



Right: Derrick Spafford and Sara Montgomery share a mutual passion for trail running

wedding last June.

The first test of the marriage came on their honeymoon when, instead of lounging around a luxurious hotel, they chose to fast-pack the Rideau Trail from Ottawa to Kingston: 50 kilometres a day, carrying 18-pound packs on their backs. Although injuries forced them to stop at 152 kilometres, neither regrets the decision to launch their married life with a run.

"It's what we both love to do, and we're so fortunate to be able to share something we enjoy this much," says Derrick, who has his own coaching and personal training business, Spafford Health & Adventure. An accomplished high school runner and later a coach at Ernestown Secondary School, he hasn't missed a day of running since 1989.

Sara didn't catch the bug until she was an adult living in Toronto. Completing her first marathon was a turning point, she says, and after meeting that challenge, there was no looking back. "Now I can't imagine life without running."

Unlike the Merkleys, although Sara and Derrick train together, they compete in races individually. "You want to do as well as you can and not hold the other person back," says Sara.

Covering between 80 and 200 kilometres a week together, the couple's favourite runs are in Frontenac Provincial Park north of Kingston. Both love the park's beautiful setting and variety of terrain. "Trails provide another whole aspect of running, in a natural environment," says Derrick. "You can go for 30 kilometres and not see another person!"

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Sara Montgomery and Derrick Spafford share the Merkleys' love of running together, but on even rougher terrain. The Yarker couple met three years ago when Sara enrolled in a clinic at the Running Room, where Derrick was manager. Soon their mutual passion for trail running kindled more romantic feelings, culminating in an outdoor