

[IMAGE]

Get the Runner's High: 5 Steps for Beginners

By Editorial Staff

Want to start running, but don't know where to start (or if you can do it)? Here are some tips on how to run the right way:

Step 1: Choose the Right Shoe: There's no piece of equipment more important than the shoe to a runner.

After all, choose the wrong shoe and you'll increase your risk of suffering a minor to major injury not just to the feet, but also the legs, knees and hips. Visit a running store and ask for a complete evaluation including foot width, stride tendencies, etc. They'll recommend the right shoe to ensure your running experience doesn't end in disaster.

Step 2: Choose the Right Gear: Those fancy running outfits you see in the sporting goods stores actually have a purpose, particularly when it comes to making sure you don't overheat during your run. You'll be amazed by how quickly your body heats up after only a 1/2 mile or so, even on a frigid day. That's where moisture-wicking fabrics come in. Avoid cotton, which will absorb sweat, weighing you down and keeping the heat in. And remember to pick up a hat with a brim, water-resistant sunscreen, and a belt that holds small water bottles, your house key, etc. Hit the road without one of these items and you'll pay a steep price.

runner - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark *Step 3: Choose the Right Surface:* When it comes to impact, the type of surface you run on matters – considerably. While many people run on the treadmill at a gym or the sidewalk outdoors, neither of those surfaces may be ideal when it comes to the consistent pounding your body (particularly your knees) takes stride after stride. You may want to consider the local high-school track, which generally has a cushioned surface to absorb impact. Other options, depending on where you live, include a dirt road or field, which is much softer than concrete; or even a paved road (use the bike lane to be safe) instead of the harder sidewalk.

Step 4: Choose the Right Schedule: You're almost ready to start your first run, but there's one important step left: *the when*. Start with one or two days a week and run a mile or less at a moderate pace, just to get the feel of things. If your knees start hurting, stop and talk to your doctor. Build to a third day or increase your distance, speed, etc., as you get more comfortable. There are a variety of free running apps that track

distance, speed, calories burned and other variables to keep you engaged run to run, week to week, as you track your progress.

Step 5: You know what step 5 is – get out there and start running! If you're like most runners, you'll find it's much more than a physically and mentally challenging experience; it's also a time to relax, get away from the stresses of life, and be alone with your thoughts after a long day – or before one. If you have a pre-existing health condition, consult with your doctor first.

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