

Running for Beginners



How to Begin Running

Running can be hard and many people do not know where to start. Today we will learn about how to start and stick to a running program.

This session will cover:

- Setting SMART goals
- Benefits of running
- Tips for getting started
- Running injuries
- Food and running
- Running safety



SMART Running Goals

Setting goals is a great way to measure progress and stay motivated. When setting running goals, it is important to use the SMART model.

Specific: your goal should not be a general statement. Saying you want to "run faster" is too general. A specific goal will keep you motivated because you know exactly what you're trying to accomplish. Ex. Be able to run without stopping for 10 minutes; finish a 5k, etc.

Measurable: a measurable goal will help you know how much progress you're making. You will be able to stay on track, stay motivated, and know when you have reached your goal.

Attainable: in order to reach your goal, it needs to be realistic. Making a goal that you will be able to accomplish (with effort) is essential. If your goal is unattainable, you will not have the motivation to work towards it. Remember to start small.

Relevant: set a goal that means something to you. Your goal should be based on what you want, not what is popular or what someone tells you to do. If it doesn't apply to you, you won't want to do it.

Timely: set realistic deadlines for your goal. If you do not have deadlines, you may lose motivation and desire to complete your goal.

Goals are more easily accomplished when you have a reason(s) for setting them. Identify why you want to start running. Once you determine your reason(s), it will be easier to get started.

Why do you want to start running?

Benefits of Running

The benefits of running are not just physical. Running provides many mental and emotional benefits as well.

Physical Benefits

- Helps build strong bones (weight bearing exercise)
- Strengthens muscles
- Improves cardiovascular fitness
- Burns calories
- Helps maintain a healthy weight



Mental Benefits

- Relieves emotional pain
- Increases endorphins in the brain
- Improves mood
- "Runner's High" -- happiness and confidence
- Decreases depression and anxiety
- Reduces stress
- Better focus in daily activities
- Improves and maintains cognitive abilities



Which of these benefits are of interest to you?

Cardio Recommendation

The American Heart Association has recommended the following for cardiovascular health:

- At least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity at least 5 days per week (150 active minutes per week).

OR

- At least 25 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity at least 3 days per week (75 active minutes per week).

OR a combination of the two **AND**

- At least 2 days per week of moderate to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity.

Getting Started

"The thing I love most about running is that you can start at any stage of life. It's not how fast you are or how far you go that makes you a runner. It's all about the journey." - Jessica Rubin Cohen

1 Start Where You Are

Reaching goals takes time. It is important to push yourself, but not so hard that you get injured or burnt out. There is a concept in yoga called edge-playing. This means that you try and push yourself enough so you are challenged, but not enough that you are in pain. Running is a journey and you are just starting. Keep that in mind as work toward your goals.

2 Run for Time Instead of Miles

If you are starting from scratch, it's a good idea to run for a set amount of time rather than miles. As you begin to improve, you will see that you will start running a greater distance in that set amount of time and that you will be able to run for longer periods of time without rest.

3 Give Yourself a Purpose

Running just to run is great, but if you find yourself in a rut, give yourself something to work toward! Signing up for a race is a great way to focus your training.

4 Identify Barriers

Life can often get in the way of exercise. A busy schedule, bad weather, or lack of motivation can kill a run before you even start. If you can identify barriers that would prevent you from running, then you will be prepared to avoid them. For example, if your barrier is a lack of time, try scheduling your runs in-between your other tasks. If you leave your run for the end of the day "when you have time", you'll find that you rarely have time to run.

5 Gear Up

Make sure that you have the proper gear to run. Pick clothes, shoes, and appropriate weather-related items that will help you have the most comfortable run possible. If you are not sure what type of shoes to buy or what clothes are best, you can visit a running specialty store and they will be able to help you with your specific needs.

6 Don't Compare

Don't compare your first day to someone else's hundredth day. Accept your limits and work steadily toward your goals. Working hard and staying focused on your goals will lead to success.

7 Just Do It!

There is only so much preparing you can do... get up and get to running!

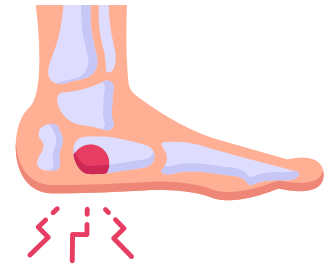
Running Injuries

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live." -- Jim Rohn

Every year, 65-80% of runners suffer an injury that causes them to take time off. It is important that you take the proper steps to decrease your risk of getting injured. Becoming aware of the risks associated with running can help you stay running longer.

Most Common Injuries

- Runner's Knee
- Achilles Tendonitis
- Hamstring Injuries
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Shin Splints
- Iliotibial Band Syndrome (ITBS)
- Stress Fractures



Common Causes

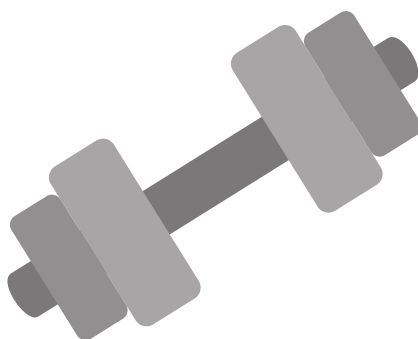
- **Overtraining:** many people will try to run more than they should when they first start running because they just want to reach their goals. Others will sign up for a race, and when they see it's approaching sooner than expected, they will overwork themselves in order to prepare. Overtraining leads to unnecessary stress on your muscles, joints, and bones. Do not try to force your body into doing things it is not ready to do.
- **Improper Form:** do you know how your foot is supposed to hit the ground as you run? Many people run with their heels making the first contact because our modern running shoes have trained us to do so. In reality, the middle of your foot should be hitting the ground first. Try this experiment: take off your shoes and try running on the sidewalk. The form that your body adapts while running in that scenario is how you should be running all of the time.

Prevention

- **Good Shoes:** improper footwear and shoes that do not fit your foot correctly can alter your form, put unnecessary stress on your joints, and cause injury. When selecting running shoes, choose ones that cushion and support the foot and feel comfortable right from the start. Make sure there is 1 to 1.5 centimeters at the end of your shoe and that they are long enough and wide enough. Good shoes have arch support that fits in the shoe without squeezing the toes or causing the heel to slip.



- **The 10% Rule:** follow this rule when you are trying to increase your mileage. Never increase your mileage by more than 10% from week to week. If you ran 20 miles last week, it is safe to run 22 miles this week, but no more than that.
- **Proper Form:** this is one of the most important aspects of running, but it is almost never taught. Strike the ground in the middle of your foot rather than the heel. Take smaller, quicker steps as opposed to long-reaching ones. When your foot hits the ground, it should be almost directly under your body. Keep your body straight. Do not lean too far forward or backward. Remember "head over hips".
- **Strength Training:** many runners neglect strength training either because they do not think it is necessary or because they do not know where to begin. However, incorporating heavy resistance training at least one or two times each week is essential to strengthening the joints and muscles used when running and is one of the most effective ways of preventing injuries. Don't be afraid to incorporate upper **and** lower body resistance training!



Treating Injuries

- **RICE:** for soft tissue injuries (bruises, strains, sprains) **Rest**, **Ice**, **Compress**, and **Elevate**.
- **Rest:** regularly take a couple of days off. If you don't want to stop completely, limit how many miles you run, the length of time you run, or the pace at which you run. Don't overdo it, and if it hurts, stop.
- **Cross-Train:** utilize the time you would have spent running doing other exercises such as swimming or biking. These exercises are a great alternative to running and they have much less impact on the body. Cross-training also keeps you in the habit of exercise, so when it is time to get back to running, you are not starting from square one.

Running and Nutrition

Nutrition is important, especially when you are participating in high-energy activities such as running. Nutrition is also individual. Experiment to find out which foods feel best to you.

Eating Before a Run

Eating before a workout stabilizes blood sugar and energy levels, although eating right before a short run (generally less than 45 minutes) is not typically necessary. Without food, you may face symptoms such as light-headedness and fatigue.

2 Hours Before

- water
- whole-grain cereal
- whole-wheat toast
- low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- whole-grain pasta
- brown rice
- fruit
- vegetables

30 Minutes Before

- water
- banana
- apple/applesauce
- berries

Eating During a Run

If you are going on a short run, it may not be necessary to eat while you're out. During longer runs (generally 45 minutes or longer) though, your body is using a lot of energy and will need nourishment.

- water
- honey
- fresh fruit
- energy gel
- raisins
- electrolyte packets



Eating After a Run

Eating after a run is extremely important. Your body needs to replenish the energy that was lost on the run.

- water
- anything on the before list
- chicken breast
- eggs
- cottage cheese
- sweet potatoes
- tuna
- peanut butter
- hummus
- salmon
- whole-wheat bagel
- oatmeal
- energy bars
- chocolate milk
- sports drinks

Running Safety

- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after a run
- Stay alert and aware of surroundings, especially if you're wearing headphones
- Wear reflective material if you're running in dimly-lit or dark conditions
- Obey traffic laws (use crosswalks, etc.)
- Take your phone or smartwatch (with calling abilities) with you
- Tell a friend where you will be running and when you plan on being back



Goals

What changes are you willing and able to make to become a runner?

What are some barriers you might face?

SMART Goal #1:

SMART Goal #2:

SMART Goal #3:
