

Bonus episode #110 - Too good to be true

Episode description

In this episode, Andrew talks about the pros and cons of running's growing popularity. He highlights the challenges runners face, especially the difficulty of finding good running shoes due to high demand. Andrew shares a personal story about trying to save money by purchasing discounted shoes online, only to discover they were counterfeits. Listen to hear about his experience with these fake shoes, the frustrations of marathon sign-ups, and other downsides of the running boom.



Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello, everybody, and welcome to bonus episode number 110 of the Culips English Podcast. My name's Andrew. How's it going? I hope you're doing well, and I'll be your host and your English study buddy for today. So, in our bonus episode series, if you're new here, let me just quickly explain what I do. I tell you some stories from my everyday life. I'm a Canadian guy, but I live abroad in South Korea, and I hope that by listening to these stories, you will be able to B.I.G.B. That is the motto for this series, and it stands for build your English fluency, increase your cultural knowledge, grow your vocabulary, and ultimately become a clearer and better English communicator, B.I.G.B. So, if those are your goals with your English learning, then you're in the right place, and I think you will enjoy this series.

Before we get to my story, I have two important announcements to do right off the top here, guys. The first announcement is that this week only, for one week only, until Monday, July 22nd, we are having a big sale on Culips memberships. So, you can save 20% off a yearly Culips membership for this week only. It's an awesome opportunity to become a Culips member and to save some money at the same time. So, what you get when you're a member are study guides and interactive transcripts for all of our regular episodes. You'll also get access to our member-only series, which is called The Fluency Files, and we'll also be releasing a brand-new Fluency File episode very soon. I just finished one yesterday, actually. You'll get ad-free audio to all of our episodes, so you don't have to listen to announcements and ads like this one.

You'll also get access to the member-only area of our Discord server, and you'll be able to participate in the weekly small-group discussion classes that we have as well. So, you can listen to Culips and then talk about Culips with our staff and with other members of our Culips member community. So really, guys, what we do here at Culips is give you all of the tools that you need to improve your fluency, to reach your goals, to become a clearer and better communicator, and speak with confidence in English. So, this is a great opportunity to become a member at an affordable price, and to sign up, you can just follow the link that's in the description for this episode. If you're already a Culips member, well, first of all,

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thank you for signing up and becoming a member, but second of all, you can also take advantage of this sale. If you're a current yearly member, then you can renew your membership early at the sale price, or if you're a monthly member, you can switch over to a yearly membership and take advantage of the sale price.

And the second announcement that I have for you is especially for all of our listeners in Osaka, Japan. Guys, first of all, I have to say thank you for all of the people who emailed me to offer me help and support in planning our meetup that we're going to be having at the end of July here. And I have good news! Finally, we've decided about the venue and the time and the location. All of the details have been set, and now we are ready to share them with you. I'll put the link in the description for this episode so you can check out the details easily that way, but essentially, to tell you in advance here, the meetup will be happening on Tuesday, July 30th at 7 p.m. Space is limited, so if you would like to come, you do have to fill out an RSVP form, and I'll put the link for that form in the description for this episode, but of course, it's free to join, and I'd love it if you could make it to the Osaka meetup if you are in that area and available. So yeah, I'll see you in Osaka on July 30th.

And finally, guys, before I get started with my story, don't forget there's a free interactive transcript and vocabulary glossary for this episode for everyone. You can find the link to access that in the description for this episode, and if you're a Culips member, then we'll also include a comprehension quiz so you can test your knowledge about how much you were able to understand from listening to this episode, which will just give you a nice indication of your English listening skills and your English listening abilities, and it's kind of fun to do a quiz anyways, right? So yeah, a quiz as well if you are a Culips member, and you can find the link to access all of these tools just in the description for this episode.

And now that all of the announcements are out of the way, let's get started with my story this week about some pros and cons of running, and also about a rip-off. OK, let's get going.

Regular Culips listeners will know that I am crazy about running, and it's one of my favorite hobbies. I have many hobbies, but I have to say these days I am most obsessed with

running. I don't know why, but it's a lot of fun, it's good exercise, and I think I like the personal challenge of running. It's like you can set your own record and then always try and go faster and break your record, and I think I'm a really immature runner. Like I saw this little quiz online, it was actually a meme that one of my friends sent me this week, and it said, "How mature of a runner are you?" And it had all of these questions, and it was kind of like a quiz, and when I finished the quiz, I found out that I was a really immature runner, because a mature runner just enjoys running **for the sake of running**. They like getting outside and just going about their run, and yeah, just enjoying, just having a pleasant time outside doing some exercise. But for me, of course, I enjoy going outside and having a pleasant time doing some exercise, but I also love going fast, and I love setting new personal records and then trying to break those records. That's really exciting for me, and that classified me as an immature runner. So, I learned that about myself this week, that I'm an immature runner, but that's all right. That's like what gives me the motivation to run, I think.

And so, I spend a lot of time outside running. Right now, I am currently training for a marathon that I'm going to do in October. And when you're training for a marathon, usually, if you want to do it properly, and of course, I'm not a professional or anything like that. I'm just very much an amateur runner who enjoys it as a hobby. But from what I've read, because I've been doing some reading about running marathons, from what I've read, your training cycle or your training block leading up to the marathon should be around 15 to 18 weeks. And so, I've been training for the marathon that's going to be happening in October for about three weeks now. And I think I timed it that from when I started training for this marathon, I had 17 weeks to get ready. So that's just about perfect. And yeah, I've been training hard for about three weeks now. And I've been spending about eight or nine hours per week running, which roughly translates to around 100 kilometers per week of running. So that's quite a bit, quite a bit of time on my feet. And the first part of this marathon training block is building my endurance. So, building the time that I spend outside actually running on my feet. So, I'm not trying to go super-fast or break any speed records, but I am trying to spend more time on my feet and just building up my endurance.

And I got to tell you, it's not very fun. It's not very fun these days, because we're in the middle of summer here in Seoul, and it's so gross outside. It's muggy, it's hot, it is humid, and it's the rainy season. So, it also rains a lot. So, I'm pretty much **glued to** my weather app these days, and I'm trying to plan my runs around when it won't be rainy. And so, the weather app here in Korea is notoriously bad for not being very accurate. It's a rather inaccurate app. And so that's also frustrating. So, I don't have a great routine. It's not like I wake up and go running right away at the start of each morning, because sometimes it's pouring rain in the morning, and I got to wait until there's a time in my schedule where it's not raining and then go and do the run then. So, it's a little bit tiring in that regard. It's not too fun just because it's so hot outside. But on the other hand, it's a nice excuse for kind of going slow and just enjoying things, trying to have a good mindset and make the best out of a not-so-great summer situation here in Seoul, in terms of the weather.

But anyways, I'm not here to talk to you today about my training plans or anything like that. Instead, I wanted to focus on some of the pros and cons of the recent running explosion. And I have a question for you about this. I'm curious where you live, because I know Culips, we have such a global audience with listeners from pretty much every corner of the world. So, I really am curious about this, guys. And if you could let me know your answer either in the comments for this episode, either on our YouTube, if you're watching the video version, or on our Instagram, if you're just listening to the audio version, or of course, on our Discord server where our community gathers and communicates with each other and hangs out with each other. Anywhere you want to let me know is fine. But the question about what I'm curious about is, have you noticed a huge jump in popularity in running where you live? So, have you noticed that there are more people around you running and exercising outside than maybe in years past?

And here in Korea, especially in Seoul, I can say definitely, 100%. I'm so, so confident, even though this is just **anecdotal**. So, I haven't done any official research or anything. This is just my observations, what I've seen while I'm outside running on the paths around the city myself. I've noticed that these days, there are so many runners outside. And to be honest, I think this is great. I'm so happy to see that there has been a huge explosion in

the popularity of this sport. And in fact, I wanted to do a little bit of searching to make sure that, you know, what I was saying here has a little bit of truth to it. So, I couldn't find any numbers specifically for Seoul, but I did do some research online and I found out that it's true. Running worldwide has exploded in popularity over the last several years. In fact, the number of people who go for runs and run regularly over the last decade, so over the last 10 years, has increased by about 57%. And during the pandemic, the COVID pandemic, there was a 65% increase in running and jogging activities that were logged on exercise apps. So, I use an app called Strava to log my runs and to keep a record of my daily running activities. But there are many other apps and there's a huge **uptick** in the number of people that use these apps to log their running and jogging just during the pandemic, a 65% increase.

There was also Strava, that app that I just mentioned, they reported that the number of runners who completed a marathon nearly doubled in 2022 as compared to 2021. Now perhaps that's because of the pandemic, maybe during 2021, there were many marathons that were canceled. But as far as I remember, a lot of the marathons held virtual marathon events during the pandemic. So even though we couldn't gather in the same place and run at the same time, you could run virtually and just run in your own time, in your own place, and then log it online and sort of say that you completed the marathon that way. So yeah, I don't know, I guess we have to **take those numbers with a grain of salt**, but double in 2022 compared to 2021. And then one final statistic here for you is that performance running shoes, the sales of these shoes grew 32% year over year by the end of 2020. And this indicates that there's just a general increased interest in running, right? If you're selling more running shoes, then you have to assume that there are more people running as well.

So, all of these stats and all of these figures, they back up what I've seen with my own eyes here in Seoul, that there are just so many more people out running on the trails. And like I said, I think this is a really good thing. And especially I've noticed many young people running. When I first came to Korea over a decade ago now, I would usually be the only person that I'd see out running. Like I think a lot of people thought I was crazy. Running wasn't really too popular. You know, I'd go running.... Especially when I first came to

Korea, I lived in some countryside areas and there would be these little roads in between the rice paddies where rice is grown. And I used to love running down these roads when, of course, when the farmers weren't farming, and I didn't want to like get in their way or anything. But when the roads were empty, I'd run in between the rice paddies. And that was awesome. That was a really good memory and a very nice place to run. Also, on some of the different paths and trails, areas where I thought would be popular running spots, but I just didn't see that many people running back in the day. Of course, I'd pass the occasional runner. It's not like it didn't exist at all, but it wasn't too popular. And mostly when I did pass somebody else who was running, they'd usually be like a middle-aged guy. You know, you can imagine that classic, like skinny, **lanky** marathoner, the hardcore runners. Those are the type of guys that I would see when I was out running.

But these days it's completely changed. There are people from all walks of life, older people, younger people, and especially people in their twenties and thirties. I see tons of them. And it's a really social activity too. People are forming running crews. And when I'm out running, I'll pass like a big group of runners, maybe 10 or 15 people. Sometimes they even have like a shirt that they've made that it's showing their running crew. So, it's kind of cool to see them out there socializing and running together. And like I said, these days the weather is terrible. It's hot, it's humid, it's kind of rainy sometimes. And even despite this fact, there are people, tons of people out there giving it their all, running hard just on a day-to-day basis. So, I can back this up with my own observations and I can back it up with some of these stats that I've seen on the internet here. At least in Seoul, running has exploded. And I'm curious about your neck of the woods, where you live.

And also, something that I've been noticing, and this could totally just be the algorithm at work here. You know, the social media algorithms that feed us the content that we see when we open Instagram or YouTube or whatever app that you use. You open these apps and the way that the algorithm works is it usually shows you content that it predicts that you are going to enjoy. And then as you interact with that kind of content more and more, then you get to see more and more of it. So, as you can imagine, when I open my social media, I do see a lot of running related content because I am interested in that topic. But

these days, more and more and more, I'm just seeing like an explosion of it. More and more YouTubers, more and more podcasts, more and more people just documenting their running journeys on social media. So really, I'm not sure if there's a huge increase in this kind of content, but I think there is. And I don't know. And again, that's something that you could maybe share with me if you've seen more running related content on social media as well, or maybe you even know some friends who have gotten into the activity in recent years.

So, this is, I guess, something that comes with some pros and cons. Whenever there's a huge shift like this, there are some pros and some cons that go along with it. And I think this is, in general, a positive, right? Probably if you're thinking **objectively** about like society as a whole, you think, "Wow, if a lot of young people are suddenly really interested in exercising, that's got to be good for society." Right? Like, I think so. And there are probably a lot of other pros as well. You could probably sit down and brainstorm some. I did that just before I started recording here. And I'm just going to share some of those pros that I brainstormed with you. Of course, this is not an exclusive list. I'm sure there's more. And yeah, if you think of more that I didn't think of, let me know. But the pros, yeah, great for your physical health, great for your mental health. Getting outside, it's good for both of those things too, right? It's nice to breathe some fresh air. In English, we have this expression, "**touch grass**." It's good to touch grass, meaning that if you're always **cooped up** inside, if you're always in your office or in your home and you don't really get outside and experience the real world, it can be bad for our mental health and it can be bad for our perspective of things. Sometimes we need to go outside, we need to touch grass, we need to interact with the real world, with nature and with the physical world, and that can just be really good for us. So, although here in Seoul, it's like mostly a **concrete jungle** and there aren't too many patches of grass. So, it's a little bit hard for me to actually touch grass, but it's just an idiom, right? So, it doesn't actually mean touching grass, but yeah, you can get outside and touch grass too if you enjoy running.

And actually, one of my friends sent me a news article this week as well, and the news article was about how younger people in their 20s and 30s these days are not going to

bars and restaurants to drink and socialize as much as they used to. And I thought that was really interesting and really is another kind of piece of evidence in this case that I'm trying to build that running has exploded in the past five years or so. And in that news article, the reporter wrote about how these days a lot of people in their 20s and 30s are more interested in self-development. So, they enjoy spending time doing their hobbies, maybe exercising, maybe learning something new. And instead of just going out and wasting their money drinking, and you know, I don't think socializing is necessarily a bad thing. Doing those things can be good for us as well from time to time. But in general, like I think this is probably a good thing too, right? If we have more people focused on improving themselves and they're spending less money and stuff at bars and just drinking all night, that can't be good. So, this is another bonus that comes with this explosion and running another pro, so to say. And yeah, I guess that's good for society in general, but perhaps if you're a bar owner or a restaurant owner, that might be a little stressful for you. So yeah, everything has pros and cons, right?

Anyways, I could probably go on and on about the benefits of this running trends and this running explosion. But I'm an old man now, guys. I'm in my forties. I'm a grumpy old man. And so, what I wanted to share about with you today specifically was one of the cons of the running explosion and how that has affected my life as a longtime runner here. And suddenly everything has changed, right? Like I used to just run by myself, but now suddenly there are tons of people everywhere. And this has caused some problems. One of the problems that it has caused is that it's very, very difficult these days to actually sign up and participate in a marathon. There's a really popular marathon here in Seoul that happens usually in, I think, late November or sometime in November. It's called the JTBC Marathon. And every year I see it on social media, and it looks cool. And sometimes they even have some big-name celebrities who participate in the marathon. And I've always wanted to do it. And so, I thought, OK, this year, finally, I'm going to do the JTBC Marathon. And this was a couple of months ago, maybe, well, probably like last, maybe, yeah, let's say two months ago. I'm not exactly sure. I don't remember. But I thought, OK, this year I'm going to sign up for the JTBC Marathon. So, let's say this was April or May when I had this thought, and I went to go and see when is the sign up date for the

marathon. And I learned that I'd already missed the registration date and it was already completely sold out. And I was like, "What? This is still not happening for like another nine months or something." And yeah, I **missed the boat**.

So, because of so many people who are interested in running and participating in marathons, it's making it very, very difficult to actually sign up and participate in marathons. So, you really, really have to be **on the ball**. You have to be alert about when the sign-up day for a marathon that you want to participate in is. And then when the signup is open, you have to like go in right away and click. You have to be like a mouse warrior and click, click, click, and sign up to participate in the marathon. So, I missed the boat for JTBC this year, but maybe next year I'm going to have to set like an alert on my phone or something to remind me maybe like the day after the marathon is finished, I should find out when the next year's marathon sign up is going to open. Anyways, there's always next year and I will try again.

Another con about this explosion in running is that. As you can imagine, you have so many more runners out there running. Well, every runner needs some basic equipment, right? They need running shoes, maybe a pair of shorts. A running watch is a really helpful accessory. In my opinion, one of the most useful accessories for running is to have a running watch. And yeah, you know, you think when you get into this sport, when you start it for the first time, I know I was this way. The reason why I chose to get into running is because when I started running, I was a poor student and I imagined that it would be the cheapest sport that I could do when I kind of brainstormed and was like, "OK, what is like the cheapest, most affordable sport for a poor grad student?" Well, I thought running's gotta be it, right? All you need is a pair of sneakers, and you can go. You don't need a gym membership. You don't need to buy any special equipment. Like you know, I'm Canadian. In Canada, ice hockey is our big sport. And if you want to play ice hockey, you really need to spend like thousands of dollars just to get started in the sport. So, I thought running's not like that, right? Of course, it's going to be a very affordable sport. Wrong. Turns out that it is actually quite an expensive sport. Maybe it's still more affordable compared to some other sports like ice hockey or cycling or something, which requires you to buy a lot

of equipment regularly. However, when you run, you also need to buy new shoes regularly. I didn't know this, but experts recommend that you should change your shoes every maybe 400 to 800 kilometers. And as I mentioned to you earlier, I'm running about 100 kilometers a week right now. So that means that a pair of shoes doesn't really last very long. Ideally, **in a perfect world**, I would be changing my shoes every six weeks, maybe even every five or four weeks. I'd be changing them regularly.

But there are two reasons why I don't really do this. And I try to log and maximize the time that I use my running shoes. The first reason is that running shoes are very expensive, especially when you get a little bit above like the basic running level. I don't want to say that I'm a fantastic runner or anything like that. I am just kind of like an average runner, but I run a lot. And so, I need a shoe that's going to be just a little bit better than kind of the standard, basic model that you could buy at probably an affordable price. So that's the first issue. And the second issue is that this is really the one that makes me a little frustrated is because of this explosion in the number of people who are running these days. Running shoes are very, very hard to find in Seoul. I'm wondering if any of our listeners here in the city in Seoul, because I know we have a lot of listeners in Seoul, if you guys have found this as well. But the brands of shoes and the models of running shoes that are a good fit for me, and I've tried many, many different types of shoes over the years, and I have my models and my brands that I think are a good fit for me and that I usually go to again and again and again. They're always sold out. It's very, very frustrating. And I've tried online, tried shopping online. I've tried shopping offline. And it blows my mind really that these expensive running shoes are impossible to find. So, I think this must be an effect of this explosion in the number of people who are running these days. It seems like that the supply of running shoes, at least here in Korea, I don't know if this is an issue in other parts of the world as well, but for high-quality running shoes, the supply is not keeping up with demand. The demand is insane. There are many people who want to buy these high-quality running shoes, and the supply is just not there.

So last week, I decided that it's really time for me to buy a new pair of running shoes. I think the shoes that I have now are probably getting close to 1300-1400 kilometers. Yeah,

so I've pretty much got every little last bit of usage that I can squeeze out of these shoes. You know, like the experts say, every 400 to 800 kilometers, you should change. But I've gone well, well, well above that. And I'm starting to notice like, yeah, these shoes are worn down and they need to be replaced. So, I thought, OK, it's finally time I need to buy these shoes. But the model that I have right now is completely sold out. I can't find it online. I can't find it in stores. It's just completely sold out in here in Seoul, which is crazy to me because it is an expensive shoe. It's like, I think almost 170,000 won, which is probably around. I don't know, maybe 130 US dollars or so around there, just a guesstimate off the top of my head. So, it's an expensive shoe. And that blows my mind that you can't find it, that it's sold out just because there are so many people who want to use this high-quality running shoe that it's completely sold out.

So, I was a little bit bummed about that, but I thought, OK, well, maybe this is an opportunity for me to try some other types of shoes. But I found other brands and other models of an equivalent shoe around that same price. Actually, the other brands that I was looking at were even more expensive than that, but they're all sold out as well. And it's not just like my size. It's pretty much all sizes except for the extremely small and the extremely big models. If you have a very small foot or a very big foot, you're lucky. It's usually like that, right? Like with any kind of clothing, the XXX small and the XXX large, they're always available, but the other ones sell out. So anyways, it's a bit frustrating that I can't find a good replacement shoe for me these days.

To go back to something that I mentioned just a little bit earlier, social media and running social media. Last week while I was flipping through Instagram, I saw an Instagram reel and it was all about running shoes. And it was a tip for people like me who have issues with the cost that is involved in running because it can be a very expensive sport as I was telling you earlier. So, this reel, what it said was if you are looking for new running shoes, a tip that the creator of the reel said to do was instead of buying **the latest, greatest model**, see if you can go back and buy a model from last year or from a couple of years ago. Because each shoe manufacturer, they're constantly tweaking and updating the look and the style of their shoe. And that's kind of cool, but often they've kind of nailed the shoe like

several years ago and some of these updates are not really too important and the functionality of the shoe is essentially the same. So, it's just like updated colors to make it look cooler and stuff and then they can charge a little bit more money also. So, the tip was, "Hey, go online and see if you can find some of the older models from a couple of years ago, buy those shoes and that's a way to save money."

So, I thought, "Hey, yeah, that's not bad. Let me see if I can do that!" So, I went online, I went to Naver, which is the big kind of Google here in Korea. It's a big portal site and it's the gateway for a lot of the online shopping that I do. I did a Naver search, and I found a model and a brand of shoe that I used to use in the past that actually I really enjoyed that model of shoe and I thought it was a good fit for me and a comfortable running shoe. And of course, because I had used that shoe in the past, I was familiar with the sizing and everything and how it feels, so I thought, OK, this looks promising. And then I checked out the price and it was extremely cheap. I was like **over the moon**. I was like, this can't be real. This can't be real. I called my wife, and I was like, "Is this real? Is this like a fake website?" And she said, "No, this is a legit website, it looks like." And so, the price of those shoes were only 60,000 won. So that's probably like 45 American dollars or so much, much cheaper than the other shoes that I was talking about. So, I was super happy, and I was like, "Yeah, this guy on the Instagram reels, what a great reel that he made. This is going to save me so much money!" So, I bought a pair right away and yeah, I thought, "OK, for the next thousand kilometers, my shoe problem is solved."

Of course, I bought them online, so you have to wait for them to be shipped. But after I bought them, then I started doubting myself and I was like, "Why were they so cheap?" Like I know they're an outdated model and stuff, but other websites were not selling outdated models for that cheap. They were still well over a hundred thousand won, sometimes even more than the new price for the outdated older models. So, I started having some doubts and I was worried. I thought, "Oh, did I get ripped off? Did I buy some fake shoes, some counterfeits?" So, a week went by or so, some time went by and here in Korea, usually shipping is extremely fast. You usually buy something online and then maybe the next day or a maximum two days later, the package will arrive at your door. But

after I bought these shoes, it was yeah, over a week or so and they still hadn't arrived. So, I asked my wife because she actually bought them for me. She bought them through her account for some reason. I think she had a coupon. Anyways, it doesn't matter. But she bought them, so I asked her to look into the shipping and to tell me what was up with them. And she said, yeah, "It just says they're in transit, so they'll be here soon." But yeah, it was weird that they hadn't arrived yet.

But then two days ago, actually I was out for a little bit and when I was walking home, the delivery man was there in front of my door at the exact same time. And so, he handed me the box. He said, "Here's your new shoes." Like oh, finally, they're here. OK, great. And I looked at the label and immediately **my heart sank**. And I thought, oh, I think I got ripped off. Because I noticed, and this is the reason why it took so long for the shoes to arrive to my home here, is that they were shipped from another country. So they weren't from Korea, which was the first sign to me, like, "Ahh, I think these are not going to be genuine shoes." But anyways, I thought, hey, let's think positively and cross our fingers and hope for the best. So, I opened the box, I pulled out the shoes, and I looked at them, and they looked very, very real. They looked exactly like the authentic shoes. The box looked real, all the packaging looked real, the tag looked real. The new shoe smell was exactly the same. Like everything was completely legit, so it seems. And I thought, OK, you know what? I don't think I got ripped off after all. I think these are legit running shoes. So, I thought, like, "Yeah! What a great tip from the guy on Instagram." And I patted myself on the back for finding these cheap shoes online.

Well guys, then it was time for me to test them. So, I put them on my feet, and I took a couple of strides around my front yard. I have a little yard in the front of my house, and it's just enough for me to do a couple of strides of running. And as soon as I took my first running stride and my foot hit the ground, then I knew 100% that I had been ripped off and that these shoes weren't the legit running shoes that I had hoped they would be, because just the foam was so terrible. Like, I guess a high-end running shoe is going to have some very specialized foam for cushioning and making sure that your running is a comfortable experience, right? But it was very uncomfortable. It felt like I was just slamming up against

the ground with pretty much no cushioning at all. I thought, oh, "I was ripped off!" So, I guess it's on me. It was my bad. I got too excited from watching the Instagram Reel and then finding these affordable shoes online. And to tell you the truth, the shoes look exactly like the real thing. If you told me they were fake, I wouldn't believe you until I started running in them. So, I think they'll be a fine walking shoe. I'm not going to throw them in the garbage or anything. I think I'll get some use out of them as a walking shoe. But unfortunately, I don't think I'm going to be able to use them as a running shoe.

It's funny. I was thinking. These days, do you know what another trend here in Seoul is? The younger people are running, but older people, especially senior citizens, are walking barefoot. This is like kind of a weird trend in my opinion, but it's something that I do notice, especially if I go out running early in the morning. This is kind of funny because, as I mentioned, these days, because of the rainy season, sometimes if it's going to be really rainy in the afternoon or evening, I'll go running early in the morning so I can avoid the rain. And usually when I run, I like to run in the evening. Just seems to be the best fit for my body naturally. I don't really usually wake up early in the morning to go and run. But because of the rainy season I have, and I discovered it's like a whole new world. When you wake up early, like 5:30-6:00, and you go out for a run at that time, early in the morning, there are so many senior citizens. Maybe it's just my neighborhood, but there are so many senior citizens out at the park. They're like very active, exercising, and socializing. And yeah, you just don't really see them later in the evening, in the afternoon. So, I didn't realize how many of these grandmas and grandpas there are in my neighborhood, but I was really happy to see them all out there. And I thought, "Wow, it's like a whole new world!" If you just go outside in the afternoon and the evening, you would never know. But you go out in the morning, and you can see them all there. And one of the things that they are doing, the senior citizens, is walking barefoot. So, there's even one of the places where I go running, there's even this like red-mud walking path where you're supposed to take off your shoes and walk barefoot through the mud. And the only people that I've seen use this are grandmas and grandpas. Haven't seen one young person do it.

But I thought, hey, maybe I should combine these new trends because I have these terrible low-quality sneakers. And because running is so trendy, and also barefoot walking is so trendy here in Seoul, I could combine these new trends, and I could go barefoot running, I wouldn't have to buy new running shoes, and I could take advantage of maybe some of the benefits of barefoot walking, or just being barefoot outside. I read online that some of the grandmas and grandpas were saying that it helps them sleep better at night, and it's also supposed to be good for your skin. So, I don't know. Maybe I'll try it. No, of course, I'm just joking. I'm not going to be running barefoot through Seoul anytime soon. But I did think that that is an interesting trend that's happening at the opposite end of the age spectrum here in Seoul. At the end of the day, I think it's good. People are getting outside, they're moving their bodies, they're being active. And yeah, I think that's just a wonderful thing to see.

So anyways, everybody, I think that'll wrap up my story for this week. A bit of a long one for this week, but thanks for hanging in there and making it all the way to the end. Of course, don't think of it as being a waste of time. The more time you spend with English, the faster you'll be able to reach your fluency goals, right? So, you spent a lot of time here with me today. You are investing in yourself, investing in your English development. And of course, that will really assist you and help you in the long run. And because you made it all the way to the end of this episode, I have to share this week's completion code with you. The completion code is going to be: "Pros and cons." Pros and cons. So, what I would like you to do is just leave a comment with that completion code: "Pros and cons." You can do it in the YouTube comments or the Instagram comments for this post, or also on our Discord community. And that will signal to me that you listened all the way to the end, and you completed this English study session with me today. If you just want to use the phrase "pros and cons," that's fine. If you would like to leave an example sentence using "pros and cons," that's even better. And I'm looking forward to seeing your comments.

Also don't forget that this week only until July 22nd, you can save 20% off a Culips membership. So go, go, go, sign up and become a member today and support the work that we do here at Culips. And also, if you're in the Osaka area, then I'd love to have you

join me for the Culips meetup on the 30th. And all of the information about the meetup and the signup form, the RSVP form, will also be in the description for this episode. So, everybody take care. Happy English studies this week as always. And I'll talk to you in the next Culips episode coming out a little bit later in the week. Until then, bye-bye.

Glossary

1. **For the sake of (something)** means for the purpose or benefit of something. Andrew uses this expression when talking about running just for enjoyment. *Example: She learned to cook for the sake of her health, not because she enjoyed it.*
2. **To be glued to (something)** means to be constantly focused on or attached to something. Andrew says he's glued to his weather app when planning his runs. *Example: The children were glued to the TV during their favorite cartoon show.*
3. **Anecdotal** refers to information based on personal accounts rather than facts or research. Andrew mentions his observations about running in Seoul are anecdotal. *Example: The doctor's anecdotal evidence suggested the treatment was working, but more studies were needed.*
4. **Uptick** is an increase or improvement in something. Andrew uses this word to describe the increase in people using running apps. *Example: The store saw an uptick in sales after introducing a new loyalty program.*
5. **Take (something) with a grain of salt** means to view something with skepticism or not completely believe it. Andrew suggests taking some running statistics with a grain of salt. *Example: You should take gossip with a grain of salt, it's often exaggerated or untrue.*
6. **Lanky** describes someone who is tall, thin, and often awkward-looking. Andrew uses this word to describe typical marathon runners he used to see. *Example: The lanky basketball player had to duck to enter the room.*

7. **Think objectively** means to consider something without personal feelings or opinions influencing your judgment. Andrew mentions thinking objectively about the benefits of running for society. *Example: To solve this problem, we need to think objectively and consider all possible solutions.*
8. **Touch grass** is an idiom meaning to reconnect with reality or the outside world. Andrew explains this expression when discussing the benefits of getting outside. *Example: After spending weeks indoors gaming, his friends told him to touch grass and get some fresh air.*
9. **To be cooped up** means to be confined in a small space for a long time. Andrew uses this expression when talking about the importance of getting outside. *Example: After being cooped up in the office all week, she was eager to go hiking on the weekend.*
10. **A concrete jungle** refers to a modern city environment with many large buildings and little nature. Andrew describes Seoul as mostly a concrete jungle. *Example: New York City is often called a concrete jungle due to its towering skyscrapers and busy streets.*
11. **Missed the boat** means to have lost an opportunity by being too slow to act. Andrew says he missed the boat on signing up for a marathon. *Example: By the time I decided to buy concert tickets, they were sold out – I really missed the boat.*
12. **To be on the ball** means to be alert and quick to respond. Andrew says you need to be on the ball to sign up for popular marathons. *Example: The new employee was always on the ball, anticipating problems before they arose.*
13. **In a perfect world, I would...** is a phrase used to describe an ideal but unrealistic situation. Andrew uses this when talking about how often he should change his running shoes. *Example: In a perfect world, I would travel to a new country every month.*
14. **The latest, greatest (something)** refers to the newest and supposedly best version of something. Andrew mentions this when discussing running shoe models. *Example: Every year, tech companies release their latest, greatest smartphones with new features.*
15. **Over the moon** means extremely happy or delighted. Andrew uses this expression to describe how he felt finding cheap running shoes online. *Example: She was over the moon when she got accepted into her dream university.*
16. **My heart sank** is an expression meaning to suddenly feel very disappointed or discouraged. Andrew says his heart sank when he realized the shoes he ordered might be fake. *Example: My heart sank when I saw the "Sold Out" sign at the ticket booth.*

Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima