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Run For Your Life: A Jogger's Handbook

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How to Start a Running Regimen

Plan Your Running Regimen Today

Running is not only practical, it is also the easiest, cheapest way to get healthy and in shape. Running, as a cardio exercise can benefit anyone – young or old. That is why running along with brisk walking continues to be popular with sports buffs everywhere.

Imagine, you do not have to sign up for a gym, nor do you need to

purchase expensive equipment to enjoy running. Plus you get to enjoy the quiet joys of nature while breathing in cool crisp air while clearing your mind at the same time. Some testify that running is the best way to squeeze healthy exercise into a busy schedule.

The beauty of running and walking is that you have to do it anyway, especially walking. Running, however, is more strenuous and if done properly, a more effective exercise. Unfortunately, there are right ways and wrong ways to run. While anyone can start a 'regimen' on their own, proper knowledge is beneficial in maximizing the benefits and minimizing the chances of getting injured.

If you do get injured, it could only mean time away from exercise. So as much as possible you will want to run the right way so you don't get injured.

Starting a Running Regimen

When starting a running regimen, one of the first things to consider are your goals:

- What do you want to accomplish?
- Are you running to increase endurance

- Are you running to burn calories?
- Build stronger muscles?
- Get a healthy heart?

The way you run and the amount of time you spend running will all depend your goals. If you plan to increase endurance, you will have to put in a lot of time running, plus you will have to gradually increase the pace and the time spent jogging. For that purpose, it wouldn't be abnormal to be running about 5k a day – especially if you are an athlete. You will probably also have to push the pace towards a full run at the end. If you want to burn calories you will need to run regularly but at a measured pace so that your exercise remains aerobic and not anaerobic.

Aerobic means that the exercise involves oxygen. Running a measured pace – somewhere faster than a slow jog and slower than a full run - is safely aerobic. If you push towards hard running, it is more anaerobic than aerobic. That kind is better suited for endurance running than weight loss. Aerobic exercise, by the way, is the only way to burn fat.

If you are simply looking for a healthier lifestyle, then a 15 to 30 minute brisk walk /jogging regimen would be best for you.

The next thing you have to consider when starting a running regimen is your schedule. You will have to find time in your busy schedule to fit in your running, and aside from that, you will have to consider whether you are a night runner or a morning runner.

Some people respond better to morning runs. They are more efficient and are able to accomplish more when running in the morning. Some people are not that morning-oriented. These people respond better during the evenings. If you think you are not much of a morning person, then don't worry. It's okay to break the mold and start running in the evening.

Whatever method appears to be more appealing for your situation, keep reading. We discuss specific times in depth in an upcoming chapter.

You will also have to consider the environment and the weather. Not all locations are alike. Some will want to choose a challenging course, running up hills and challenging areas. But this is not for all people; some will want to consider gentler courses, running down easier slopes and terrain. It all depends on your goal, endurance runners will benefit from more challenging terrain while others can stick to flat roads.

Also, make sure you are equipped for the weather. Cool attire that moves moisture away from your skin is still the best for such situations. You will also want to purchase shoes that protect your feet against the repeated pounding it will take while you are running. Go for comfort and strength here, not just fashion. More on this later.

Starting a running regimen is a truly exciting activity. Plan ahead and stick with your plan to truly enjoy its benefits. Also, you will probably want to consult with a trainer for further information. Enjoy!

Best Places to Run

Run Where It Suits You: Best Places to Start Your Running Regimen

Running is truly a joy to anyone that likes striding through the cool mornings and basking in the still rising sun. But with the burgeoning urban landscape, finding a practical and enjoyable place to run is getting harder and harder. Some people have no recourse but to start running in the confines of their own home. However, using a treadmill, while convenient, does not match the joy of running outdoors.

Other people, on the other hand, will jog anywhere – as long as there are roads. But being new to running, they are desperately looking for a place to run that will make the most of their running experience. If you are one of the people mentioned above, then here are some tips to help you find the perfect place for you to run with abandon.

First of all, you have to consider what kind of runner you are. Are you a busy runner trying to fit a running regimen into an already too hectic schedule? Or are you a serious athlete wanting to get the most effect out of a serious run? The kind of runner you are will largely determine what location you will want to choose for your running.

If you are a busy person that wants to have 15 minutes to an hour (which for you is already too long!) to jog, your neighborhood will probably be enough as a running ground.

This is, of course, only if your neighborhood is safe, and even then, you will still want to confine your running to the early mornings since later in the day, there will be too many people disturbing your tranquil jog. Early mornings will also be the best time for you to run. If there is a park nearby, and you don't mind doing laps around an area, then by all means drop by a park. Parks are an all-time favorite of joggers, and

you will not find yourself out of place at such places.

Do keep in mind that for your type of running, you will want to keep yourself to flat ground. Rough roads and challenging slopes, especially slippery ones, will increase the chances that you will get injured. And for a busy person – and one that jogs for leisure at that – that would be disaster. You will want to jog at a leisurely pace to further lessen the risks that you get sprained, pulled muscles and such.

For those looking for a more strenuous kind of running, and who are not that pressed for time as their urban colleagues, a trip to the nearest outlying hills would be nice. Or any paved pathway that is near nature is a great place to run.

If you are looking for slopes, inclines and other challenging courses, you will probably find one in the vicinity. Just make sure the place is safe and conducive to running. While a lush environment is lovely on the eyes, a place near civilization is best in case of sudden emergencies.

You will want to map a path around the area you are running to make sure there are no hitches in your running plan. Also, serious runners

will always have company somewhere near, just in case.

But then again, sometimes, such areas are too far off to be practical to visit regularly multiple times a week. If this is the case, you will want to consider your immediate neighborhood as your running grounds.

You can still make your run challenging by incorporating a few ingenious alternatives. You could even try a flight of stairs or something just as challenging.

Also, it would be great to be able to get acquainted with fellow runners who may give you a hint at great running haunts. A running buddy wouldn't be such idea either.

Whether you run seriously or for leisure, one thing to consider when running is the number of people present in any given area. Crowded areas are a nightmare for runners, so find a time of day that the people in an area taper off, or are still fast asleep. Or better yet find an area that is peaceful and quiet. That would make the most out of any running ground.

When to Run

Schedule Your Running

For those that have been putting off their running forever now is the time to start your running regimen!

You have probably noticed that things have to change. You have been putting off running for the longest time and have now decided to take the plunge into running today! Setting up a running schedule can be a problem.

Those starting to consider running are often busy executives, busy homemakers and other workers wanting to get into a healthy habit in contrast to stressful daily humdrum. If you are one of these people, finding time to sneak in your running is probably one of the hardest things to do. One thing you really have to say to yourself is that, "There is always time for running in my schedule."

If you think you are too busy to run, think again. Those that have running regimens are proven to have higher energy levels and are

usually primed to accomplish more than their more sedentary counterparts. So there you have it, another reason to start running.

The first thing you have to remove from your mind is the desire to run when "I feel like it." If you don't start running even if you don't feel like it, the "I like it" feeling is never going to come. Runners are usually addicted to running because of the increased levels of energy and satisfaction they receive from doing it. You won't get a taste of that feeling when you are sitting comfortably at home. Although running involves moving out of your comfort zone and a few aches and pains, it is definitely worth it.

It would be best to start what is called a running journal. It should be a calendar of sorts that includes dates for your runs, locations for your runs, special running events (yes, you will want to occasionally join a marathon), and notes and observations from your runs. This will give you a picture of how you are doing and will help you find dates and schedules for your runs – because we all have to admit that our schedules are constantly shifting.

Some people respond better to morning runs. They are more efficient and are able to accomplish more when running in the morning. Some

people are not that morning-oriented. These people respond better during the evenings. If you think you are not much of a morning person, then don't worry. It's okay to break the mold and start running in the evening. Some busy people have considered running anytime during their slack period in a day. If you can squeeze this slack period into the hours before or after work, then all the better so you can give it the proper concentration.

Whether you run seriously or for leisure, one thing to consider when running is the number of people present in any given area. Crowded areas are a no-no for runners, so find a time of day that the people in an area taper off, or are still fast asleep. Set this as your regular running schedule and stick to that schedule. Other than setting aside a time of day for your running, another important thing you have to do is to make sure you do your running at this schedule regularly. Irregular exercise will do more harm than good. So make sure you follow your plans and schedule with perseverance.

Weather can also affect your running schedule. You may want to put this in your running journal. In the event of inclement weather, you choose to either postpone your run to another date or continue the run indoors. Although it isn't as pretty as running outdoors, it is still better

than no run at all.

If you are feeling under the weather, call off your run to another date – when you are feeling better. You don't want to exert yourself in these situations lest you get worse. If you pull a muscle or feel too sore, don't push it, and have a specialist look at you. You can avoid a lot of long-term injuries this way.

Selecting the Right Running Shoes

Selecting the Right Running Shoes

The most important piece of equipment any runner needs is a good and trusty pair of shoes. Choosing the right pair of shoes is essential to maximizing your running experience and preventing any untoward injuries resulting from the wrong choice of foot gear.

Good shoes will give good traction to help your feet grip the ground firmly. They allow for good balance to help you concentrate on plowing forward and not wobbling and slipping. And since we are mentioning slipping, good traction is essential to avoid slips and tumbles – the cause of many a sprain and injury. When choosing a shoe, check its

traction and ask if the shoe holds well even on wet surfaces. You may test it for a few minutes to get a feel for its grip before purchasing it.

Your shoes will also have to be durable. Running shoes are some of the most punished shoes around. So it isn't a surprise to see that running shoes are designed with durability in mind. You take about two steps per second when you run – that's one step per foot. When you run for about 15 minutes, each shoe will have taken about 900 cycles of punishment. It's even more if you run a lot harder and a lot longer. Your shoe will have to absorb that much punishment. So it is imperative that your shoe be durable and made of strong material. When choosing a shoe, check its materials. Look for any design flaws that allow for easy breaking or wearing out of any parts.

Choose shoes that are comfortable. As said earlier, the shoes will take a constant pounding every time you run. However, it is not only your shoes that will take a pounding. Your feet will take their own share of punishment too. When choosing shoes, make sure that they are very comfortable. The shoes you choose do not have to be very foamy. As we previously discussed this type of shoe carries a greater risk because the structure comprises balance. Go for designs that absorb a lot of shock. They should be soft but firm. Try running with them while

choosing. If you feel a slight jar in any part of your feet, especially on the balls and the heel, you may want to look further. Sometimes, bad shoes will cause a jarring sensation in your skull when you are running, avoid these as well.

Unfortunately, even with proper cushioning, your shoes will eventually wear out as well. Rubber cushioning toughens up through time and loses much of its spring. You will have to be sensitive to this. If your running shoes gradually lose their shock absorbing abilities, go purchase a new pair to avoid injuring yourself.

Consider your foot type when choosing shoes. There are three types of feet – flat, normal, and high-arched. You can test your feet for type by using what is called a wet test. Wet your feet and step on a dry surface. If it shows the whole of your feet – or a typical flat footed look, then you have flat feet. Normal arches are when you see a slight C shaped arc from the balls for your feet to the heels. High-arched feet have a pronounced C-arch running from ball to heel; the imprint of such feet look as if the balls and the heels were connected by a tiny piece.

Those with flat feet will need shoes that have greater control, since

flat-footer runners have difficulty running with good form. High-arched runners have trouble with balance because they teeter so. They also are prone to straining their plantar fascia. They will need well-cushioned shoes to keep balance.

Also, when choosing shoes, make sure you do not rush your choice. Take a few minutes per shoe to determine cushioning, comfort, traction, and other quality oriented observations. It is also advisable to choose shoes at the end of the day, when your feet are at their largest. This helps avoid choosing shoes that are suddenly too tight when you start running (and have blood engorge your feet).

Never underestimate the value of the running shoe. It will be your most treasured companion during your running experience. Never overestimate its lifespan as well. After a good full year of running service, you should retire your shoe and purchase a new one.

Running Apparel Do's and Don'ts

The Big Do's and Don'ts of Choosing Running Apparel

While running is an altogether inexpensive sport to engage in, it doesn't hurt to purchase equipment to help make your running experience a whole lot more enjoyable. When choosing proper running attire, however, it is not enough to just pull off anything from the store racks. Proper care in selecting apparel that will enhance your experience – and not deter it – is needed.

Gear other than shoes includes socks, shirts, shorts, sweatshirts and other apparel. Most of these are fashionable. While fashionable isn't a sin, being fashionable without being comfortable, practical, or functional is. So when choosing apparel, remember that comfort and functionality are premiums.

Running Socks:

Thick socks can absorb sweat. However, they also promote that sweating and can make the feet hotter. Thick cotton socks are good for keeping away blisters especially for long-distance running.

Synthetic running socks are also popular among runners since they are light and cool. They also promote moving the sweat away from your feet. However, if you have sweaty feet, and your running shoes do

not have cooling technology, you may want to stick to cotton socks.

Running Shorts:

Synthetic fibers are definitely popular choices for running shorts as they provide a dry running experience. These fibers move moisture away from the skin towards the outer layers of the material for easy evaporation.

Another consideration is the fit of the shorts. Baggy pants will definitely hinder your running movement. You may choose them if you are comfortable with them. However, it is better if you choose well-fitting pants that do not impede your running movement. Shorts that fit well through the hips and are above the knees are recommended.

Running Shirts:

Cotton is not really advisable for serious runners. They tend to absorb sweat and easily soil. Special fabric that moves moisture away from the skin towards the outer layers of the material for easy evaporation will do well for any runner. Running on a wet shirt is doubly uncomfortable, so right after shoes, this and shorts are easily the most important equipment to purchase. While cotton shirts are not exactly a no-no, the more expensive (albeit rapidly being affordable) technical

shirts are the best choice for any runner.

Tights: Although they are not exactly required, on colder days, you will want help to keep your muscles warm. A good pair of tights will do the trick. You won't especially need too much time to choose such. Tights are a pretty straightforward affair. Standard materials include spandex, nylon or lycra. Make sure however, that you also check for quality.

Other Clothing:

Depending on the weather, you will probably need extra protection.

Running vests will make a good companion to keep you from the ravages of the elements. Make sure you choose material that does not absorb moisture (that would be defeating the purpose of the vest).

Look for material that keeps out moisture and remains cool and comfortable at the same time. Such equipments are usually made of nylon with mesh parts to facilitate ventilation. You might also consider gloves and caps. Make sure your equipment is light and comfortable. Your caps have to be aerodynamic. Brims are usually discouraged unless you can fasten the cap to your head.

Investing in good equipment shows your interest in your running

regimen. After purchasing such, make sure you DO use them and get into a running habit. Have a great running lifestyle and choose wisely! Enjoy!

Warming Up

Warming Up To a Better Running Experience

Whether you have been running for a long time or are only starting to get into the habit, it cannot be denied that warming up is an essential part of your routine.

If you are like many of us that start running right out of a dead start, you might not have realized that this could be the reason for unnecessary soreness after your run. It is also generally established that this is also the reason for many sports related injuries. Stressing your muscles immediately off the block is harmful for athletes. To get the most out of your muscles, it would be best to ease in them into activity.

To do that, gentle activity can be done for 5 to 10 minutes to warm up the muscles and increase flexibility. "Cold" muscles typically under

perform and never achieve optimal output. If you don't tease your joints and muscles by flexing, you risk injury from pulling a tight muscle or a cold joint.

To warm up, you could try light cardiovascular activities to get blood flowing through the system. This activity also primes up the muscles for activity. After warm up activities, the body is now ready for increased activity. Light jogging in place is generally one of the best ways to warm up. Other activities are also available and recommended as long as they remain light and low impact. Other exercises that accomplish this include – light stairs and lunges.

Make sure that when you warm up, you don't rest afterwards. That is because after priming your body for the activity ahead, resting will cool off your body, effectively defeating the purpose of warming up. So after warming up, don't idle around or sit about. Get ready to stretch and do so purposefully so you don't lose your momentum. So try to stay away from idle chatting and staring at nothing after warming up to get the best results.

After warming up, stretching will be the next order of battle. Good stretching is essential to improving performance and avoiding injuries.

You can start with the head and arms, swing and stretch in counts of 12. Focus your stretching activities on your lower body because this is where most of the action will take place. Stretch and tease every major joint, and even the minor ones.

Be careful that you do not overstretch these muscles and joints, doing so could cause injuries. Stretch yourself enough to challenge the tightness, but don't go overboard and cause an injury yourself.

After your running session, don't forget to cool down by tapering down your activities to ease your nervous system into lower activity. Here are a few exercises to help you focus your warm up activities specifically for running; they may be a little hard to perform at first, but when you get used to them you can gradually up the ante for most of them.

Lunge walk – this exercise is perfect for loosening hip joints and improving leg drive. It will also strengthen your glutes and your quadriceps. To perform this exercise, get into a lunge position and do lunges, moving forward at the same time. When doing this exercise, keep a straight upper body and look ahead. Repeat this six times for three sets.

High knee lift – this exercise improves ankle strength and improves hip flexor performance. Walk forward while keeping up on your toes and marching your thighs up high. Your thighs do not have to be too high. They only have to be parallel with the floor.

Elbow-to-inside-of-ankle lunge – this exercise improves hamstring strength and improves hip flexor performance. It also works well with stretching the lower back. It is very similar to the lunge walk, except that you have to stretch forward to touch your elbow to your ankles while doing so. This exercise is pretty challenging, you will need good balance to pull this off.

There are lots of other exercises that focus on the running muscles, and you may want to consult with professional trainers to learn of them. Make sure you take the time, no matter how tedious it may seem to warm up before you start running. Make it part of your routine to maximize your running experience and to promote better performance and health.

Weight Training for Runners

Weight Training for Runners

Weight training improves a person's stamina, strength, and speed. Experts recommend it to all athletes to achieve and maintain overall fitness. It protects muscles, tendon, and joints imbalance. This is the secret of all athletes that never fails to bring home the bacon.

Runners should do weight lifting to exercise their quadriceps, hamstrings, upper back, lower back, and abs. This will greatly improve the strength of their upper bodies and legs to run faster. In addition, weight lifting is proven to be one of the most effective ways in decreasing joint injuries and improving performance.

Ideally, weight training should be done every other day. This would allow the muscles to rest for a day and get ready for another set on the following day. Body builders suggest starting with weights that can be carried comfortably for 12 repetitions. An athlete may increase the weight every now and then to increase muscle strength and endurance.

Below are the advantages of weight training for runners:

1. Recent studies show that 7 weeks of weight training can greatly reduce the risk of certain injuries commonly associated with athletes, these are recurring lower back pain, nagging hip, and kneecap pain.
2. Proper weight training is consistently associated with improved performance. It improves breathing techniques that allows runners to run faster and delay exhaustion.
3. Weight training is guaranteed to maintain or improve the health of runners by increasing their muscle strength and endurance needed to win any race.
4. Physical fitness has always been associated with weight training. It helps a person in toning or defining the muscles that is very beneficial in any sport.
5. Weight training helps runners in raising basal metabolism rate or the state in burning calories when resting or after eating. As a result, runners do not gain unwanted body fats that can hinder them for running faster.
6. Runners can also increase their energy through weight training.

It burns calories faster and produce more energy.

7. Weight training keeps the runners healthy by decreasing the risks of diabetes, colon cancer, and heart attack.

8. Weight lifting improves posture, which is very important to runners, by strengthening shoulder, neck, hip, and back muscles. This enables runners to run comfortably and improve stability and balance.

9. Runners can also handle stress effectively through weight lifting. Recent studies show that positive body changes promote good sleeping habits and good mood. Experts agree that weight lifting is a good tool in stress management.

10. Lastly, weight training produces stronger bones to withstand extended running and pressure.

While weight training is proven beneficial for runners, it is important to keep in mind that this training should not be done unless a professional trainer is around. Here are some tips in ensuring safety while doing weight trainings:

1. Learn the basics of weight training. Ask a trainer about warming up or cooling down before and after the exercise, and do not forget to ask about proper breathing to get maximum results.
2. To prevent injuries, start with minimum weights; gradually increase the weights as needed. This would slowly build muscle endurance and strength.
3. To avoid muscles from being over worked, make it a habit to observe the heart rate before doing weight training. If it is obviously higher compared to the average daily rate, have another day off or until it normalizes again.
4. To reduce muscle stress, slow down when lifting weights. Allow 2-4 second interval when lifting or lowering the weights.
5. Ask a trainer to design a balanced workout targeting all the muscles in the body. Most beginners concentrate on a specific muscle group (chest or biceps) that results in muscular imbalance. Make sure to exercise all the major muscle groups when doing weight training.
6. Eat a balanced diet. Working out will be useless if runners will

not monitor what they eat. Combining weight training, exercise, and balance diet is the most effective way in achieving desired body weight. More about this later.

Weight training can be very helpful not only for runners but for all kinds of athletes. Knowing how to properly do it can bring anyone one step closer to the finish line.

Treating What Hurts

Treating What Hurts with Runners

Athletes, especially runners are prone to injuries that are commonly associated with knees, legs, and ankles. Studies show that 85% of beginners are injured during their first couple of months of running. This percentage gradually decreases as runners become more aware of how to prevent these injuries.

Experts prove that among athletes, runners have a higher risk of getting injured while training or competing. Other injury-prone sports are volleyball, basketball and soccer.

However, injuries can be lessened significantly if runners know how to prevent them. Here are sample of common injuries and their simple treatments:

1. Runner's knee or patellofemoral syndrome is the injury on the kneecap that commonly affects healthy, young athletes. It occurs when the kneecap rubs against the knee joint that irritates the cartilage resulting to knee pain. This can be treated by simply resting the knee or getting into a physical therapy program. A person with a runner's knee must refrain from doing sports like volleyball, basketball, or running for several weeks. However, it is recommended to do other activities that strengthen the knee like swimming or brisk walking.

2. Shin splits or pain on the lower leg occurs due to overuse. This greatly irritates the tibial and causes pain. In the world of medicine, this is called Tibial stress syndrome. This is the result of a sudden increase in intensity or duration of trainings or sport activities. For

immediate treatment, runners can use ice packs and take medication to prevent inflammation. They must also do low-impact exercises such as cycling and swimming until the pain subsides.

3. Ankle sprain is the most common injury associated with runners caused by abrupt foot twisting movement or landing to an uneven surface while running. This injury affects the ankle's ligament that controls extreme movements involving feet and joints. When the ligament is over stretched or torn, it results in sprain. Treatment for sprained ankles involves the use of ice pack and simple ankle exercises. Wrap the ankles using bandage from calf muscle to the toe. When sleeping, raise the affected ankle using books or pillows.

4. Arch pain occurs when the tissues inside the midfoot are inflamed. This can be treated by taking anti-inflammatory drugs, doing stretching exercises, and wearing comfortable shoes.

5. Snapping hip or the popping noise when flexing or extending the hip is caused when the cartilage on the hip joint are torn due to abrupt movement. Treatment for this syndrome includes taking anti-inflammatory drugs or physical therapy. Serious cases may need x-ray and other tests to ensure that the bones are okay.

6. Pulled hamstrings syndrome is a sport injury affecting the thighs from shinbone up to the pelvis. This injury is associated with sports that require sudden accelerations like basketball and track and field. This occurs when a person lands on his thighs or when the thighs are hit with blunt objects. Common symptoms of pulled hamstrings are pain when flexing the knee, muscle spasm, swelling, and bruising. Treatment for this injury includes the use of ice pack and bandage to control the swelling. Simple stretch exercise may also help, however, if the injury is severe, it is recommended to get medical attention immediately.

While common running injuries can be cured easily, it is still best to prevent them. Here are some simple tips on how to avoid sport-related injuries:

1. Wear comfortable footwear. In buying footwear, be sure to get a slightly larger size with insole. Try the shoes by walking for a few minutes to make sure they are comfortable. Also, make sure to replace the shoes every 400 miles.

2. Do some stretching before running. Loosen up the muscles slowly and get some tips from trainers or physical therapists on proper

stretching.

3. Start with 20-30 minute run-jog routine. There are still some beginners who are so excited taking 1 mile on their first run that results to a lot of injuries. Be more realistic with the goal, setting 5% maximum increase in mileage per week.

It is true that runners are prone to injuries. Knowing how to prevent or cure them will ensure longer life on the tracks to enjoy this sport. The key is to not overuse the legs to spare them from being injured.

Diet Does Matter

Diet Does Matter with Runners

A good diet is a must to complete any training program. This, along with proper exercise, will deliver excellent results and improve performance.

Sports nutritionists recommend a diet that is rich in carbohydrates for runners. This allows the runners to meet their energy requirements when training or competing. A runner's healthy diet should include

60% carbohydrates, 25%fat and 15% protein.

This nutritional diet lets runners eat healthy food to ensure stronger immune system to prevent illnesses as much as possible. In this diet, runners are encourage to consume food that are considered anti-oxidants such as fresh fruits, supplements, and vegetables that are rich with Vitamin C and E, and lycopene.

Runners need exercise and well balanced diet to become more energized while on tracks. Eating well is one of the elements in ensuring that runners will perform better. They will run longer, faster, and more efficiently.

Carbohydrates are the most important source of energy needed for running, that is why runners should eat a lot of pasta, bread, rice, and potatoes.

Runners should have 25% fat in their diet. That is why they should eat a small serving of red meat or skimmed milk everyday. They can get 15% protein from fish, poultry, lean meat, nuts, beans, egg whites, whole grains, low-fat milk and cheese, and vegetables.

Here are some tips on preparing a runner's meal:

1. Stay hydrated especially when running. It is recommended to drink beverages that contain less than 8% sugar. To avoid diarrhea or stomach cramps, stay away from fruit juices when exercising or before running, instead get some energy drinks. Also, do not forget to drink at least 8 glasses of water everyday.
2. Prepare nutritious meal by choosing foods that are high in carbohydrates. Eat bread, cereal, and bagel for breakfast. Have some rice or pasta and vegetables or fish during lunch or dinner. Drink fruit juices between meals unless exercising.
3. While eating chocolate cookies are not strictly prohibited in the runner's meal, it is important to note that these should be avoided before running especially when competing. The recommended pre-race meal is always pasta and bread.
4. When thinking of preparing a meal with fish, serve salmon. A very good source of omega-3 fats protects runners from inflammatory conditions (ex. Arthritis). A runner can bake, grill, or serve it with vegetables.

5. Instead of beef burgers, prepare soy burgers. These will lower the risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, and certain cancers. These burgers are rich in carbohydrates and proteins that are perfect for every runner's recovery run.
6. When serving fruits, oranges are the best choice for a runner's meal. They are very good source of Vitamin C that boost the immune system. They do not only protect the runners from illness they are also proven to help in controlling weight because of their pectin fiber.
7. Runners should consume a cup of non-fat yogurt daily to easily meet their calcium needs. This helps ensure healthy bones while running.
8. To fuel runners before the morning run, nutritionists recommend eating at least 2 slices of toast and a piece of any fruit or cereal with skimmed milk and fresh fruit. Runners can also have low-fat cheese and toasted bagel. This will keep the runners from feeling exhausted right away and hungry throughout the day.
9. To keep runners energized throughout the day, it is

recommended that they do not skip a single meal. They should consume at least 500 calories during breakfast for optimum performance.

10. To prevent gaining unwanted fat, runners must eat moderately during dinner. They should not take in calories more than what the body requires. Needless to say, excess fat will slow down a runner.

11. Lastly, as a general rule in any diet, eat moderately. Some runners think that eating low calorie or low fat foods allows them to eat as much as they want without gaining extra weight. This simply isn't true.

Runners depend on their health in order to enjoy their sport. This largely depends on proper exercise and balanced diet. Knowing what to eat and how much are some of the keys in staying healthy and running.

Should You Decide to Cross Train

Why Do Runners Need Cross Training?

Cross training can prevent injuries. Most overuse injuries can lead to the end of a running career. It is a never-ending problem for most runners. Statistics shows that more than 50 percent of running injuries are commonly acquired from previous injuries. You may prevent or at least lessen the possibilities of overuse injuries by undergoing cross training. Here are some advantages you get from cross trainings.

1. It helps you develop flexibility and strength in your ankles, legs, lower back, and knees. You acquire this from balance running and leg workouts. Walking and elliptical machines can also condition and improve your endurance even when you are not in high-level cross training. For new runners, it helps you more to become comfortable with the sport. It does not require you to absorb too much amount of body impact unlike with the body impact most veteran runners undertake in their cross trainings.
2. It helps you to enhance your determination and motivation for your passion to run. Some runners may get a little bored if they train on the same routes and programs. Most runners are stimulated when they train from different kinds of routines that will enhance their speed and sustain the needed enthusiasm for the sport.

Cross trainings that require runners to work and practice harder help them to be competitive and determined to perform well in races. Anything that you can do to enhance your motivation in training should be rewarding and accomplishing for it can improve your physical and emotional conditioning as well.

3. Cross training can help you to rehabilitate from previous injuries.

It helps those runners to sustain their physical fitness despite that they are required to train less than their usual trainings before acquiring injuries. For most runners, their immediate reaction to injuries is to be back in their usual trainings as much as possible. There are instances that a runner is not recommended to train yet because of bad injuries. In this case, you may have the option to undergo rehabilitation for your recovery process. You may get into water running, cycling, elliptical training, and inline skating. These alternatives can easily simulate and enhance leg movement.

4. You can benefit an active recovery from cross training. Runners that perform active recovery workouts from special trainings can be physically fit and emotionally motivated. However, the training should be gradually worked and handled well. On the other hand, those runners who do not perform an active recovery training rest make

them inactive and slow in recovering from the injury. You may involve yourself to light workouts that can accelerate recovery beyond your usual expectations from just resting. When you are injured, it is important that you must get yourself to cross training that is appropriately matched to your needed running workouts in a particular training level, structure, and time table for your recovery.

5. It will also allow you to enjoy other sports. Cross training that you get from other sports like swimming, cross country skiing, cycling, skating, and other endurance sports can help you to have a healthy heart and lungs. You may choose one particular sport that will specifically help you develop the activeness and determination you lost from your injury. It is advisable that you play your chosen sport often to ensure a fast recovery.

6. Cross training also enhances a greater running fitness. The most common motivation a runner set to his mind is to run faster and be physically ready to face any kind of racetrack. You may even catch up to perform better and beat your personal time.

Establishing a new personal record gives every runner the satisfaction and fulfillment from those hard trainings and emotional challenges

they set to themselves. To increase your motivation, you can be faster as a runner if you get into cross training than just by running only. Aspects that you acquire in cross training increase your running ability.

Other advantages of cross training include the enhancement of your running efficiency, improves the time you get from the training without experiencing fatigue and acquiring injuries, and it increases your power to run.

A better efficiency, more power, good stamina, and greater amount of cross training really help you to become a better runner. Always remember to train consistently to be more prepared and confident in every race.

Tips for Female Runners

Female Runner? Here are Tips for You!

Female runners should always know the safety measures while they exercise. She should always remember some smart habits while she runs so that she will have a fun and safe exercise outside. Some of these guidelines and tips may apply to all runners, but there are some

important facts that are especially addressed to the needs of female runners. Here are some tips and safety precautions a female runner should always remember when running.

1. For female runners, they should know how to have a controlled and balance anaerobic training intervals and repetitive hill trainings that can enhance their strength and endurance. It will also help female runners to gain the same speed achieved by male runners. High-intensity anaerobic training is an effective stimulator for growth hormones in gaining more power and speed as a runner.
2. It is not recommended to use headphones while running. You will not hear cars, bikers, and people that may have bad intentions on you. Many attackers will always choose a victim who they think is vulnerable and not ready for any approaches. Always remember that it is unsafe to run with headphones.
3. Statistics show that heart disease is ten times more fatal than breast cancer for most women in the United States. One of the best things to do to prevent heart disease is to exercise. A woman who exercises regularly can have a normal blood pressure and a regular heartbeat. Every woman can do running as their exercise where they

can have a balanced HDL cholesterol level and will help have a physically fit body.

4. Most women have smaller feet than men. When you are buying running shoes, your best choice should have designs specifically made for female runners. Always remember to buy the shoes that can provide you with the most running comfort.

5. Every female runner should always think that she is a competitive athlete. It is not important if you are not the best in the racetrack. You should realize that a runner should always have the determination and the motivation to be at her best while running.

6. Running can help you burn more excess calories than walking. Slow running can also help you to lose the unwanted weight you gain from the food that you eat. You can perform this kind of exercise everywhere and anytime you want. It is also inexpensive and enjoyable while in your quest for having a physically fit body.

7. Every female runner should always remember to take the necessary precautions while she is out for a jog. She should always inform everybody at home that she will be out with her running

buddies. She may leave a note stating where she is going to jog and what time she will be back. She may bring her personal alarm or a stick for her self-defense in populated areas and unfamiliar routes.

8. For those women who are in their early stage of pregnancy, it is advisable to perform a lower level of exercise. Running pregnant can affect pregnancy hormones leading to the softening of tendons and ligaments. You may have the option to do other sport exercises such as walking, stationary cycling, and swimming as your substitute exercise to running.

9. It is advisable to use a sports bra when you are exercising. In this way, you can control breast motion and you may feel more comfortable while you are running. Try to fit the sports bra before you purchase it. It is important that it should support your breasts when you are in a cross training and on high intensity exercises that include fast running and high jumping.

10. You may join a group of female runners that regularly jog and exercise near your place. This will help you to be always motivated and will keep you away from harm. In addition, it is always fun to have a companion while you are running.

You do not have to be a competitive runner to join races. You will find lots of runners that do not necessarily run for competitions. They join for fun and social interaction to keep them motivated in the exercise. Involve yourself to running, it is a great way to exercise and the best and easiest way to interact and meet a lot of people.

Running and the Weather

Safety Tips when Running in the Cold Weather

When you want to go out and run even on winter season, you may need some help to ensure a safe and comfortable run on the snow and cold climate. Here are some recommended winter-running tips that you should always remember.

1. You should wear a scarf or a handkerchief to cover your face from the glares of the snow. You may encounter bronchial problems when you are running on cold weathers. You should be aware of the hazards you may get in this kind of seasons. Some of the dangers you may get from winter running may include poor eyesight, bronchial difficulties, hypothermia, and frostbite.

2. It is important to drink plenty of water before and after you are through with your run. Even if you are not sweating does not mean you are not losing water in your body. It is essential in winter running to stay hydrated.

3. Run on layers for winter weather. You should consider running on a base layer of snugs and wicking materials like Thermax, polypropylene, wool, or polyester. You could also use mid-layer loosening materials that allow moisture from the base layer such as fleece and polyester. Lastly, you can use a jacket as an outer layer to prevent the wind from entering your body and let the moisture go out.

4. You may start your run into the wind and finish your run with the wind behind you. This means that it will help you to get home easier by allowing the force of the wind to help you move faster.

5. You should dry off quickly to avoid chilling and drying the sweat after your run. You should change immediately to dry clothes as soon as you get home. It is also advisable to bring extra clothes and a pair of socks in case you want to change anywhere you want when at rest or on breaks.

6. Find the right clothing that can maintain the needed body temperature. You may wear clothing that are for weathers with 20 degrees warmer and can accommodate the temperature outside.
7. You should be recognized while you are running in the cold. It is suggested that you bring your identification every time you run alone in winter. You should also inform anyone that you are going outside to take a run and let them know how long you will be out.
8. You may add dark sunglasses when you run outside. This will help you to have a good view on your route. The glare of the snow can affect your eyesight and can even dangerously lead to blindness.
9. Ask your friend to come with you in your run outside. You can make your winter run more social. It could even turn out to be more enjoyable if you go out in groups. This will also ensure your safety being with friends in your run.
10. If it is snowy outside, it is advisable that you wear clothing with bright colors and reflective gears that others can easily identify. If it is too dark and too snowy, you may think twice before leaving, it could

be too risky for your safety and health.

11. You may cut half of your total running schedule if the weather is bad. You may spend the half of your schedule to cross training, exercise videos, indoor sports, and weightlifting. This will be your alternative while you wait until the weather gets better and where you can continue your regular running schedules.

12. Always choose to run on snow instead of running on icy roads or slopes. It is also advisable to shorten your strides to ensure safety running and avoid injuries. You should run slower than your usual run in normal climate conditions.

13. You may buy trail shoes that are commonly used in winter running. You may also improvise screw shoes that will help you on your run in snowy and icy pathways. It will also help you improve your balancing and can make your ankles stronger.

You should always remember these tips while running in winter climates. It takes a lot of safety precautions if you want to go outside and run. Cold climates can make your outdoor activity unsafe and dangerous if you do not prepare yourself to extreme cold and bad

weather.

What About Racing?

What About Racing: Preparations Before the Leap

To be in good running shape, it will take you a several months of preparation.

Train Like a Pro

Those months of preparation should not be wasted by just doing anything you would like to do. You must run for about 5 to 6 days a week. Why run that much? Here is exactly how you should spend those running days:

- 1-2 days should be spent for long runs, say 5-6 miles.
- 1 day should be spent while working out on speed. Working out 200's for speed training is said to be advisable. Start with 5 to 6 and then maintain a pace that is steady. Improving your speed is easy if you do strides about once or twice a week every after run. But while doing this, you must not be stressed out. Relax.

- 1 day should be spent for hill workouts.
- 1-2 days for shorter runs, i.e., about 30 minutes or 3 to 4 miles.

Before running, don't forget to warm up so as not to upset your muscles and ligaments. Stretch properly. You need to stretch and warm up before running to not make yourself prone to injury. Jogging in place can be a good form of warm-up.

Watch What You Put into Your Mouth

Proper diet is essential for the health and performance of a runner. You don't want to be sluggish while training. Eating the right kind of food will make you ready for running. Carbohydrates are one food group that runners should never run out of in their diets. Carb loading is required to make a runner's muscles ready for action because it is what energizes a runner. Good sources of carbohydrates include bread and pasta. However, a runner should not eat anything heavy before a race because it can cause cramps. Eat way before the race and just something small.

For more information about diet see the chapter "Diet Does Matter."

A runner will need to drink lots of liquid the night before the race.

Hydration is very important to ward off any sickness.

Have Enough Rest

How you handle the night before a race is crucial in doing great in a race. You have to have adequate amount of sleep and should not undergo any stressing activity.

As you near the day of the race you have to prepare the following:

Create a checklist of the things that you have to bring.

You should label or mark all the things that you will bring in a race to avoid confusing your things with others' or vice versa.

Choose your most comfortable and functional running shoes.

Lightweight shoes are often preferred but it's really your call on which ever you feel best running with.

During the big day or the day of the race, be sure to wake up early to be able to catch better your presence of mind. Don't eat anything that

might make your stomach upset. Get to the racing spot early. Get your things to the designated spot where you can keep them. Or if you have a company or a running coach let him or her help with your things. Familiarize yourself with the racing field though you should have done this a few months or weeks prior. 15 minutes before the race begins, do some stretching and light jogging to prep up your muscles. Make it to the start line about 10 minutes before the race.

When the race starts, you have to slow down. Pace yourself and maintain an even pace from the beginning to the end of the race. For each mile, signs will be available for you to monitor your pace. Keep tabs of your pace by timing yourself for each mile that you finish. Don't forget to drink at the provided drink stations. Walking while drinking is a good way to summon more energy. One more thing: Enjoy!

Consistency is the name of the game here. If you don't make yourself do all the required training stuff, it's almost preparing to fail during the race. Without self-discipline you will not be worthy to run a race at all.

Racing Basics

Racing Basics that a Runner Newbie Should Not Take for Granted

Running can be one healthy hobby for anyone. However, before engaging in any running activity, check these running basics for beginners:

Consult the Doctor First

Any new bodily activity that you get yourself involved with necessitates the advice of a health expert. If you are planning to do running for a long haul tell your family doctor about it. The doctor will definitely inform you of whatever health concern that you might go through in case you would like to make running a regular activity. This will prepare you physically for any problem that might arise.

Learn Your Running Safety Precautions

One way to ensure your safety while running is familiarizing yourself with the running spot you choose to tread, err, run. Common sense should tell you that you must avoid busy streets. Tie your shoelaces well to avoid getting tripped by loose shoe laces. Change your route frequently since any discernable path will make you an easy victim for

potential predators. Wearing headsets while running will make you less aware of your surroundings. Avoid such habit. Another logical tip - look at where you are going. Emergency know-how can be very helpful, tool.

Learn to Eat Like a Professional Runner

Ever heard of carb loading? This is what constitutes the dietary needs of a professional runner. Carbohydrates serve as the fuel of a runner's muscles. Good source of carbohydrates are various kinds of bread and some pasta. Drink adequate amount of liquids, especially water to take care of your body's hydration. Everyone knows that the body should be hydrated well to avoid getting any sicknesses.

Warm up to avoid injury.

Proper stretching techniques can be contributed by either your doctor, coach or an experienced running mate. Don't overlook this bit of advice as it will save you from lots of injuries. Devote about 5 minutes stretching before and after running. Little jogging can help you warm up. This will make your muscles easier to work out and running can be breezier than without having any stretching and warm up exercises.

Improve Your Running

Cross training is known to improve one's running skills. This is because it works on the other muscles that running un-worked. These non-running muscles make a runner prone to injuries. To do well in toning one's body and improve one's strength cross training can be a good way to accomplish both. Boredom is fought by cross training, too.

Keep Yourself Psyched with Running

There might be a lot of runners that lose motivation after a few days of learning to run that they don't even get to join a race anymore. How do you keep yourself motivated? Learn these benefits of running:

It has a lot of health benefits. There are those who would like to lose weight. Yes, 60% of runners chose to do the activity to fight obesity or to simply maintain their weight. Weight management is facilitated by running simply because it allows one to sweat out all the excess energy in one's body. Some are trying to treat their diseases, while some plainly believe that running can halt or at least slow down their aging. In some way or another, they do achieve these goals through

running.

Running can help you improve your mental health. No, it can't turn insane ones to become normal in a wink of an eye. But running is reportedly known to relieve stress and anxiety. It helps the body release the feel-happy hormone known as serotonin.

If you would like to expand your social circle, running can be of great help, too. With looking healthy, confidence comes next. With this new-found confidence, aside from having lots of running mates, you can even bag a date out of running with a bunch of people. Remember those marathons for a cause event? Yes, one can contribute to charities just by running. Isn't this one cool and socially-responsible reason to fall in love with running?

With those loads of information, making an informed decision as to how to go through your running activity or even career will be a lot easier. With the physical, psychological and social benefits running offers, what can be more fun while staying safe and healthy through running?

Running a Marathon - The Mother of All

Running a Marathon - The Mother of All

Many runners are dreaming or are actually planning to run a marathon. Why not? It's the ultimate event where a runner can test his or her running skills with. Hundreds or even thousands of marathons are sponsored each year to give in to the runners' love for such race and often they're done for a cause, too - charity marathons.

But how does one make sure that he or she will be prepared enough to run a marathon successfully? Here are some quick tips and suggestions:

Safety First

Before undergoing any activity required to get into that best marathon running shape, learn these precautions first:

- Consult your doctor, particularly your family doctor who knows your medical history. Ask for suggestions on who can better help you with your plan while considering your health.

- Choose the proper marathon training apparel for you. Don't ever

forget that any item that makes you feel pain when used or worn out will not help you reach your goal and might even cause injury. Look for the best running shoes that you could find. Shops that sell running supplies or apparel can help in this area. Don't be too shy to ask for advice. Get two pairs of trainers to have a spare pair when you are not that comfy with the other pair or when they get damaged. Don't forget to tie your shoelaces properly before running. This will optimize your performance and will avoid you from tripping from them. Search for the best marathon kit that will make you comfortable while running.

- Familiarize yourself on the location where you are planning to do your marathon training. This is to avoid becoming a victim of those who have bad intentions. Stay away from busy streets. Avoid wearing headsets to make yourself more alert and aware of all the happenings in your surroundings. Be with a running mate if such doesn't distract you.

- Learn emergency routines. If you incur any injury, stop training immediately. Take a rest. Use ice on the injured part. And then, elevate the injured part.

Engage in Marathon Training

Aside from your several years or months of running training, a marathon training program will definitely walk you through on how to finish one successfully.

Stretching and warm up activities will prepare your muscles to be more flexible. This flexibility will avoid injuries, too.

Start running slowly. Learn to even walk or jog in your marathon training because that might just be what will get you through the marathon proper. Yes, walking or jogging is allowed during marathons.

While training for a marathon, cross training is advisable. Aside from warding off boredom, this will work out the other muscles that your running leaves un-worked.

Use a training log when preparing for a marathon. This will document all those steps that make you better or worse as a runner. From these mistakes and improvements, you'll learn how to do better during the marathon proper. The log will also make you aware of which activities cause you injuries. It is also a good motivating item.

Don't forget about hydrating your body properly. One of the most essential concerns that a runner should consider is a well-hydrated body. Drink more than a non-strenuous activity doer is drinking. Your body will require more than 8-12 glasses of water a day, which is the usual requirement an average person. However, don't drink too much before running as this might make you uncomfortable. Train with isotonic drinks which are good in replacing your body's lost salts and liquid.

Drinking comes with eating. A balanced diet is another health concern that a runner should not overlook. Value the help of carb loading by eating pasta, bread, rice and potatoes. Carbohydrates energize the muscles of a runner to get him or her through long runs.

To further enjoy the training you can even join a marathon or running organization. Experienced ones thrive from these clubs and you can get to learn more pacing techniques.

With these tips, it will be hard for a running enthusiast to not learn the ins and outs of a marathon quickly. Just follow each suggestion properly and with the guidance of specialists or experienced marathon runners and you will be ready for any marathon.

