

Fit Facts™

FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE®

Ready to Run?

YOU SEE THEM POUNDING THE pavement at lunch or after work, sweating away the cares of the world. They make it look so easy, as if nothing could be more natural than running for miles or minutes on end. But the last time you tried it, all you received were blisters and shin splints for your troubles.

Sound familiar? Running (or jogging, which some see as simply a slower form of running) is one of the most effective, time-efficient workouts around, but if you, well, get off on the wrong foot, it's hard to stay motivated and easy to get discouraged. But starting — and sticking with — a running program doesn't have to be difficult. It's simply a matter of doing the right things at the right time.



Training Basics*

| WEEK | TIME | INTENSITY |
|------|------|---|
| 1 | 20 | Walk |
| 2 | 22 | Walk |
| 3 | 22 | 30-60 sec. jog, 5 min. walk |
| 4 | 24 | Same as #3 |
| 5 | 24 | 30-60 sec. jog, 4 min. walk |
| 6 | 26 | Same as #5 |
| 7 | 26 | 30-60 sec. jog, 3 min. walk |
| 8 | 28 | Same as #7 |
| 9 | 28 | 30-60 sec. jog, 2 min. walk |
| 10 | 30 | Same as #8 |
| 11 | 30 | Jog 2 min., walk 1 minute |
| 12+ | 30 | Gradually progress to continuous jogging. |

*Individuals who are in good shape may progress at a faster rate by increasing time and intensity simultaneously, while those who are less fit may opt to progress more gradually.

Step by Step

First things first: check with your doctor to be sure that running is the right activity for you. Individuals who should probably bypass running in favor of walking include those with orthopedic or heart problems, or those who are more than 20 percent overweight.

Nothing can derail a running program faster than sore feet. Though they often carry a hefty price tag, good-fitting running shoes can help prevent shin splints, blisters and sore muscles. Aside from comfortable clothing, little else is required. Once you're suited up, simply head out your front door or take a drive to a nearby park. Asphalt or dirt surfaces are preferable to concrete; be sure that where you run is safe and well lit.

Jog Your Memory

As a child, you probably didn't think about how you ran. You just did it. Your muscles took over while your brain concentrated on more important things, like hopscotch or baseball cards. But as you've grown older, your muscles may have forgotten how to run effortlessly. To help jog both your

and your muscles' memories, here are a few tips:

- Keep your head level, avoid bouncing and lean forward slightly from the ankles, not the waist.
- Keep your shoulders down and relaxed.
- Strike the ground first with your heel, then roll to the ball of the foot, pushing off from the toes.

F.I.T. Tip

Frequency, Intensity and Time (FIT) are the elements you need to put together an effective beginning running program. The accompanying table offers a program for those who are less fit, but may be adapted for those who have been exercising aerobically for some time. The best way to halt a running program in its tracks is to do too much too soon. A minimum of 20 to 30 minutes, three days per week (with days off in between) at an intensity of 50 percent to 85 percent of maximum heart rate is the standard recommendation, but may be manipulated to suit individual speed or endurance goals. Here are a few more things to keep in mind:

- Take time to warm up before, and cool down after, a run.
- Never increase mileage more than 10 percent per week.
- If anything hurts, take time off until it feels better.
- Follow a strength-training program on alternate days to help reduce upper-body fatigue.

Like any activity, running isn't for everybody. If you don't enjoy it, don't do it. But if you do, take your time, progress slowly and allow your muscles to adapt to the rigors of running.

Compliments of:

Put your name and logo in this area, then make handout copies.



Reprinted with permission from the American Council on Exercise.

If you are interested in information on other health and fitness topics, contact: American Council on Exercise, 4851 Paramount Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, 800-825-3636; or, go online at <http://www.acefitness.org> and access the complete list of ACE Fit Facts.