Edited by Katie McCabe timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon

It's the London Marathon this weekend. Can't face 26.2 miles? Pound the pavement your own way at a running club, says Fly Girl Collective founder Matilda Egere-Cooper

Backpackers Run Club

Backpackers is for those runners who usually find themselves at the back of the pack. In running circles, we call that the 'party pace' - but this is one community that strives to be the life and soul, focusing on getting out there in the first place, rather than the need for speed. It welcomes new runners, those returning from injury, or anyone nervous about joining a running group - so if you fit the bill, you can expect to fit right in.

→ Meet at Lululemon Regent Street. O Oxford Circus. Thursdays, 7.30pm.

TrackMafia Did you hate the 400-metre sprint at school as much as we did? TrackMafia didn't: this speedloving squad has spent the last four years building a community that likes to go fast and furious every Thursday night. Their following is so impressive, they've even landed the cover of Runner's World magazine. Sessions are free and open to anyone who wants to seriously test their limits (and that's always a good reason to run).

→ Paddington Recreation Ground. ← Maida Vale. Thursdays, 6.30pm.

REP Runners

Started by pacers from the former NRC (Nike Running Club), REP Runners meet at Tap Coffee in the West End and describes itself as a running club 'for the people, by the people'. It's big on high-fives, cheering and spreading good vibes, so I'm fairly convinced it could become your new

running BFF (especially as there's cake involved). Join London its Marathon shakeout run this Saturday at Ministry Does Fitness.

Free. Or at Tap Coffee, 26 Rathbone Place. Tottenham Court

Founded in 2015, WMN RUN was created by ultra-marathoners Sorrell Walsh and Cat Simpson to tackle the uneven gender ratio of men to women in endurance running and races. In that same year, they organised a group of over 50 women – myself included! – to run the 100k Race to the Stones ultra-marathon in the south of the UK. Three years later, they've grown into an encouraging, supportive space for women to aim higher and push themselves together. Runs are completely free and open to all (even gents!)



un this town Above: Project Awesome. Below: Fly Girl Collective

→ Ministry Does Fitness. → Elephant & Castle. Sat Apr 21, 9.45am. Rd. Tuesdays, 6.30pm.



Run Like Hells

Beer lovers: assemble for a weekly social run that started off with a trio of runners who got into the

habit of finishing off their Saturday runs with a brew. It wasn't long before the group doubled in size -you can understand why - and now they meet every Wednesday at Camden Town Brewery.

Have a friendly, chilled run, then stop for hops.

→ Camden Town Brewery. ← Chalk Farm. Wednesdays, 6.45pm.

LDN Brunch Club

Running, working and brunching around London is the motto of this gang, who take their training as seriously as their love for food. The community is made up of

qualified running coaches and PTs, and every Sunday they finish their long runs with a wellearned brunch (of course). Although they're currently locked off for membership, you can join the Brunch Club on April 18 for their final premarathon run.

→ Meet at Holiday Inn Camden Lock. ← Chalk Farm. Wed Apr 18.

Fly Girl Collective

Missy Elliott said it best - 'if you a fly gal, get your nails done, get a pedicure, get your hair did'and in this case, get your run on. That's the mission of Fly Girl Collective. Granted, I may be biased (I launched the group in March to encourage and celebrate more diversity in fitness spaces). Fly Girl Runs are aimed at beginners, cover a 5k distance – with a bit of strength training thrown in - and take place in different parts of London fortnightly, followed by the best weekend meal: brunch! ■ → Location TBC. Saturdays, 10.15am-11.30am. The next session is on Apr 28.

Mr Gorilla's London Marathon survival guide

Take advice from the eager ape who crawled the entire marathon route for charity in 2017

Find loopholes

Stick to the rules, but look for the gaps. Be inventive. Roller-skating is not allowed. Crawling, somewhat surprisingly, is allowed, or at least it was last year.

Start slow

Take your time. Why not turn up at 11.30am and be the last to start? The route will be beautifully clear and you won't have to elbow your way along the first 16 miles.

...Then go even slower

Why not walk the whole way? A brisk walk should see you finish in around 6.5 hours and, like the tortoise and the hare, you can enjoy overtaking those who set out too quickly and are limping along the last ten miles.

Stay alert

Watch out for speed bumps in the first half of the course. They are evil.

Open up

Feel free to cry at the end, especially if it's your first marathon.

Give in to it

Swear you will never do another. Then find out when the ballot for the next year opens.

→ www.justgiving.com/gorilla-go



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