

[IMAGE]

Four R's of Running

By Editorial Staff

Running is an increasingly popular pursuit, and for good reason: it's a great cardiovascular and total-body workout, not to mention the mental-health benefits - challenging yourself, spending a little time in the Great Outdoors, enjoying a little one-on-one time amid your too-busy, too-hectic daily grind. Whether you're running a mile a week or 5 miles a day, it's easy to forget there are ways to make your running experience more safe, more enjoyable and more productive. Here are four to consider before you hit the open road:

Respect: Running can put extreme demands on your body, regardless of your experience and training. Respect your body by considering the proper shoe for your feet & running style, your apparel (your body will warm up quickly and stay warm, so dress lightly or be prepared to remove and carry layers), and hydration (drink 16 ounces before your run and 4-6 ounces every 20 minutes or so during your run).

running man - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark **Routine:** While developing a routine is important in terms of pace, motion, etc., you also need to *vary* the routine to stay challenged and interested. Too many trips down the same route will sap your drive; pick a different distance, direction, etc., occasionally and stay engaged. Buy a GPS watch or map out routes beforehand online at sites such as MapMyRun.com.

Rhythm: Develop a rhythm when you run, one that not only establishes a uniform pace (the speed you want to go), but also engages your entire body. For example, swinging your arms in a controlled fashion helps you move more effectively, while running upright and ensuring your head, neck and shoulders are relaxed and facing straight ahead helps prevent posture-related injuries and pain.

Recourse: Since most people run alone, you need to prepare for the unexpected. What is your recourse if something goes wrong? To minimize risk, carry your cell phone with you (buy a wrist or waist pack) so you can contact someone if you sprain an ankle or a loved one has an emergency and needs to contact *you*. And for long / isolated runs, let a loved one know your route, just in case.

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