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**Hockey, John C ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5826-8005> (2019) Everyday Routines as Transformative Processes: A Sporting Case. Sociological Research Online, 24 (2). pp. 219-234. doi:10.1177/1360780418790273**

Official URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780418790273>

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1360780418790273>

EPrint URI: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/5753>

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# **Everyday Routines as Transformative Processes: A Sporting Case**

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## **Abstract**

Currently there is scant sociological research on everyday routines within sport and also upon other routines which make sporting routines themselves possible. This paper adds to that very small literature, illustrating how movement between the contexts of paid employment, sport and home is habitually accomplished. Utilising qualitative data from a collaborative auto-ethnography on distance running, a case study of the routines of getting ready for, doing, and leaving daily training sessions is portrayed. The ensuing narrative depicts the cognitive and corporeal routines, which effect the *transformations* necessary to accomplish daily distance running.

## **Keywords**

autoethnography, every-day, routines, processes, running, sport, transformation

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## **Introduction**

As Giddens (1984) has asserted the stable continuity of both individual selves and of social institutions is dependent upon the continuous reproduction of everyday routine events. Sport is no exception to this reliance on this mundane reproduction for its structural, interactional and embodied construction. However, curiously when one examines the general literature on the quotidian, much of which is located within cultural studies and sociology (e.g De Nora, 2014; Highmore, 2011; Pink, 2012; Shove et al., 2012; Sociology: Special Issue, 2015 ), one finds scant or no mention of sport. Also within the sociology of sport until relatively recently the sub-field took for granted the mundane. One could find rare papers (e.g. Chambliss, 1989; Coates, 1999;

Crossley, 2004), but it is only in the last few years that a body of literature on some of the everyday practices which underpin sporting activity has begun to grow. This growth has been propelled in the main by a small number of scholars starting to examine the commonplace, embodied phenomenology of these everyday activities. Yet even with this advance there has been almost no attention given to other non-sporting habitual activities which need to be done so sport itself can be accomplished (for recent reviews see Groth and Krahn, 2017; Sparkes, 2017). The objective of this paper is then to add to this developing literature on the sporting every-day.

### **Theorising the Routines of Everyday Sporting Life**

Given this paper is about the commonplace or as some would term it the 'everyday life' of sport, how is it to be theorised? A useful initial definition comes from Edensor (2001):

The everyday can partly be captured by unreflexive habit, inscribed on the body, a normative unquestioned way of being in the world...The repetition of daily, weekly and annual routines...how and when we eat, wash, move, work and play, constitutes a realm of 'common-sense'...These shared habits strengthen affective and cognitive links, constitute a habitus of acquired skills which minimize unnecessary reflection every time a decision is required. (p.61)

Thus we have repetition and habit for the mind and body so as to make the complexities of modern life manageable. Of interest here is that for the vast majority of sports participants, their chosen sport has to be fitted in around the other pressing demands of employment and domestic life. Statistically speaking there are relatively few professional sportspeople and a vast amount of amateurs. Therefore, to manage to fit sport into busy lives constitutes a considerable accomplishment, particularly for amateurs whose commitment to sport propels them into large volumes of training for periodic competition. Training far outweighs engagement in competitive events, particularly in terms of frequency and volume of effort. Hence, for those for whom sport constitutes what Stebbins (1982) has termed 'serious leisure', habit and repetition are vital so as to accomplish such training in the face of the previously mentioned countervailing pressures

on time. These mundane features are combined in quotidian *routines* so as to get sport done. As Highmore (2004: 307) indicates: 'We establish our own daily routines to give our lives rhythm and predictability', so they are fundamental but ironically contemporary scholars have given them 'scant attention' (Ehn and Lofgren, 2010:235). Routines themselves are composed of a 'series of practices which are linked together...often these practices are not only linked together but even coordinated with other activities, and organised in a particular serial order' (O'Dell, 2009: 85). Moreover, they as Ehn and Lofgren (2009: 100) note, 'can be seen as tools for organising the flow of time, and in this process create temporal rhythms and patterns, by sequencing and synchronisation'. Thus, sporting routines habitually repeated allow participants to accomplish doing sport in a physical way, but they also facilitate that accomplishment in a cognitive way, for as Crossley (1995: 47) stresses the mind is inseparable from the body as they remain 'reversible aspects of a single fabric'.

These routines facilitate movement whilst participants engage in sport but they also facilitate movement between the domains of paid work, leisure (sport) and domesticity. These three constitute major cultural categories in modern life and are differentiated by boundaries particularly those of space and time (Zerubavel, 1991), within which different experiences and kinds of being flourish. Routines then facilitate the process of 'transformative movement' (Van Gennep, 1960:10) between the aforementioned zones of activity and linked role performances.

There is some psychological literature on sporting routines which focuses upon the relationship between drills, motor learning and tactics (e.g. Vinson et al., 2013), but sociological attention has hitherto been largely absent. Ehn and Lofgren (2009) have called for the production of detailed ethnographies of routines generally and what follows is an ethnographic examination of the 'micro organization of routine' (Shove et al., 2009: 7) in distance running training. Routine which facilitates the *transformative* movement between the domains previously outlined. Initially the kind of ethnographic data portrayed and the form of analysis will be explained. Next the resources used to analytically conceptualise that data will be explained. Then the routine of leaving paid work and preparing for training is focused upon. This will be followed by a scrutiny of the

embodied routine of distance running training itself. Lastly, the routine of ending training and movement into domestic life receives attention. These three routines cohering to form one overall daily routine.

### **Autoethnography: A collaborative endeavour**

Whilst having its critics (e.g. Delamont 2009), from more “traditional” elements of social-science communities, autoethnography also has a growing body of proponents positing powerful justifications for its utilization where appropriate and insight-generating (e.g. Allen-Collinson, 2012). Autoethnography brings to bear an ethnographic perspective on the researcher’s own personal, lived experience as a member of a (sub)cultural group, directly linking the micro level with the interactional and structural levels. It examines the dialectics of subjectivity and culture, and in general entails the detailed analysis of the researcher(s) *qua* member(s) of a social group or category; in this case, the UK distance-running subculture. The autoethnographic genre is becoming more established within the sociology of sport and physical cultures (e.g. Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2014) and ranges over the full continuum from “analytic” to more “evocative” forms (see Anderson, 2006). With regard to collaborative autoethnography or joint autoethnography, this particular methodological form has its own history (see Bochner and Ellis, 1995). Collaborative autoethnographers adopt various models, ranging from full co-involvement at all stages of the research process to collaboration only at a specific point or points. In the “parallel” or “concurrent” approach, data are gathered independently but concurrently, and researchers then join together to share and discuss their findings, subsequently feeding back these discussions into the collaborative autoethnographic narrative. This is similar to the approach adopted in this research

A brief foray into both researchers running-biographical background might be helpful at this juncture, so as to situate and explain our insider perspectives on the distance-running subculture in the UK. Both of us have been involved in this particular sporting domain for decades: the author is in his 50<sup>th</sup> year and his female co-researcher in her 32<sup>nd</sup>. Time within which distance running has emerged from being

a small minority sport to a popular cultural activity, as evidenced by mass participation city-based marathons in the UK. As co-runners and domestic partners we sustained a commitment to training together for 19 years, mainly 6/7 days a week, with racing experience ranging from five miles to marathons. We are therefore committed, 'serious' runners, who: 'regularly (run) further and faster than fitness for health would demand' (Smith, 2000: 190). Our distance racing and more importantly, in terms of time commitment and volume, our training constitute life-long practices which demand *routinized* engagement.

By a strange inter-corporeal coincidence, we both sustained knee injuries during the very same week of dark-evening, November training and made the rapid decision to turn this collective misfortune into a research project. Data were collected over a 2 year period, on our injury its rehabilitation and recovery process, via highly detailed individual injury/training/research logs made up of field notes and audio recordings. The great majority of the data was collected within the environs of a small town in a predominantly rural county in the south west of England. In what follows the author is Log 1, his co-researcher Log 2. The data were analysed for emergent themes using a form of the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006). We then compiled Log 3 which was a collaborative endeavour detailing these joint themes analytically. The process of identifying and then coding the themes evolved from a combination of sources. Firstly, there were our initial research questions about how we were adapting to being injured and not being able to run. Secondly, previously held theoretical and conceptual resources, principally symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. So for example themes which respectively revealed identity concerns and how identity was constructed. Thirdly, as the data analysis progressed we became increasingly aware of our athletic 'stock of knowledge at hand' (Schutz, 1967) which we had previously taken for granted when running. Further analysis indicated that a lot of the latter was founded upon sensory perceptions which produced coded themes: seeing, hearing, touching, moving etc. The documentation of this was then added to our initial main analytical task, that of recording our response to being injured. The

ethnographic data which follow later in this paper constitute part of the aforementioned stock of knowledge.

### **Interrogating the Data Conceptually**

Analytic depiction of the ethnographic data is made using conceptual insights from two principle theoretical resources anchored in cognitive and pragmatist sociologies respectively. Zerubavel's (1991, 1997) work on cognitive sociology illustrates how people create and maintain divisions within their social reality. His work focuses upon how different social domains are established by the construction of particular space-place and cognitive boundaries. Within these domains certain roles are routinely occupied and identities substantiated which results in particular thought processes predominating. So there are cognitive, corporeal and interactional *transitions* (Van Gennep, 1960) to be made between paid work, distance running and domesticity. These domains are bounded by particular places, spaces, times, and role performance. As Zerubavel (1991:16) notes: 'In fact, we basically experience reality as a "space" made up of discrete mental fields delineated by mental "fences" that define and separate them from one another'. As these boundaries are approached individuals need to do transitional work to pass through or over them. Zerubavel (1991) stresses that such movement requires a jump between categories of experience. He also notes (1991:24) that crossing between those categories 'therefore requires significant mental effort...' The greater the difference between categories the more of a cognitive leap is required. Much of that work consists of particular routines made up of sequences of practices which are used to move embodied consciousness between one domain and another. In the case at hand those of leaving paid employment, preparing for leisure (sport) and then returning from the latter to domestic life.

Whilst there is preparing for and leaving training, there is also the actual daily routine of training sessions themselves. Further analytic purchase on this routine is gained by making use of additional 'key insights' from the 'flexible framework' made up of the pragmatist works of Mead, Dewey and James (Shilling, 2008:5), which underpins the sociology of symbolic interaction. Within this framework, Shilling (2008) portrays a number of useful concepts for analyzing the routine

of running itself. Firstly, building on Dewey (1980), he points out (p.10) that it is via the *senses* that individuals interact with, and gain information from, their immediate environment. The empirical field logs which follow, depicting routine training, are comprised principally of such sensory based data. Secondly, he notes (p.12) the central importance of *habit* to pragmatist thought which has tended to be forgotten by contemporary sociology. Utilizing the three aforementioned theorists, Shilling defines habit as the subject's 'routinised modes of behavior that are more or less effective in 'joining' them to, and enabling them to manage, their surroundings' (p.12). Daily distance running constitutes such an embodied routine as training routes are covered via this 'habitual continuity' (p.12). A process within which sensory data is accumulated, interpreted, acted upon, evaluated in situ and after training. Having outlined the principle conceptual resources supporting the paper's ethnographic analysis, the routines of preparation for training, accomplishing the latter and subsequently leaving training for domesticity are now examined.

### **The Routine of Getting Ready**

As Segrave (2000: 61) notes: 'One of the sources of sport's enormous contemporary appeal is that it provides an escape, a brief and often intoxicating respite from the complexities and confusion of everyday life'. Hence, moving into that escape requires a routine of getting ready made up of particular practices which constitute the transitional work needed to facilitate the accomplishment of Zarubavel's (1991:24) 'leap'. In effect the routine practices function as a means of linking work to sport effecting movement from the former to the latter and they equate to Simmel's (1994: 7) concept of a 'bridge', with its emphasis on connecting rather than separating domains (see Brekhus, 2007, for the links between the thought of Zarubavel and Simmel). At the heart of these domains are particular role performances (worker /athlete/domestic partner), hence the usefulness of Simmel's metaphorical insights into movement in space which are focused at the level of identity. As Game (1998:48) says of Simmel: 'Whenever he is speaking about spatial forms he is speaking about experience, about a self in relation to the world'. Analysis of the ethnographic data revealed a number of different kinds of



bridging practices within the routine of getting ready to train. These started at our mutual university work places:

We have both become aware that we start getting into daily running way before we put on training shoes. It starts in our individual offices, with checks for weather conditions, the more likelihood of 'bad' weather, the more we are glancing out the window in the hour before we are due to finish work. Even with 'good' weather we still check as one of us is not too good at running in high temperatures. On one level this helps as weather conditions influence the amount and kinds of running kit we will put on or not. It also seems to be the start of our daily athletic head preparation so to speak, the start of getting our heads ready for the forthcoming discomfort which is always there in distance running. It's the first sign of us saying to ourselves 'gird your loins' because distance running is tough and it's even tougher when one is battling against freezing rain or soaring temperatures (Log 3 ).

Another perennial and mutual practice that occurred just before leaving work was urinating. At this point our urine was not just looked at but evaluated for its color. The lighter the urine the more hydrated and ready to run we were, whilst the darker our urine, the more we needed to hydrate quickly before we started to run so as to avoid running badly, or getting injured (usually via cramping muscles which can pull or tear). This is a practice which occurred not just in summer but also at other times of the year, given one can get dehydrated, when preoccupied by work pressures. Via these routine practices the focus of cognitive attention started to move from teaching and researching concerns to the thoroughly embodied concerns of athletic endeavor. Upon leaving the university campuses our separate commutes to home and home itself constituted a 'liminal' space (Van Gennep, 1960), both these contexts serving as *zones of transition* within which the identity of athlete began to take hold. For one of us the commute was by car and the other by foot, but in both cases there was a concern to generate a particular rhythm. The latter constituting a 'patterned energy-flow of action marked in the body by varied stress and

directional change; also marked by changes in the level of intensity, speed and duration' (Goodridge, 1999:43). Rhythm then organizes or shapes the flow of action, whilst simultaneously being part of that action and contains cognitive, emotional, physical and social accomplishments. A rhythm then had to be achieved so as to secure training time, in the face of all the social and domestic pressures which lay in wait within the home environment, and immediately outside of it. Propelled by that rhythm the transitional work for the author continued via the walk home:

I have realized I walk home quickly. Firstly, because I need to get home to organize things for tonight's training session. Secondly, I walk fast because I need to get 'up' for the forthcoming run, which means changing from being an academic, to being a distance runner. A lot of the time I just want to slump when I hit home after work. That is the last thing I need as I have to raise the energy level. Fast walking is not like running, but what it does require is a focus on muscles and tendons, and foot placement etc. That requires a change of focus from pre-dominantly head work at University. (Log 1).

In contrast for my female training partner/researcher who had to commute by car, the process of moving into the distance running role was facilitated by playing music during the drive home. In particular upbeat 'rock' was routinely played, with the conscious intent to raise both mood and muscular tempo. The habitual shaking of the head, tapping of the steering wheel, humming and singing lyrics served to facilitate movement away from the work self. Thus, starting to relinquish the overwhelmingly static physicality of that academic role and again generating a level of rhythmic impetus for the run to come. Once home was reached first by the author a routine of preparation to make possible the forthcoming training session was initiated. This routine had to be accomplished in around 30 minutes, before the other training partner arrived home from work, so again the momentum was rapid and an up tempo rhythm maintained. The routine comprised of preparing the evening meal, making the next day's take- to work -lunch and organizing the evening sessions training kit. All this accomplished to modern jazz as that filled the house helping create momentum :

Having rapidly made the evening grub and tomorrow's sandwiches I rush around the house collecting our mutual training gear stuck on radiators to dry or like today I have forgotten that it's been put in the wash, which necessitates a literal run up the stairs, to swear words, to get replacement clean kit. Coming down to root out dirty trainers, lay out the kit for J and then get some fluid and fuel for the session ready. I perennially look at my watch and go 'phew!', usually just as J's car pulls up outside our house. (Log 1)

Getting organized meant laying out a series of objects for use which become incorporated into our running corporeality, what Merleau-Ponty (1945: 176) has called 'body auxiliaries'. The use and ingestion of these objects having a dual purpose. Firstly, there was a material purpose in that the objects were used to facilitate the forthcoming training session and secondly they constituted further symbolic links to the athletic world, as the following log extract illustrates:

In through the front door and drop my bag crammed full of student essays, clunk! A few quick words with J and then I grab the small handful of dried fruit and glass of apple juice he has kindly laid out for me. Fuel up for the session! Peel off the work clothes and struggle into my habitual two sports bras and haul on tights, socks, cap, top and trainers, all of which he has thoughtfully placed by my chair. There is always a moment of inertia between pulling off the day clothes and putting on the training kit, a moment of hesitation, but as soon as I start putting on the kit, that hesitation is gone. The feel of the kit is so different from the work gear, much more athletic and streamlined - as if another me emerges once I am kitted up. (Log 2)

Above the running identity in action begins to emerge increasingly as athletic clothing and footwear 'forms a literal and metaphorical extension of the self' (Woodward, 2007: 5). Other 'body auxiliaries' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945:176) which helped accomplish the symbolic work of transformation included our athletic watches which we donned so as to time our training sessions and different parts of them usually termed 'efforts' or 'splits'. Additionally, the final act

before leaving the house was to pick up a set of particular house keys hung on a distinctive key ring, known to us as 'the training keys' which were not used for non-running occasions. Thus, the routine of getting ready was then constructed by the use of everyday 'bridges' (Simmel, 1994: 7): food, drink, clothing, footwear, keys, watches, music, which all interacted and had a cumulative material but also symbolic impact upon us. So for example training shoes allowed us to run but the very dirt on them, prior to each run symbolized previous runs and efforts and the efforts to come.... In a similar fashion our specialized watches were there to record our forthcoming 'efforts', but also symbolized what kind of particular space-time nexus we were heading into. One which demanded specific physiological, psychological and interactional commitments, and the watches invoked 'us to adopt our destination's mindset' (Nippert-Eng, 1996:139). Constructing and using this routine of getting ready accelerated us through the liminal spaces of mutual commuting and our house. The latter for this period between work and training constituted a zone of transition which we did not so much inhabit but 'move through' propelled by the tempo of events we collectively generated. This routine rhythm was individually, collectively and consciously created as we were both well aware that without it moving into training would be a much more difficult process, after long days at the university workplace. Having examined getting ready for training sessions the latter will now be focused upon.

### **The Routine Embodiment of Daily Distance Running**

There is a specific routine embodiment to distance running training as serious athletes cover large amounts of mileage. As a consequence runners develop a particular sensory habituation (Dewey, 1980; Shilling, 2008: 10-12). Analysis of the ethnographic data revealed two kinds of practice-based processes evident within routine daily training. The first of these are the sensuous practices of doing distance running and like lots of everyday activity these develop over time. Hence, runners learn to touch, see, smell, hear and move over their routes in very particular ways. The second of these is an ongoing, primarily sensory based evaluation, of the quality of the runs. These two processes when combined construct a routine that provides runners with what

Bourdieu (1990) might have termed a 'feel for the game' of distance running. To turn to the routine practices of sensory perception the most immediate sensation is *touch*. Paterson (2007: 2-3) has defined touch as 'a world of movement and exploration, of non-verbal communication', embracing the 'immediacy of our everyday, embodied tactile-spatial experience'. Thus, via their feet runners constantly improvise their movement, 'tuning in' (Ingold, 2004: 332) to the complex variations of terrain and weather, accumulating intelligence about their chosen route and instantaneously putting that corporeal intelligence into practice via their next footfall.

Parts of the snow have been walked upon and those bits have frozen into ridges, then this morning another heavy snowfall has covered them. So this afternoon it was a question of feeling one's way around the route, searching with ones feet for those obstacles upon which one can turn an ankle easily. If one hits one at speed the least it is, is so painful! It is as if my feet are extending beyond their normal size. I know that is some kind of illusion, but that is what it feels like. The forefeet reach out 'searching' for safety with each stride across the fields. (Log 1)

Intimately connected to this haptic routine is a *visual* one for as Merleau-Ponty (1945) has pointed out, the haptic and visual senses are often inseparable in much of daily life. Runners develop a shared 'point of view' (Lee and Ingold, 2006:83), constituting a specific skilled ocular practice. They see in particular 'active ways' (Emmison and Smith, 2000: 185), and their concerns focus upon hazardous features of terrain (e.g. rough ground, potholes, tree roots, pine cones, uneven pavement, etc) , problematic people (e.g. teenage groups (see Smith, 1997), drunks, dangerous car drivers, cyclists on pavements) and their affiliates (small errant children, wayward prams and particularly dogs). All of which experienced runners know can cause annoyance or injury, the latter having the potential to wreck athletic performance. Hence, a routine practice of visual surveillance for hazards ensues:

How do we safely negotiate the snow wrapped landscape? Snow is ok, as it's just hard work running in it. The real problem is avoiding what is underneath it, ridges and ruts which have frozen there. Part of what we do is to look for signs of where the ground is undisturbed, where there have been no walkers. That is because they cause divots which then freeze in shape. The only way you can tell that is by seeing where the very tips of the grass are still poking up through the snow in a pristine fashion and then try and run there. One ends up taking a very zig zag route, but it works and we have found we can train safely using that method. Better than ice bound streets! (Log 3)

As Feld (1996: 97) has pointed out 'acoustic knowing' is a crucially important skill for safely negotiating the environment. Distance runners thus mundanely use their powers of hearing, constantly *listening* to keep themselves safe when crossing traffic intersections or underpasses. Also to locate predatory dogs who invariably approach from the rear, as well as to evaluate the performance of themselves, their training partners and competitors. In the last three forms this involves an auditory evaluation of respiratory patterns as physiological processes combine with the socially mediated process of categorizing them (Lyon, 1997). Runners then become attuned to *how* they and others are breathing:

We both ran well today. Neither of us was making too much noise, as the breathing was smooth, even going up the hills it was well within us. At other times the breathing gets 'ragged', louder with more panting for that stuff called oxygen! How we are going is how we are breathing in a very fundamental way. (Log 1)

A further routine sensory practice involves runners in recognizing a particular set of *aromatic* features that constitute their immediate 'smellscape'. This olfactory intelligence is used by them to 'order the experience and understanding of space' (Classen et al., 1994: 97-98) through which they run. Thus, routes are experienced as a set of aromatic markers charting runners passage through habitually traversed terrain, the points at which odors are encountered simultaneously

marking both distances, pleasure and displeasure. The ethnographic data revealed a spectrum of such markers including: vehicle pollution, particular hay fever inducing blossoms, aroma from burger bars, dog crap (in hot weather) at trail crossing points, flare- offs from steel works and discharges from breweries:

Today we ran down through the meadow heading for the footpath that links to the canal. The sun was shining and the meadow had been recently cut, so there was a warm sweetness to it, which made passing through a kind of primeval pleasure, as we moved with a high knee lift, kicking up the fresh-cut grass, which then gave off even more sweetness; clouds of natural perfume for free ! (Log 2)

These haptic, visual, auditory and olfactory practices are combined in a sensory routine as runners move across their training routes. They are learnt via constant repetition until they become 'incorporated' (Leder, 1990: 30-32) into the embodied schemata of distance runners. Along with these are developed the practices of rhythm and timing. (Goodridge, 1999). Rhythm is itself dependent upon a skilled coordination of body parts which requires the development of a sense of timing, which runners learn via 'a ceaseless stream of kinesthesias, cutaneous and visceral sensations' (Leder, 1990:23):

Once we hit the required rhythm one can feel it and our individual and collective sense of timing is pretty accurate. We know what running eight minutes a mile feels like, or even sevens on a very good day on a flat road given we are now both veterans! So whilst we carry watches we actually know by our bodies anyway. I used to know what fives were by feel but I've lost that sense now as I have slowed over the years. A lot of the feel is how your lungs and legs are at the particular rhythm of the session, different ones have different feels and once you are experienced you equate that set of feelings with the tempo. (Log 1)

The second practice-based process which was evident within our training routine was a perennial evaluation of ongoing performance. Runners are perpetually aware of their corporeal form, known in subcultural terms as their 'going'. This is constantly evaluated using a primarily sensory

based criteria founded on binary oppositions. These constitute the texture of muscles and tendons in terms of their flexibility or rigidity; the feeling of muscles in terms of their heaviness or lightness; energy levels in terms of capacity to able to hold a particular tempo or not (thus rhythm), and the alignment of their posture in terms of it being compact or relatively disjointed. Lastly, this evaluation also focused upon the degree of an internal dialogue which reflected upon the 'going', with little internal dialogue reflecting ease of movement and much internal dialogue reflecting 'dys-ease' (Leder, 1990) of movement:

It is interesting how different our heads are on different runs. We both acknowledge that when sessions are tough there is much more internal chatter than when we are coping with the sessions better. It's as though duff sessions are full of chatter, with the mind focusing on the problems such as fatigue, tight muscles, sore and stiff tendons, burning lungs. In contrast when we are running well and handling the sessions more efficiently there is a lot less chatter internally. That's not to say we are totally silent, but rather what chatter there is tends to be of the 'this is a good run today, Bud' or 'we are really flying now' ilk. (Log 2)

The aforementioned amalgam of practices was mundanely used as a resource to evaluate each particular session as it progressed and in its aftermath. As Blumer (1969:163) has observed of people's objectifications from the sensory domain in general, they constitute the 'means of transacting business with [their] environment'. So runs were placed along a continuum of three categories: 'crap, ok and brill(iant)', constituting the conceptual elements of a kind of 'folk theory' used in our attempt to 'capture patterns in what is happening' (Rip, 2006:349). Thousands of training miles resulted in this routine of combined sensory practices and their ongoing evaluation becoming habitual, and as Shilling (2008:15) notes when expounding on Dewey's pragmatist position on embodiment: 'Habits reside in and shape the deepest recesses of the embodied subject'. The result being that distance runners can be truly said to inhabit their sporting role via their everyday training routines. Having analytically portrayed the sensory based routine of daily training and it's evaluation the narrative now turns to the routine of leaving training.



## **The Routine of Departing the Athletic World**

Upon finishing training sessions and returning to our house a transition (Van Gennep 1960) from the athletic world to the domestic domain needed to be effected. However, initially when entering the house athletic concerns remained dominant:

We do have our little patterns, as we can be little creatures of routine. That's our joke, as we DO have training habits but also are somewhat 'little' at least relative to the size of most of the UK population! So, for example, as soon as we come in through the door after training we always drink apple juice and eat a banana each. Immediately we are re-fuelling and re-hydrating as we know (from running mags and experience) that is the most effective time to 'replen' [replenish] in terms of recovering from training. We therefore have one eye on recovering from the session, and the other eye on being able to train effectively again tomorrow. (Log 2)

So whilst there is a functional utility to the above practice there is also again a *symbolic resonance* (see Nippert Eng, 1996:129) attached to it, as we had finished running but immediately were considering the next day's training session, indicating our future commitment to the athletic role. Then the process of transition proper started with us divesting our training clothing for other clothing. In part there was a pragmatic purpose for this as one is often sweaty, wet and muddy after training, but this clothing change also acted as another 'bridge' (Simmel, 1994) facilitating departure from the zone of athletic effort. The replacement clothing consisted of athletic kit which was no longer used for training, on the grounds of being too worn, deficient in terms of its technical qualities (waterproofing, wicking, etc), and too old fashioned also! We perceived this kit as both old and comfortable and it constituted a kind of half-way house clothing. Donning it invoked a recognition that the hard work of training had finished for the day. Clad thus we engaged in a twenty minute routine of slow stretching, elongated all the major muscles and tendons in an attempt to maintain mobility, which running diminishes. At the same time we talked and watched the television evening news:

We have noticed at first when we go into stretching we are still really in athletic mode. That's because our talk is at first about the session we have just done. About how we were going, about if we ran into anyone we know (other athletes) and about difficulties encountered. Like aggressive dogs, tight muscles or nagging tendons. That kind of chat then begins to diminish gradually and we will pick up on some item on the TV news, usually something political and engage with it, and then as we are finishing stretching we will start to chat about domestic things like the dreaded 'we have to go to the supermarket' announcement by one of us. So there is a gradual tapering off, or perhaps falling away of athletics. (Log 3)

During this period our attention became initially divided between an athletic practice (stretching) and non-athletic concerns. In effect we phased out our involvement in the athletic role by relinquishing full athletic movement, moving to a partial variation (stretching). We then eventually engaged in cognitive and interactional work which started to substantiate our domestic selves. Habitually this role crossing boundary was fully recognised by both of us via various 'performative utterances' (Turner, 1975) focused on domestic practice, the most common being some variation on suggesting sustenance, such as one of us asking the other 'grub (food) time?' It was at this juncture that the process of 'transformative movement' (Van Gennep, 1960:10) from athletic to domestic role was finally completed via this routine of passing from one to the other.

### **The Permeability of Domains**

Further analysis of the ethnographic data revealed that whilst transformation between the domains of work, sport and domesticity was accomplished, the latter were never absolutely sealed off from each other. For whilst the *overwhelming* focus of individual and collective attention in each domain was salient to it, there remained some attention present emanating from the other domains. As previously indicated (pp.7-9) consciousness of running matters arose in both participants work environments and commutes, whilst this was similarly so for their domestic environment. Thus, within the latter multiple pairs of training shoes were perennially

lined up expectantly next to kitchen doors, whilst training kit festooned room radiators, all of these being reminders of forthcoming athletic activity. In addition distance runners develop a particular 'somatic mode of attention' (Csordas, 1993) and post-training there still remained a sensory alertness to how our running bodies were feeling. So for example, the author is habitually alert to 'creaking' Achilles tendons when first rising in the morning, as past disregard of this indicator has led to injury and on occasion no running for months. Prior to the research work matters would rarely come to mind or into conversation when training. However, after the inception of the project, sociological abstractions used to analyse training inevitably intruded into that activity when doing it. So our leisure activity became impregnated by a consciousness of sociological work, which still arises on route today whether either researcher wants it to or not! Nippert-Eng (1996) has illustrated how different occupational groups differ in how integrated or divorced domestic and work activities are, hence the decision to analyse our sport, meant that inexorably our domestic environment also began to be permeated by the activities of work. Thus training shoes in the kitchen, viewed through the sociological lens were not just material objects but simultaneously symbolic ones, impregnated with meaning accumulated over lengthy individual and joint commitment to athletic endeavour.

### **Finishing Line Thoughts**

Some time ago Highmore (2004: 319) called for a 'giving voice to the dense and often invisible routine worlds of the everyday', invisibility caused by the general social science trend of focusing upon dramatic and exceptional social processes rather than small and routine ones (Shove, 2003). This paper has portrayed three quotidian sporting routines in their normally taken for granted density of mundane practices. It has examined what Moran (2007:3) has conceptualised as the 'infra-ordinary: that part of our lives that is so routine as to become almost invisible, like infrared light'. What it has revealed are a series of routines composed of sensory, cognitive and interactional practices, which are accomplished as daily distance running training sessions are prepared for, completed, and departed from. These practices have physical and symbolic functions, which work to produce *transformation* (Van Gennep, 1960) for the participants. It was

via these practices that Zerubavel's (1991:16) 'mental fences' were passed over as the occupational role was relinquished for an athletic role and then eventually for a domestic one. These 'bridging' (Simmel, 1994) practices were repeated daily establishing in pragmatist terms a 'habitual continuity' (Shilling, 2008:12). The interlinking of this series of practices into three routines created an overall daily routine (O'Dell, 2009), which in the case at hand, allowed the accomplishment of an amateur sporting activity in the face of countervailing work and domestic pressures on time.

As Zerubavel (1981) has pointed out social life is essentially rhythmic and particular routines manifest their own particular rhythms, which are constructed and maintained by everyday practices which are interactive and display some degree of coordination (Shove et.al., 2009). The rhythmic routine of getting ready for training saw a gradual investment of energy via practices which focused upon running concerns. The individual and collective tempo of the routine of preparation building momentum (Adler, 1981) to the point of starting to train. From that point on the rhythmic nature of the training routine changed, according to the aim of the particular training session (endurance, speed-endurance, strength-endurance) itself and the terrain ran over (rough, smooth, flat, hilly, or mixed). The training routine then had a changing sensory rhythm which was contingent and habitually evaluated (Dewey, 1980; Shilling, 2008) by the participants. Relinquishing the athletic role manifested a gradual reduction of rhythmic intensity, as the routine was eventually transformed via domestic practices. One of the interesting findings about the routines portrayed, is that whilst there were found to be the occasional individual differences in the form the practices took, the latter were nevertheless deployed by both athletes and thus constituted part of a collective routine (Ehn and Lofgren, 2009). So for example, the differing modes of the participants mutual commute meant a difference in the means by which the up-tempo rhythm of the routine of getting ready to train was established (pp.8-9), but established it was for both athletes.

This paper is an ethnographic case which has examined the cognitive, interactional and sensory features of transformative quotidian routines in sport, plus those other linked routines which

make sporting activity possible and which hitherto remain under-examined. They all constitute mundane 'ordinary work' which Sacks (1984) has pointed out demands considerable effort of people. Therefore, the routine social processes which construct the substantive social order of sporting and non-sporting experience via repeated mundane occasions (on this general point see Lynch, 2001) are thus well worth examining analytically. What are the everyday routines of sport parachutists as they prepare to jump and cricketers as they prepare to bat? How does one move from being a chemical engineer to being a table tennis player and then to being a mother? There is then a 'fertile field' (Ehn and Lofgren, 2009: 101) of presently taken for granted transformative sporting, occupational and domestic routines awaiting the ethnographic eye!

### **Acknowledgments**

Thanks are due once again to Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson who collected the data with the author.

### **Funding**

The research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for profit sectors.

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