



Braving the vertical climb of the Manaslu Trail, Nepal.

T+L PICKS

Going the Distance

If plodding along on a treadmill feels a bit blasé, the latest fitness frenzy is sure to inspire you. **Diana Hubbell** checks out epic running trails framed by some of the region's most striking scenery.

NEPAL THE MANASLU TRAIL

This grueling path traverses 200 kilometers and a 5,100-meter mountain pass. Experienced athletes require seven days of running plus one day of hiking to complete it, though you may be tempted to stop along the way and snap photos of prayer flags, Himalayan peaks, and the wild, windswept slopes across the Tibetan border. It gives a new meaning to the phrase “runner’s high.” manaslutrailrace.org.

NEW ZEALAND THE MILFORD TRACK

Panoramic vistas of Fiordland National Park, an ancient tableau sculpted by glaciers, set the scene for this 54-kilometer run. It typically takes four days to complete the Mackinnon Pass, while soaking in views of the triple-tiered, 580-meter Sutherland Falls—the country’s highest—but die-hards can conquer it in a day. Just make sure you secure approval from the Department of Conservation in advance. doc.govt.nz.

AUSTRALIA THE LARAPINTA TRAIL

It may be one of the newest routes in central Oz, but the 223-kilometer, 12-section Larapinta Trail has already established itself as one of the most popular places for an ambitious walkabout. The undulating rust-hued hills of the Outback give this landscape an otherworldly feel and the vast length makes it possible to jog for hours without spotting another soul. larapintatrail.com.au.

JAPAN THE KYOTO TRAIL

Want to get into the sport but nervous about taking the plunge? This 110-kilometer trail around Japan’s former imperial capital offers plenty of challenge, but never takes you too far from civilization. If your stamina falters, you can always trot to one of the city’s train stations and take the lazy way back, but if you can power through the whole circuit you’ll pass waterfalls, bamboo forests and ancient pagodas. kyoto-trail.net.

SRI LANKA THE WILD ELEPHANT TRAIL

Leopards and bears and water buffalo, oh my! Pachyderms aren’t the only megafauna you’re likely to see on this 210-kilometer dash. Particularly varied terrain makes this a gorgeous, if strenuous slog. The trail culminates in a sprint up 1,860 steps to Sigiriya Rock, a UNESCO World Heritage site, that is equal parts exhilarating and excruciating. global-limits.com/the-wild-elephant-trail.html. ☯