

## Take Your Time at the Laguna Phuket International Marathon™

**Eco-marathoner, Hajime Nishi, philosophises on a way for runners to connect instead of compete.**

Since when was running all about personal bests, the niftiest gadgets, or what's in the goodie bag? At a time when more and more people across Asia are joining the running scene, Nishi's philosophy is timely and promotes an accessible approach to long distance running. For him it's all about making new friends, enjoying the scenery and promoting responsible running.



Hajime Nishi has been a regular participant at the Laguna Phuket International Marathon, and is one runner who does not keep his eyes on the clock, GPS or heart rate monitor. He prefers a go-slow philosophy as part of his eco-marathoning lifestyle. "Slow running is beautiful, accessible and can be eco-friendly" says Nishi, who until recently clocked up a marathon each weekend across the globe to promote his eco-marathoning philosophy. "The slow running philosophy can also be applied outside of the running scene, to those who are aware of the environment, respect humanity and promote peace and want to contribute to creating a healthy planet for future generations."

When asked about his finishing times Nishi earnestly responded that his 'best' time for a marathon was about seven hours, and his worst time was around four and a half hours. Now if that's not enough to turn a regular runner's world upside down then I don't know what is. Whilst Nishi may often be amongst the last runners to complete a marathon he's not deliberately last. "I can't guarantee what time I will do on a certain day in a certain race. That's not my concern," he declares. "My main interest during a marathon is to enjoy it as much as possible. Sometimes I'll stop to talk to cows, take pictures of flowers or beautiful views, encourage other runners, and talk to volunteers to share my slow running philosophy."

"I'm sure that this type of running is not for everyone," advises Nishi, "but I do believe my unique approach has enabled me to complete my first 1,000 marathons across the world without pushing myself beyond my limit. I think many people will appreciate this different attitude towards running at a time when there is greater attention towards balance in life and some believe we need to slow down a little bit to make life more meaningful."

In an attempt to determine the 'eco-friendliness' of sports events around the world Nishi has developed an Ecomarathon International Evaluations (EIE) ratings system. Events are graded against a matrix of 34 criteria in seven elements, such as environment, cultural exchange, management, safety, convenience, commemoratives and fairness. Nishi reports on his experiences to an international audience via his website so that others can make informed choices about which events they choose to support. "I believe the combination of a slow running philosophy' and my EIE rating will promote more connectedness rather than competition amongst runners and will hopefully lower the marathon bar to encourage more people to participate in running events".

**Laguna Phuket International Marathon™**  
[www.phuketmarathon.com](http://www.phuketmarathon.com)

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When he revisits an event it is re-evaluated - and yes it's possible for events to be both up and downgraded over time. An event will be graded favourably if running and vehicle traffic are well controlled, or if sufficient toilets are provided. If there are no rubbish bins at aid stations (encouraging littering) or the pre-race awards dinner is expensive for local participants these factors can downgrade the event. Similarly, events with cut-off times or 'sweeper' buses that discriminate against slower runners will find themselves marked down.

Nishi's unorthodox approach turns competitive marathon running on its head, and that, quite frankly is his aim. "If I give other runners a chance to overcome their 'small ego' to run fast or 'beat-that-guy' attitude then I'm happy."

### **[How you can be a responsible eco-runner](#)**

Runners are dependent on and appreciative of the great benefits of the natural environment such as fresh air and safe water. We are often the first to complain about air quality, pollution and waste at a running event, so take positive action - become a responsible runner by starting with the little things like: **re-using water bottles, disposing of trash properly, and voting with our feet and wallets when considering our events for the forthcoming season.**

***Take your time at the Laguna Phuket International Marathon - 13 June 2010. [www.phuketmarathon.com](http://www.phuketmarathon.com)***

***Read more about the Ecomarathon International Evaluations (EIE) ratings system at <http://ecomarathon.org/>***

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