

Does Running Pay?

by John Farrow

If you're like me, you've probably never thought much about a cost-benefit analysis of your running. You put in the miles, run the races, collect the T-shirts, and generally feel better and have more energy as a result and that's it.

Now comes Michael Sutin of the *Santa Fe Striders*, who has actually put a pencil to the question (or more likely a calculator, since most of us have long since forgotten how to work a pencil, and since calculators are now allowed in school, that's why the typical store clerk or fast-food counter help can't make change when the computers are down, but that's a rant for another time).

Sutin figures that he's averaged finding about a coin a run, and that over a five-year span his little treasure trove has amounted to at least \$56.73. His finds include everything up to a five dollar bill, as well as coins from Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, the Netherlands Antilles, and an East Caribbean penny. That works out to \$11.35 a year, about 6 cents a run (if he's able to average a run every other day), maybe a penny a mile.

So, does running pay? Everything is relative. Ask Princess Di. She says she can't make it with a paltry 26.5 mill, poor thing. Most of us, we'd take it and run. But hey, times are hard. Maybe she has to let some of the help go. Cut back on the plastic. Give up a palace or two.

Maybe she got shorted, maybe she took Charlie to the cleaners. Who knows? Whatever she got, she's entitled. She did the time.

Me? I've never kept track of the coins I've found since they usually don't stay with me very long afterwards anyway. But I

do distinctly remember two things I've found while running. The most practical item was a contractor's grade 3/8" power drill that has proven quite handy around the house.

The other was a pair of red lace panties. No, I didn't actually pick them up and take them with me. But there they were.

Now, had they not just been lying there but, say, had there been something else, more there there, you know, like maybe on someone or something, then that might have put things in a slightly different perspective. But no.

At best, I was left with some pleasant speculation about an offer I couldn't refuse, as it were. Or how they happened to get there in the first place, which, I had to admit, I had nothing to do with. I am, however, always open to second chances. Does running pay? Like I say, everything is relative.

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