

Couple run Dubai balcony marathon to beat coronavirus blues

29 March 2020

A South African couple who ran a marathon on the balcony of their Dubai apartment, streaming it online, plan to take the project global to help people shake off the coronavirus blues.

Collin Allin, 41, and wife Hilda covered the 42.2-kilometre (26-mile) distance by running more than 2,100 laps of their 20-metre (yard) long balcony from dawn on Saturday.

A stopwatch provided by the couple shows they covered the distance in five hours, nine minutes and 39 seconds.

"We did it ... #balconymarathon," Allin said on Instagram, congratulating his wife on her first ever [marathon](#) and thanking the virtual crowd that cheered them on.

"Thank you for all the love and support for doing something silly... was great to have you all along for the ride," he said.

The couple's 10-year-old daughter Geena acted as race director, putting up signs marking "start" and "turn around" and providing her parents with water and snacks as well as inspirational music.

Allin said he planned to organise a "bigger, global and more inclusive run next" where people who are under lockdown but keen to stretch their legs can join for a few kilometres or more.

"This is about giving people something else to think about," Allin told AFP. "It's about getting people to connect, as everyone is worried about the impact of coronavirus."

The pandemic has wiped out international sporting schedules and triggered lockdowns that have limited options for outdoor exercise in many countries, but enterprising people have found ways to fit in a workout.

Elisha Nochomovitz, a 32-year-old who lives near the French city of Toulouse, ran a marathon on his balcony which measures just seven metres.

He reportedly managed the feat in six hours and 48 minutes, nearly double his best marathon finish time.

The United Arab Emirates, of which Dubai is a member, has imposed a Thursday to Sunday nighttime lockdown to allow for outdoors and public transport sanitation operations.

With some 468 cases of the novel [coronavirus](#) and two deaths, it has also been promoting a "stay home" campaign, a message lit up on top of Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower.

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