

Running or Jogging

Running or jogging is one of the most popular forms of exercise in the US. Jogging is running at a slow pace. Running can help your physical and emotional health.

What are the benefits of running?

The benefits of running include:

- Weight loss
- Lower cholesterol levels
- Lower blood pressure
- Better endurance
- Reduced risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity, and certain types of cancer
- Less anxiety and depression
- Improved self-esteem

What equipment do I need?

One of the reasons that running is so popular is because you don't need a lot of equipment. The main thing you need is a good pair of running shoes. Proper running shoes can help prevent injuries, so it is important to find shoes that are right for you.

There are many types of running shoes. Some running shoes are designed for cushioning while others are designed mainly for motion control. Motion-control shoes are also called anti-pronation shoes.

- Most people need a shoe with both cushioning and motion control.
- If you have a high arch, you might consider a running shoe that has a lot of cushioning.
- If you have a low arch, or if your feet roll inward (pronate), you need a running shoe that is designed for motion control.

If possible, buy your shoes from a running specialty store, where you can get expert advice.

Proper clothes can make you feel more comfortable during running.

Moisture-wicking synthetic materials move moisture away from your skin, keeping you dry. Cotton can hold moisture, making you feel sticky and damp. If you are going to run in damp or cold weather, wear a jacket that is breathable and water resistant.

You may find it helpful to have a sports watch with a stopwatch feature to keep track of your running time.

What is the proper running technique?

Follow these tips for proper running technique:

- Let your arms swing naturally by your sides and keep your elbows bent 90 degrees.
- Keep your head and trunk upright and lean your hips slightly forward.
- Keep your jaw and shoulders relaxed and try to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Try to land lightly on your feet and allow your knee to bend as soon as your foot hits the ground.
- Run at a pace that lets you carry on a conversation with someone without getting out of breath.

How often and how far should I run?

Check with your healthcare provider before you start a running program. After that, your next step is to decide your running goals. First make sure that you can walk at least 3 miles at a brisk pace. If you can do that, a good goal for general fitness is to run 8 to 12 miles each week. If you are just starting it might take you several months to reach this goal.

Start your running program with a combination of walking and jogging. Start by jogging at a comfortable pace for about 30 seconds, then walk until you feel fully recovered. Continue this jog/walk cycle for 20 to 30 minutes, 3 times a week. Slowly increase the time you jog instead of walk by 10 second intervals over the next several weeks. Eventually you will be able to jog the entire way. Be careful to not push yourself too fast. Once you are comfortable jogging 3 days per week, you can add a fourth day if you wish. Make sure that you rest for one day between workouts.

How can I prevent running injuries?

If not done properly, running can cause injuries. When you run, your foot hits the ground with a force that is more than 3 times your body weight. Training errors such as running too far, too often, or too fast can also cause injuries. To prevent injuries follow these tips:

- Try to run on soft, flat ground such as grass or a dirt path. Concrete and pavement are unforgiving surfaces and can cause extra jarring of your body.
- Do not run on slanted or uneven surfaces.
- Replace your shoes every 500 miles since they eventually lose their ability to absorb shock.
- Increase slowly. Try not to increase your running mileage by more than 10% each week.
- Running may be a lot of work, but it should never be painful. Some muscle soreness is normal, especially when starting out, but don't run if your pain gets worse. If you develop pain during a run, stop running right away. If you keep having pain for more than a week, see your healthcare provider.

- Warm up and cool down. Before starting your run, warm up with 5 minutes of brisk walking. Start your run at a slow pace and slowly build up to your target speed. Near the end of your run, slowly reduce your speed and eventually slow down to a walking pace. Cool down with a 5-minute walk followed by 2 to 3 minutes of stretching.

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