

Fly Girl

*Professional runner **Kara Goucher** is arguably the biggest female running star of our generation. So what's a day like as a marathon celebrity? We headed to Kara's hometown of Boulder, Colo.—and followed her around from daybreak to dinnertime—to find out what helps her soar and what keeps her grounded. Space-age treadmills, four-legged races and train tracks are involved. But enough with the spoilers...check out Kara's day in photos for a true look at her life.*

BY JESSIE SEBOR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT DRAPER



Kara starts her day with a run—of course! This morning, she performs a solo speed session of 300-, 200- and 100-meter repeats. Coming back from an injury earlier this year, Kara, like any other runner, has struggled to get back into shape. “We did our first re-intro to speed last week and it was not very pretty, but this was a huge improvement. I felt good!” she says.

“When you get into the marathon grind, your form starts to fall apart.” Even though Kara’s training for a 26.2-mile race, her coach includes shorter speed sessions (even 100-meter sprints) to encourage a powerful stride.



This year, Kara moved her family from Oregon back to Boulder—where she and husband Adam attended college. “I didn’t even remember how beautiful the setting was here. You come around the bend for the homestretch and you see the Flatirons,” she says of the track she trained on in college. “It’s been awesome being back.”





Kara and her husband, Adam, are renting out a downtown condo in Boulder while their house is being built. Luckily, there's (just) enough room for all their shoes.



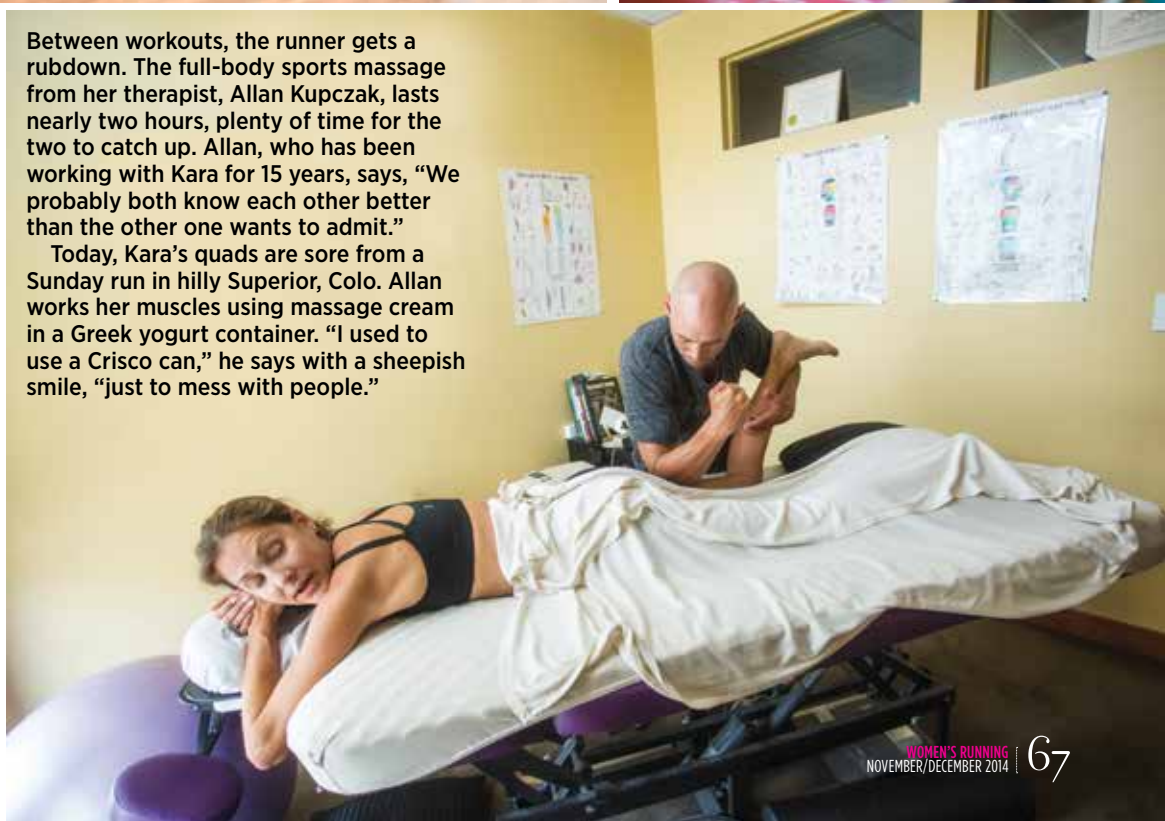
A quick shower later, Kara eats an early lunch (chicken wrap and kale chips) while catching up on email.



Upon moving back to Boulder, Kara started working with Heather Boroughs and Mark Wetmore, her former teammate and coach (respectively) at the University of Colorado. When we asked what makes Kara such a special runner, Heather replied: her talent, her competitive nature and her love of running. "She's never had trouble staying motivated—and that's pretty special."

Between workouts, the runner gets a rubdown. The full-body sports massage from her therapist, Allan Kupczak, lasts nearly two hours, plenty of time for the two to catch up. Allan, who has been working with Kara for 15 years, says, "We probably both know each other better than the other one wants to admit."

Today, Kara's quads are sore from a Sunday run in hilly Superior, Colo. Allan works her muscles using massage cream in a Greek yogurt container. "I used to use a Crisco can," he says with a sheepish smile, "just to mess with people."





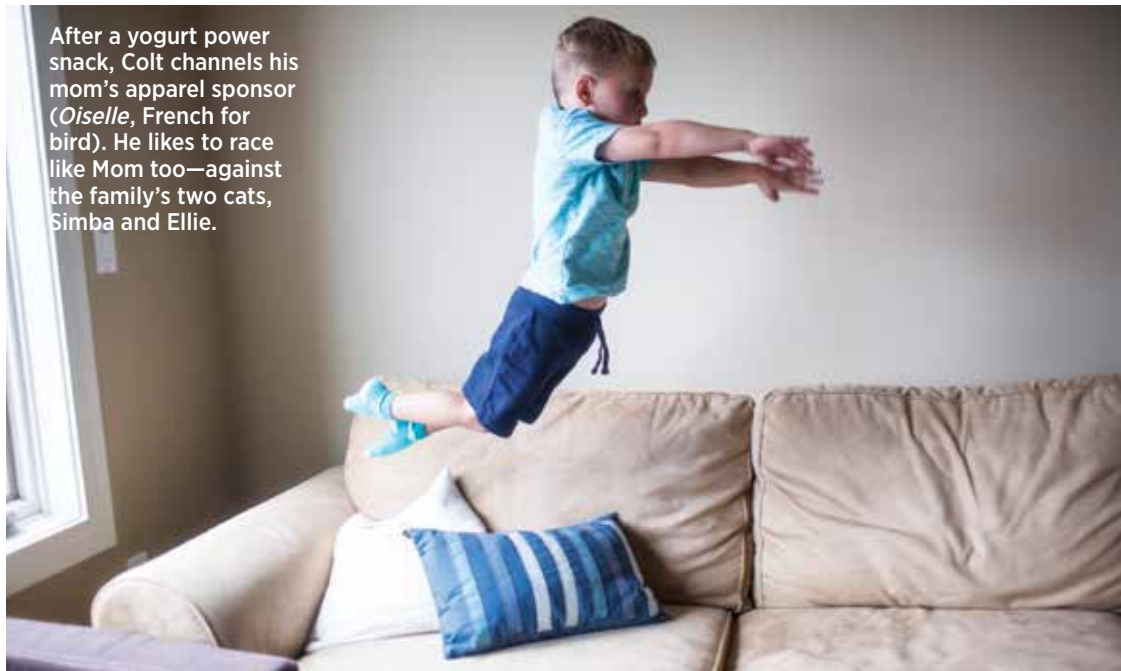
Kara and her 3-year-old son, Colt, prep veggies for dinner. (Kara gets the big knife.) “We like stir-fries and pasta with stuff piled on top or quinoa—nothing fancy.”

After a documentary binge last year—“Food, Inc.,” “Forks Over Knives,” “We watched them all!”—Kara and Adam decided to go vegan but soon realized this wouldn’t work for her training. “But what we took away from it was to make sure we get plenty of vegetables all the time, and to use meat more as flavor than the meal itself.”

Kara’s clan is really into making smoothies with tons of spinach—and to balance out the green drinks, there’s the cheese drawer. “I love cheese in all forms: Parmesan cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese, mozzarella cheese.”



Afternoon is playtime for Kara and Colt. His current obsession is trains. He's hoping for a freight car for his birthday. "How old are you going to be?" Kara asks. "Really good!" says Colt.



After a yogurt power snack, Colt channels his mom's apparel sponsor (*Oiselle*, French for bird). He likes to race like Mom too—against the family's two cats, Simba and Ellie.



When your career is based on your body's performance, pregnancy can be a tricky proposition. "Being a female athlete, there's never a good time. But it got to the point where I felt there was more for me in my life," Kara says. "Aside from a couple meltdowns when he was a baby and I was trying to get back into shape, I've never looked back. It was the best decision I ever made."

She says the hardest thing about being an athlete-mom is the lack of sleep, relying on rest during naptime with Colt. "The recovery and being able to sleep in on days I don't have practice, those days are gone."

Fly Girl

Kara's afternoon workout is a run on the AlterG anti-gravity treadmill at the University of Colorado. The device uses air pressure to allow runners to work out at a lower percentage of bodyweight. "It's a really cool tool to have," Kara says. "If it's longer than 8 miles, I'll listen to music." The college athletes have also set up a DVD player in the small room that houses the treadmill—but Kara says she never touches it. "I just like thinking."



The sun's going down on the drizzly day, and Kara calls Adam to see if he's home. Cheerleading camp, held at the field house, is also commencing for the evening, and Kara is followed by a group of ribbon-wearing teenagers.



"This is actually my happiest time of the day. It's just me and these boys," Kara says as she heads home for the night. **WR**