

THE RHYTHM OF RUNNING

Running is like music – you need passion, determination and love to reap its rewards, believes accomplished runner Terence Ho, General Manager of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra.

Text Maia Lowe

Terence Ho's days are filled with rhythm and not just because of his job as the General Manager of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO). This 43-year old lives and breathes music and running. As he says, "My passion is running and music. As a GM, I don't practise music five hours a day, but I run at least five to 10km every day, unless I'm travelling."

Terence, who manages to combine his hectic life with passions, has his routine down pat. On weekdays, he wakes up at 6.30am, brings the wife and kids – he has three kids, a daughter (13 years old) and two sons (nine and six years old) – to work and school and enters the fray ("the battlefield", he calls it) of his work life. Meetings consume most of the day and evenings are spent relaxing through running.

"I try to run every evening except for concert night on Fridays. Sometimes with the 'ex-commando' buddies on Tuesday and Thursday nights to prepare for races," Terence enthuses.

Weekends are spent pretty much the same way – wake up early, send the kids to their weekend activities and then he goes off on training runs. "I would start by mid- and long-

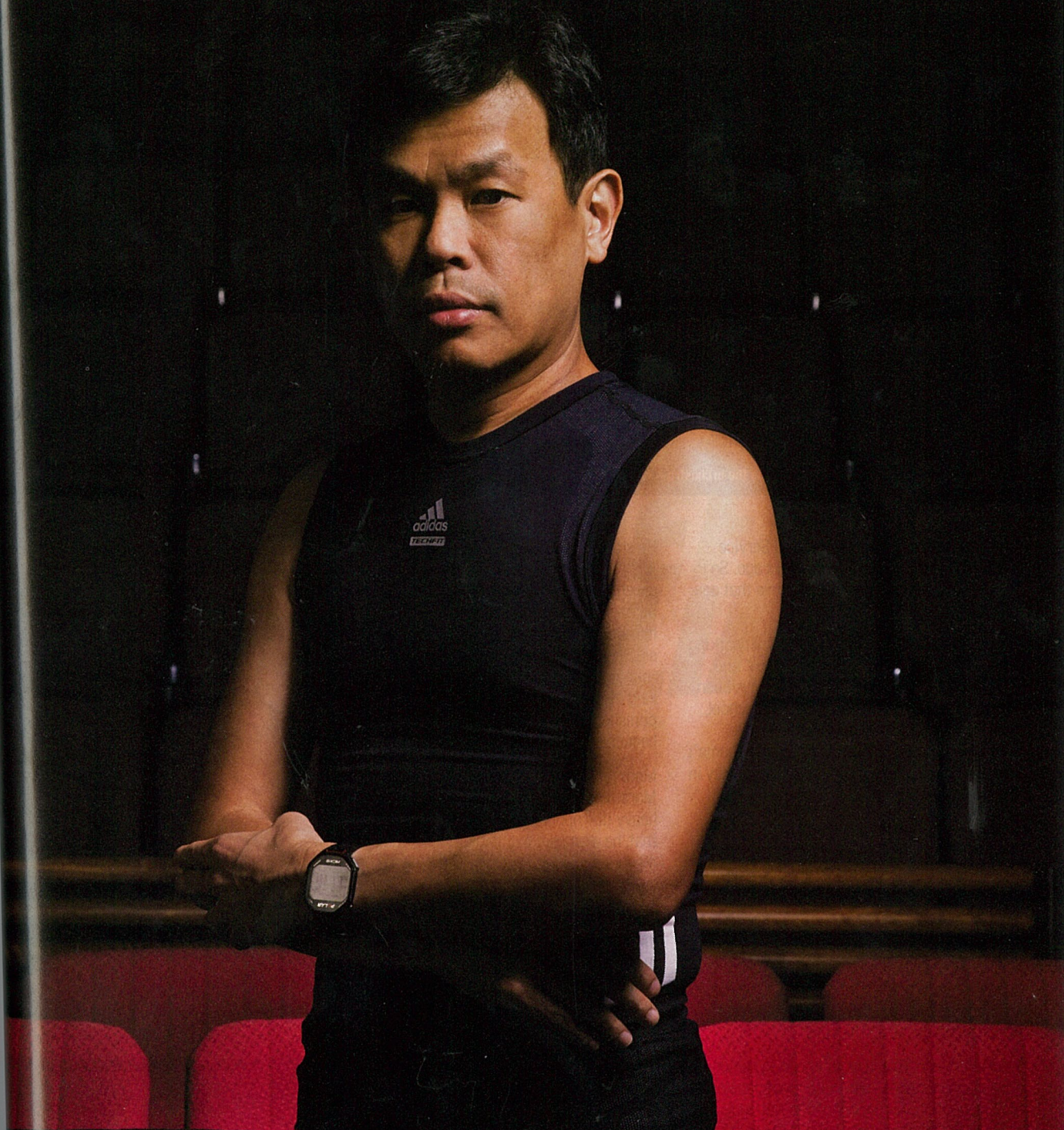


run training. When I need to train for a biathlon or triathlon, I add swimming and biking. I don't like running indoors so I rarely use the treadmill – only when it's raining or when I am travelling," he says.

Terence, who describes his job as like "being a manager of a soccer team" handles the SCO's corporate and administrative duties. "I manage the corporate and administrative side of the orchestra." His job entails everything from finance to fundraising and everything in between. As such, he does a lot of travelling. How does he maintain his training while on the road? "I love to do orientation runs when I travel with the orchestra or on conferences overseas to experience the people, ground, and the air."

A Well-Orchestrated Fitness Plan

Terence is as fit as can be though he continues to challenge himself. A man who always seems to have a goal, he is determined to be at his personal best. The impetus for this? "What put me on the running track was that someone laughed at my 'ex-commando' status," he reveals, adding: "I realised that my personal best for marathon had gone up from 4 hours



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Terence (centre) runs his races like he runs the orchestra – with passion.

and 10 minutes during my National Service period to almost 6 hours three years ago. So I wanted to challenge myself and prove that age doesn't matter."

Though these days, running is part "networking session to catch up with army buddies" and part fitness regimen, Terence has always been athletic, having discovered running at school, where he also excelled in racket games – badminton ("in the school and battalion teams"), tennis and table tennis ("I was picked to play in the Singapore Combined School team").

Healthy habits die hard and he's been trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle ever since. These days, though, his focus is on running. He says: "It allows me to set my own pace and run at my own speed."

Because he's both musician and athlete, it's inevitable that the two halves of his passions influence each other. "Running gives me passion and inspires me, and this is how a musician would treat his music," he says.

He elaborates: "This is what I hope to see in my musicians onstage – play with great passion and inspiration. As the GM of the National Chinese orchestra, I always want to see how our music could inspire and touch people's hearts regardless of your background, race and culture, thus making Singapore and the world into a more gracious place to live in for everyone. It's the same with running. Running makes you aware of the earth and the world we live in, something that we don't feel all the time. Hopefully, being more attuned to the earth will help us treat others with compassion."

Marathon Maestro In The Making

Such passion and dedication to his sport is evident when Terence recalls some of his memorable events as a runner. Like most, he can't forget his first marathon.

He shares: "Ah, my very first marathon in 1991 – the Mobil Marathon. I was quite a green runner with no knowledge of facts and numbers. I managed to clock 4 hours and 10 minutes, which I thought was a good time since I never slowed down to walk and kept running at a good pace and didn't take too long at the hydration station. However, I was punished by my commander for that time because I didn't end with a sub-4.30 time!"

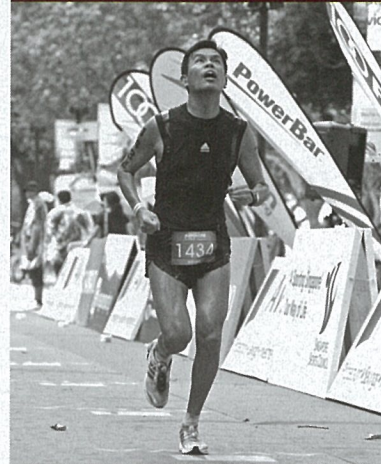
More recently, he participated in the Sundown Marathon 2012, where he experienced a heavy downpour at the 33km mark. Despite that, he managed to complete the marathon in 4 hours and 15 minutes.

Terence is such a go-getter that he says he competes in about 10 to 12 races a year. For instance, for this year, he has already been in several races. Last March, he competed in the Singapore Biathlon with a time of 43 minutes for the 1.5km swim and 58 minutes for the 10km run. His time for the Run 350 Half-Marathon last April was 1 hour and 59 minutes and finished the Best Friend Run 2012 10km at 50 minutes.

"I thought the Biathlon was the most challenging one," he recalls. "I was not well and was deciding whether to continue with the race but I did sign up for the father-son race too. In order not to disappoint my boy, I decided to take up the challenge of two races at one go."

Definitely, Terence has been inspired by running – or maybe his passions and philosophy inspire his running? Who knows; it could be a synergy of both. As he says, having a healthy lifestyle is all about "the great IDEA – Inspiration, Definition, Expression and Articulation – in life." And he has found both in running and music. **R**

PACE AND PASSION



Terence's Tips On Running... And Life!

- 1 Focus, Fantasy And Fit**
"When you run, focus. When you need to think about difficult issues in work and life, focus. Fantasise about achieving goals and objectives. Be fit for life!"
- 2 Pay Attention**
"Listen to your body and pace your runs accordingly."
- 3 Preparation Is Key**
"When preparing for a race, do more intensive runs and increase the tempo. Set a personal record to achieve. As for diet – load up on carbo and drink enough fluids."
- 4 Advice for Newbie Runners**
"Have fun and start slow – even walk. Be inspired by the running gear; put on something you never thought you'd wear. Run with or sign up for races with friends with the same objectives"

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