



## It's dark, but there's something afoot along the city's streets

Quite a few expats are members of DarkRunners. — Ti Gong



Members of DarkRunners pose for a photo after a night run.

### Li Qian and Yu Tong

As dusk turns to darkness, shadows silhouetted in city lights flit across streets, cobbled alleyways and riverside paths.

They are not apparitions. They are joggers who find so-called “dark runs” an offbeat but interesting way to enjoy and explore Shanghai’s urban landscape.

A report by running app Joy-run issued in 2021 estimated nearly four in 10 people go for runs between 6pm and midnight, and most of them are from the generation born in the 1990s.

It’s a great way for daytime

desk jockeys to get a daily workout at little cost. It also provides an alternative to eating, drinking, music and other nightlife pastimes.

“There’s a unique vibe when running in the city at night,” said Zhou Yuan, founder of DarkRunners, a leading running club in Shanghai. “It allows you to look inside yourself and to take in the beauty of surroundings in every season.”

DarkRunners recently teamed up with lifestyle platform Xiaohongshu to launch the City Running Plan, with running activities held around the Shanghai Suhewan MIXC World commercial and cultural area along Suzhou Creek.

“It was my first time to run 5

kilometers, and I felt so good,” a participant identifying herself as Lili Martini posted on the platform.

“The beautiful night scene held my fascination as I ran, passing locals sitting or strolling along the riverside in an evening breeze. It was fun.”

Though it may be trendy today, night running was considered an aberration when Zhou started doing it more than a decade ago.

He recalled that late night in 2008 when he was home watching the film “Crank” and suddenly had an impulse to run.

“I ran all the way to the Nanpu Bridge, and I felt quite refreshed,” he said.