is "all food is fuel". I also believe you can dig yourself out of holes in training by eating good quality fuel, enough of it, and making sure it is well-timed for before and after training and around competition. I am rarely a fussy eater and chocolate has taken me very far in

Words: Joanna Ebsworth / Photography: HOKA



Twell loves to run outdoors so her body learns to respond to different surfaces

my career! I like to see units of nutrients and vitamins in my meals rather than focusing on the volume of what I eat.'

RECOVERY

'I'm not great at this part, however, I do like to work outside of athletics. I am part of multiple committees and I also do freelance work for my local council, on preventing inactivity and promoting health and wellbeing. I love catching up with friends and family, of course. But mainly, I love finding good eating spots, listening to music or playing cards and board games with my husband. I would say I have time to do more activities but, in reality, I often feel tired from training, so I don't. If I'm feeling spontaneous, I go to local museums in the places I visit, but I'm just happy with

company, and I like to focus on making them good occasions.'

VITAL KIT

'Right now, my go-to running shoes are the HOKA Mach 4 (£125, hoka.com). I love the variety of colours you can choose from, and I also love their responsiveness, flexibility and support for my feet whilst running fast! Another must I think everyone should try is the

HOKA Hupana 5" Shorts (£35, hoka.com). They are a great length with good coverage, and they have a brilliant, streamlined pocket as well as an extra zip pocket that I love using for my marathon gels, phone or gym card. They feel secure even whilst I run, and the softness is perfect.'

Steph Twell is an ambassador for running brand HOKA. Find out more at [hoka.com](https://www.hoka.com)

'My greatest achievement...'

'My greatest achievement is winning the Night Of The 10,000m PB's event (nightofthe10kpbs.com) in 2019, in a time of 31:08. Not only did I run a PB, but I also achieved a World-qualifying time as well as the Olympic-qualifying time, winning the race from behind. Most of all, I am proud that I self-coached myself to this performance! This was also in a recent era of racing that pre-dates carbon-plated shoes, so I know my ability wasn't just down to the new technology. My next goals are to focus on an autumn city marathon and to run faster than 2:26.41. That's the Scottish National Record, so I'd love to break it again before someone else has their eyes on it.'