

Alison Wasserfall, South Africa

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Loved our stay at Buffalo Gorge, spent long days mountain biking, running, hiking and drinking out the springs. Had a lovely day picnic with my 3 year old daughter at the cascades. Was privileged to see Kudu, Blesbok, Chameleon and Tortoise on the farm. Pet friendly too. Wild camp pool is amazing for a quick dip during exercise excursions. Campsite/ablutions are rustic and for bush lovers.

## Testimony of Benefits of Trail Running by Alison Wasserfall

*Credentials: 2016 21km Sani Stagger(1<sup>st</sup> Lady), 2016 Hilton Night Trail Run (3<sup>rd</sup> Lady), 2016 Giba 10km night run (2<sup>nd</sup> Lady), 2016 Run for Bella(1<sup>st</sup> Lady), 2015 Giba 12km Trail Run(1<sup>st</sup> Lady), Winner of Ballito, Umhlanga, Piggly Wiggly, Shongweni, Middelburg, Uvongo and Thousand Hills Park Runs, 9 Rhodes Ultra Trail Runs, 4 Two Oceans, 3 Comrades, 3 Mont-Aux-Sources, 3 Baviaanskloof Marathons, 2 Sani Staggers, 1 Turkey Marathon*

I started running at the age of 7, doing the local 2km time trials and school cross country, by the age of 12 I had joined my local running club, Hillcrest Villagers and participated in my first 10km road race. From then on I did the maximum road running distance I was allowed for my age, up till the age of 19 when I did my first Two Oceans. I came out of my first Two Oceans with an ITB injury as well as being the 7<sup>th</sup> Junior overall. I did my first comrades at the age of 24. I find my recovery time for a road run, as well as the joint pain, to be much more severe than from a similar distance trail run. In the 25 years that I have now been running, I have needed to see a physiotherapist a mere 3 times. All 3 times were leading up to (high road mileage), or after a long road race. I have completed 9 Rhodes Ultra Trail Runs(52km) and not, after a single one of these ultra trail runs, have I had an injury.

I believe that because of the varying surface which you run on trail runs, you build up a wider variety of muscle strengths, which result in less injuries due



to stronger overall muscle control. However, if you are new to trail running you must run with caution as before your ankles strengthen, there can be the danger of twisting your ankle by placing it on the uneven surface with applied body weight. With road running, your foot strikes the ground in the same position, for hours at a time, this repetition leads to more wear and tear on single muscle groups and tendons, with trail running the way your foot strikes will vary considerably, depending on the ever changing terrain. I also believe that running on the road is like spending hours running on hard rock bed, whereas the ground on a trail is much softer and therefore prevents, and prolongs, the health and strength of impact on your knees. Lastly for me, my

greatest advantage to running on the trail is simply being out there in nature, enjoying the fresh air away from the city pollution, enjoying the views and animal sightings as well as keeping my mind busy on the right line to take over the trail. Road running can become tedious and boring to me, trail running has you focusing your attention on the path ahead, as you never know what is around the next bend in the trail.