

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

How to Start Running



Running can be a great way to improve your health. It's one of the most effective ways to burn calories and build cardiovascular endurance, and increase your mental toughness. If you run outdoors, you also benefit from the exposure to nature, which can reduce stress, relieve anxiety, and boost your mood. But before you lace up your shoes, check out these helpful hints for beginners.

Dress for Success

What you wear when you run makes a difference. If you're serious about running on a regular basis, you will need to invest in some proper gear



You need running shoes – cross-trainers are too heavy and bulky. They should be comfortable the first time you put them on and have good cushioning. Buy shoes from a store that can assess whether you have a neutral gait or if you supinate or pronate. How your body naturally moves will have a big impact on which shoes are best for you.



Wear dry wick clothing. Cotton soaks up sweat, which weighs you down and causes chafing. Damp clothing can also make you chill quickly once you stop running. Dry wick material pulls moisture away from the skin, keeping you cooler. When needed, add an outer, breathable layer of nylon to protect against wind and rain. If it's really cold, add a middle layer of polar fleece.



For women, a **good sports bra is essential.** There are many options on the market, but don't be distracted by fashion. Comfort is key. Some women wear two sports bras (one conventional shoulder strap and one racer shoulder strap) to minimize movement and spread the shoulder support.

Make it Fun

When you first start your running program, you'll likely feel excited and energized about your new commitment. Your motivation may soon get tested, but making your run fun is a great strategy to stay inspired and stick with it. Running with a friend can make a difference, so find a running buddy or join a running club. Listen to music to stay energized, especially on longer runs. Leverage technology like social media and apps to share goals and track progress – friendly competition can be a great motivator!



Start Slow

Watch out for beginner mistakes! Running too fast, too soon can lead to injury.



Start with short running intervals to build endurance. Start with one minute of running followed by one to four minutes of walking, increasing the running interval as you become more comfortable. Build week by week doing more running and less walking.



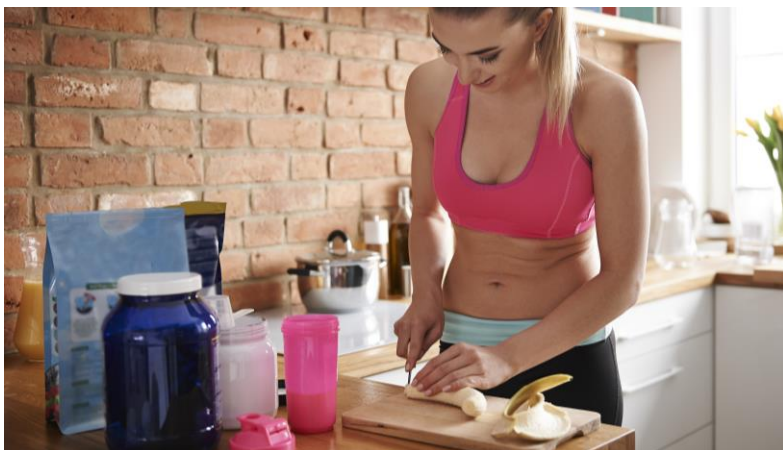
Make sure to cross-train. Your running program should include more than just running. Core work, strength training, and complimentary aerobic exercise help balance different muscle groups that support injury prevention and improved running form.



Proper running form conserves energy, improves your pace, and reduces the risk of injury. Keep head lifted, shoulders level but relaxed, and back long and tall. Swing arms naturally and keep hands relaxed. Clenched fists can lead to tension in your arms, shoulders, and neck.

Food is Fuel

Eating right and staying hydrated can make or break your runs. What you eat before and after a run has a big effect on your performance and recovery.



Before a run, eat something light that's high in carbohydrates, but low in fat, protein, and fibre. Ideally, finish eating 90 to 120 minutes before you run, but some runners can eat 30 to 60 minutes before and still work out comfortably. Determine the best routine for you.

After a run, eat carbs and protein within 30 minutes to restore muscle glycogen. Healthy protein like eggs, yogurt, nuts, and lean meat are good options. A good ratio of carbs to protein is 3 to 1.

TOP FOODS FOR RUNNERS

- Whole grains (breads, pasta, quinoa)
- Lean proteins (eggs, salmon)
- Fresh fruit (bananas, berries, oranges)
- Yogurt
- Peanut butter
- Almonds

WHAT TO AVOID

- Sugar-filled drinks (especially soda)
- Spicy food
- High-fiber veggies (broccoli)
- Lactose-rich foods
- Legumes

Sources www.verywellfit.com/how-to-start-running-the-absolute-beginners-guide-2911191#citation- | www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/15/1/31
www.verywellfit.com/should-i-eat-before-a-run-2911547 | Images from Freepik.com