

Some like it hot

Dan Marinsik runs 217 kilometers in 48 hours



Taking it to the limit

Dan Marinsik, Bosch associate and extreme athlete, enjoys running through Death Valley

Palo Alto | jz | At the end of the first day, says Dan Marinsik, that's when things get tough, really tough. The 51-year old has been on a non-stop journey through the searing heat of California's Death Valley since 6am. And when the sun goes down, he knows that he has not even made it half way.

“The temptation to push yourself to the limit is great. Everybody in the race feels the same.”

Dan Marinsik

In July every year, approximately 80 extreme athletes meet in Badwater, California to cover a distance equivalent to five marathons. Dan Marinsik, quality and regulatory director at Bosch Healthcare in Palo Alto, first took part in the race in 2002. The running enthusiast had recently been diagnosed with a tumor on the vestibular nerve and his doctor had warned him that his jogging days may be over after the operation.

75 sachets of paste

“My thinking was, if I'm never going to run again, then the last race had better be a good one,” he says today. But the operation was a success, and Marinsik has taken part in the Badwater Ultramarathon every year since. The temptation to push yourself to the limit is great. “Everybody who takes part in the race feels the same.”

When the sun is at its zenith on the second day, temperatures are far in excess of 50 degrees Celsius.



Blistering pace: Dan Marinsik has taken part in the Badwater Ultramarathon every year since 2002.

Marinsik downs a bottle of water every 15 minutes and his crew replaces the ice in his specially designed neck scarf. The three helpers in his support vehicle regularly hand him sachets of a sugary paste, rich in carbohydrates. Over the course of the race, he will consume 75 sachets of this gel-like substance, as well as blueberry muffins and even a few hamburgers. “The exertion gives you a real hunger for fatty and sugary foods.”

48 hours to the finish

His regular training regime is a little less extreme. While he does don his running shoes every day, he is only in them for half an hour at a time, and double that at the weekend. This leaves plenty of time for his family, as well as his job at Robert Bosch Healthcare, where he is responsible for quality and regulatory matters.

Even a grueling challenge such as Badwater eventually reaches its conclusion and, 48 hours after setting off, Marinsik crosses the finish line. He has slept just one hour in the last two days and pushed his body to the absolute limit. Yet the thought of quitting never crossed his mind. “At the start, I do wonder why I'm putting myself through this, but these thoughts soon disappear once you get going.”

On this occasion, the unrelenting heat was not his worst enemy – it was the blisters on his feet. The ultramarathon took place in the middle of July, and Marinsik was still moving quite gingerly when he visited the Bosch Healthcare office in Waiblingen two weeks later. Some wounds take time to heal.