

# Welcome to Woodlands Online

## Preparation the first step in Woodlands resident's 100-mile journey

by Evan Koch  
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THE WOODLANDS, Texas - Ronnie Delzer has a passion for pushing his body beyond its limits, a trait all but necessary for completing the endurance challenges he enthusiastically pursues. The 34-year old has been running for as long as he can remember and has steadily completed marathons and triathlons since his days on the East Carolina University track and field team.

Delzer loves running and triathlons and the community around endurance sports in The Woodlands, where he resides and trains with Finish Strong Racing. He loves preparing for marathons and the grueling 140.6-mile IRONMAN triathlon, a test of physical endurance and mental toughness that requires completing a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and marathon-length run of 26.2 miles. He also loves the pursuit of the next challenge.

But Delzer is also a father of two with a busy work schedule. He needed a break from the time it took to train.

"I needed a new challenge, but something that was less time-consuming than training for an IRONMAN," Delzer said.

Ultra marathons were the answer for Delzer. An "ultra" as it is simply known in the endurance sport community, is any running event longer than a traditional marathon.

"Ultra running became the new challenge for me," Delzer said. "I have learned a lot about myself during the short time I've been involved in ultras, so it's been very motivating and rewarding. There really is no limit to the distance, so you can run as far as your body will allow."

That is the tricky part—finding out what the body will allow, especially when it will assuredly be pushed to its limits.

The 50km ultras Delzer started running were comparable distance-wise to the traditional marathon. But when Delzer set his sights on the USA 100-mile trail championship Rocky Raccoon Race in Huntsville earlier this year, he knew a transition needed to take place in his training.

"A 100-mile ultra is a totally different challenge compared to a normal marathon or triathlon," said Brett Singer, M.S., R.D., C.S.S.D, L.D., a dietitian at the Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute - The Woodlands. "The training runs are consistently longer. When athletes have to train that much, recovery is imperative, yet the amount of time available to eat and recover is less."

Delzer turned to a familiar resource prior to his 100-mile race training. In 2012, Delzer followed the advice of his coach, Dana Lyons, and underwent testing at the Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute - Texas Medical Center to aide in his preparation for the Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Texas. For the 100-miler, Delzer stayed close to home and visited [The Institute in The Woodlands](#).

At the Institute, Delzer underwent a body composition analysis, run lactate test and gait analysis with exercise physiologist and sport biomechanist Alyson Ruggiero, M.S., and visited with Singer to work on his nutrition.

"The information I left with was very valuable and I had a better understanding of my current fitness," Delzer said. "The results of the testing gave me instant information. The more current the testing and up-to-date results, the better opportunity you are going to have to continuously improve."

The test results prompted Delzer to alter his preparation in several areas. First, he needed more calories and carbohydrates per hour when training, so he started taking nutrition supplements every 30 minutes instead of every 45 minutes. He also tweaked his race day nutrition plan, which literally required eating on the run.

The gait analysis gave Delzer a better understanding of his biomechanics and how his form was affected as he fatigues. He was also given strength exercises to improve his body mechanics and the run lactate test helped determine the 8:30-mile pace he wanted to achieve in Huntsville.

"Having this knowledge gave me the confidence I needed to prepare for race day," Delzer said. "It allowed me to make the right decisions in training because I was more in tune with my body."

That knowledge paid dividends when it came time for Delzer's first 100-mile jaunt. He finished fifth among all competitors and third in the U.S. at the Rocky Raccoon Race, completing the run in 14 hours, 15 minutes and 53 seconds. His cumulative rest time during the race was 10 minutes.

"I get a lot of satisfaction pushing myself to my limits, whether it's 50km or completing my first hundred-miler," Delzer said. "It amazes me what your body will achieve on race day when you have properly trained and prepared for an event."

Delzer already has his next challenge in mind. He'll soon be ready to commit to the time it takes to train for a triathlon and has set his sights on competing in the IRONMAN Triathlon World Championship in Kona, Hawaii.

He also knows that his first step on the journey to Kona will be another round of testing at The Institute.

"Performance testing will always be a part of my training plan for endurance races," Delzer said. "It allows me to strive for peak performance and reach my goals. Every staff member that helped me during my visit to The Institute has been a pleasure to work with and has helped me reach my goals."

Keep up with Ronnie Delzer's training [here](#). To schedule an appointment at the Memorial Hermann IRONMAN Sports Medicine Institute-The Woodlands, call [713-8970-7930](tel:713-8970-7930) or visit the link provided below.

[ironman.memorialhermann.org](http://ironman.memorialhermann.org).

