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About the Author

Amanda Whiston is an enthusiastic runner who also has a busy career and family life.

Amanda started running as a form of exercise which could fit easily in and around her other personal and business commitments.

She was helped from the start by a couple of good friends that were also recreational runners. She found that the family dog enjoyed a run too and they are both more fit from doing a light run regularly.

She soon found that the promised benefits were worth the effort and time involved.

She did not need the monthly payments for a membership of a gym and she could adjust her running to changing needs and circumstances.

She has made new friends of other runners and learned much from them.

Amanda has also gained a better appreciation of places that she and her family visited for holidays since she started to run there instead of just driving around.

Amanda believes that almost everyone can benefit from running at a level which suits them and their lifestyle.

She hopes that her book will help many people get into the healthy habit of running.

Introduction

We all have our own reasons for running.

I can remember that, as a child, I used to run everywhere. So, I suppose, it was natural for me to choose running when I was looking for a form of



exercise which was not expensive and could fit in with the many demands I already had on my time.

Many people see some runners in their neighborhood who puff and groan as they run around the streets. They look under stress, unhappy and completely wrapped up in their own thoughts.

My experience is that this sort of runner is a very small minority who are perhaps over-exerting themselves. Some people might think they are being forced to do it!

I don't think they would continue if they weren't getting some benefit from their effort.

I hope that some of them will read my book so they can find out how to reduce the pain and increase their gains.

I will help you by explaining the choices available to you and suggesting ways to fit running into your daily life with minimum impact and maximum effect.

The Difference between "Aerobic" and "Anaerobic" Exercise

This explanation is simplified and does not cover all the factors involved. However, I use it as my guide.

Aerobic is usually defined as "something which depends on the presence of oxygen". So, aerobic exercise is anything which can be done without putting too great a demand on the ability of your body to process oxygen to power it.

Some examples could include the aerobic classes where people time their movements to music and the bellowed instructions of the person running the class, using an exercise bicycle, light running and low impact sports.

Anaerobic exercise is any which requires your body to use its reserves of fat to power it.

Weightlifting is an example of anaerobic exercise because much higher demands are put on the body and it must use its fat reserves for the required level of effort.

Running could qualify as aerobic exercise except where it is taken to extreme levels.

Preparation

A vital part of preparation for any kind of new exercise program is to consult your medical advisor to ensure that you have the physical capacity to handle the transition from your current level of activity to a more active one.

It is also very important to have regular check-ups from then on to ensure that your body is benefiting from and can continue to stand up to the amount of running which you are doing.

We can do some self-checking but may not notice the development of a potentially serious condition because the signs can appear gradually.

Start slowly



It's natural to be enthusiastic about any new activity or interest and many people get their gear and want to start running.

But, your body will need time and care to adjust to the stresses running will put on it.

Even if you have a fair level of physical strength and have been active in other types of physical activity, too much running too soon can cause problems which could take a long time to correct.

It's important to realize that you will feel some discomfort during the first couple of months of running, especially if you have not been doing regular exercise previously.

You will need to keep yourself motivated through that period.

An early injury or other difficulty will affect your rate of improvement and probably reduce your motivation to continue your running program.

It will take a while before you will start to feel some benefit from your efforts showing in other areas of your life.

If you have not been exercising previously, I suggest that you start by walking briskly and slowly adding some light running to each session after a while.

As your body adjusts to the greater demands on it, do some slow running at the beginning of each session and then increase the length and intensity of your runs while you reduce the walking part of your sessions.

This will help to warm your body and get it ready for the harder effort.

Keep within limits that don't put your health at risk. Don't make your early sessions too long. You also may feel a temptation to add a couple of miles to a particularly enjoyable run.

It's common for many new runners to try to extend the length of their stride and run at a faster pace before their body is ready for it. The length of your natural running step will have your foot landing under your body where it can support it and keep you balanced. Longer strides are not the way to run faster, you need to give yourself some time to develop more power and then you will run faster.

“Moderation in all things” is a good maxim to keep in mind when you are starting your running. It will help your body to adjust at an appropriate rate and reduce the chance of an early injury.

Grass, sand or sidewalk: Vary the surfaces which you run on.

Sidewalks are very hard on your feet when you are walking and much tougher when you start running.

It's not much better to always run on easier surfaces like grass or prepared tracks.

Try to get some experience on as wide a range of safe surfaces as you can.

I've never used a treadmill but it could be a good option for days when the weather is too bad for you to run. That is one time that I would use a headset!

The fact that using a treadmill is fairly boring can cause you to lose focus. You will also sweat more heavily because there is no wind to dry your skin. Don't ignore any pain or the appearance of any blisters or other sores, stiffness, or irritation.

These things need to be heeled and the problems resolved while they are still minor.

You cannot perform at your best when you have some condition which is affecting you.

Running puts plenty of pressure on you when you are fit. It will also cause any problem to become worse more rapidly if you don't take action.

Recovering from Injury with R.I.C.E.

Some sort of injury is almost inevitable for any runner though I hope that this book will help you to reduce their incidence and the intensity for you.

If you have suffered an injury and want to help your body to recover in the shortest time, the **R.I.C.E.** system can help.

R.I.C.E is an acronym for Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation.

It does not fix the injury but may make your road to recovery shorter and easier.

This system will usually provide noticeable benefits but check with your health professional before you use it. Leave the diagnosis of any problem to the professionals because you can cause further lasting damage to yourself by self treatment.

Rest does not usually mean keeping the affected part immobile. Your doctor will advise you on a suitable level of activity and may suggest certain specific exercises to help your recovery.

Some people have no trouble resting their limbs but they reduce the effectiveness of that by not relaxing and letting their minds get some rest from their problems as well.

This can cause your recovery to be less effective and take longer.

Gradual Muscle Relaxation

One exercise which I have found helpful when I’ve been under stress is to sit down and consciously focus on relaxing each group of muscles in my body one after another.

Start by closing your eyes to minimize external distractions. Then, concentrate on your breathing. Make sure that you are drawing each breath deep into your stomach and not just taking short breaths which limit the amount of oxygen your lungs get to process.

Then, start with the muscles in your neck and concentrate on easing any tension in them. Then, do the same with your shoulders, your hands, and slowly work your way down your body to your feet.

By that time, you will probably start to feel some benefit. You may even drift into a light sleep.

Applying **ice** to a swelling or sore part of your body can reduce the recovery time noticeably. If you don’t have an icepack, you might wrap a frozen pack of vegetables in a towel and gently apply it to the injury.

Using a compression bandage can support a damaged joint while also reducing the visible effects of the injury and speeding the healing process. Get expert advice on how tight your bandage should be and how long you should leave it in place. Overuse or an over-tight bandage can cause problems.

Elevating your injured leg when you rest can help to reduce any potential problem which might be caused by your blood forming a static pool in the immobilized limb.

Dealing with the Weather

Running in High Temperatures

You might think that warm weather is the best time to run, but I know some runners who tell me that they have some of their most enjoyable running in cold weather.



You have to be careful when the sun is shining. Your running raises your internal temperature and you need to dissipate some of that heat. This is not so easy to do when the external temperature is also high.

If you start to cramp or feel dizzy, stop and take on some liquid. These are two signals that may present before heatstroke occurs.

If there is no breeze, then your body will not be able to balance your temperature as efficiently as it would when it had assistance from a cooling wind.

Anyone that is not in good condition, whether it is because of lack of preparation, poor diet, insufficient sleep, injury or illness will be at special risk when the temperature is extreme.



Children need to be watched at all times. That becomes even more important when it is very hot because they tend to over-exert themselves without regard to possible consequences.

If you feel that your body can deal with the conditions, still consider having a lighter or shorter session.

A cap or sun-hat should be an essential part of your equipment. Remember that the UV risk may be higher than it seems.

Keep up your intake of water. Arrange your route so that you can get water during your run. Carry some water with you if you are unsure about what might be available during your run.

Also, make sure that you don't decrease your body's sodium level. You need to be aware of the calories you are taking on board with these drinks.

You can also benefit from pouring a cup of water on your head or dousing yourself lightly from a hose.

Running with at least one other person is a good idea if the conditions are not what you are used to.

Take breaks before it becomes obvious that you need them.

Reduce the duration and intensity of your sessions when the weather starts to warm up. Then, build up slowly as your body adjusts and stay within a range than you can manage without undue risk.

Running in Cold Weather

Extreme cold puts extra demands on a runner as well. But, most like to run when the temperature starts to drop because it helps to compensate for the heat our bodies generate during the session.

Use layers of clothing rather than thick items so that adjustments are easier.

A hat or cap is a very good idea.

I wear thin, insulated gloves. Thick gloves can become uncomfortable, especially if they become wet.



Wet Weather

We get rain all year round, so we need to be prepared for it. A thin zippered jacket is a good investment.

If you are running along roads and tracks, you will be less easy for other users to see and avoid when it is raining.

You will also need to run a little slower because of the risk of slipping.

If your favorite tracks become muddy, you will not enjoy your running so much and will have to work harder when the mud clings to your shoes.

You should get shoes with adequate tread and ensure that they will not let the rain in. It's probably a good idea to have a couple of pairs which you alternate so that each pair has time to dry properly before you run in them again.

The Wind Factor

The other major weather factor which you will face is the wind.

A cross wind can be annoying but it is dealing with the wind that you have to run into or ahead of which will most affect the success of our running sessions.

Always make a note of any significant assistance from a tailwind or resistance from a headwind in your running diary.

Accept that you will sometimes get a headwind but it will help you build your strength for later runs.

You must decide how you will handle the wind if you intend to do a fairly long run that day.

If you run against the wind for the first part of your session, you will probably have the advantage of it being a tailwind for the return part of your journey, unless it reverses direction during that time.

If you run with the wind for the first part of your session, you will probably be running against the wind during the later part of your session when you will have started to tire.

You might be able to arrange for someone to pick you up after you’ve run with the wind for a while so that you don’t have to push against the wind for your return.

That is worth considering when you are still building up your strength and endurance. But, you should do some running against the wind when you are confident that you can handle it.

Dear Diary

I believe that getting a diary to record all your running experience in will pay big dividends in the years to come.

You can, of course, make yours a virtual diary by recording everything on your computer. I think the convenience of being able to carry it with you and add the information about your latest run while it is still fresh in your mind makes a paper version better.

This also makes it easy for you to take it when you go to your doctor so that you can tell him or her about anything relevant which you have recorded.

Some people record only the basic details when they start their diary or training log. That’s a personal choice.

I know many runners that also record their thoughts and feelings about their running and their progress. They find it motivating to look back over earlier entries when they were hardly able to even dream about running distances which have now become routine for them.

Important information which is always worth recording includes:

Your diet: Changes in what you eat and drink can have a major effect on your running. One benefit of starting to run or take up any other physical activity is that you will focus more on the quality of what you eat and tend to limit unhealthy choices.

Amount and quality of sleep: Your running will encourage you to ensure that you get enough sleep. You will notice a variation in your sleep pattern much more easily if you record the details.

If you start to put too much effort for your current physical state, your sleep will be one of the first things to be negatively affected.

Your running: The most important factors are:

- Where you ran
- The type of surface
- The distance

- The time it took (this is less important for many runners).
- How long you warmed up for
- The methods you used in your warm-up (slow run, stretches, Yoga).

Changes of equipment or clothing: This can have a marked effect on your running, especially if you change the type of shoes you wear. The brand is not as important as the physical characteristics of the shoes. This sort of change can be very significant.

Many athletes report the first appearance of a problem with their performance or some part of their body after they changed for a different type of shoe.

Aches and injuries: Record all problems, however minor they may seem at the time. This history might be very helpful in preventing a major problem developing or, at least, help your doctor to work out the probable cause so that you can perhaps avoid it happening again

It may seem a chore to set up your diary with all this detail but I believe it will have great benefits for any runner to help them achieve their goals and smooth the road ahead.

Clothing

Choosing the right clothing is very important. It does not have to be expensive but it has to be comfortable and provide appropriate support for your body as you put the various parts under extra pressure.

All your clothing, with the exception of a thin, zippered jacket you might wear to keep rain off your other clothing, should fit closely.

This will reduce the possibility of chafing, one of the most common and persistent problems which runners encounter.

Some people buy expensive, branded sports gear to make an impression on other people. But, the only person whose opinion matters is you; choose clothing that is comfortable and that you feel good in.

You can save money on your running clothes if you buy them at the end of the season or in the annual sales after Christmas.

Underwear

Making a careful choice of the right type is important for all runners.

Comfort, support and durability are important.

For women, getting the right sports bra can be critical for your health and enjoyment of your running.

Invest the time and money to be fitted by a professional or, at least, put each one to some testing before purchase.

Before you buy, you need to put it on, then move around, bend and jump to ensure that the bra gives you the support and coverage you need.

You also must check that any metal parts are adequately padded and that the material is unlikely to wear too quickly or cause chafing.

Socks

Our feet are probably the most under-valued part of the human body.

Problems which develop can make our later years very miserable and many can be avoided by looking after them with simple measures like choosing the right socks.

Your socks need to fit your feet closely. If parts of the socks bunch inside your shoe, you are more likely to get blisters.

Perspiration can be a significant problem. Socks which are all cotton will keep the moisture near your feet which increases the development of blisters.

The extra cost of socks which are made from a blend of materials that draw the moisture away from your feet (a process called “wicking”) is usually worthwhile for the added comfort and protection.

If you run on uneven or very hard surfaces, you may want socks that have some support.

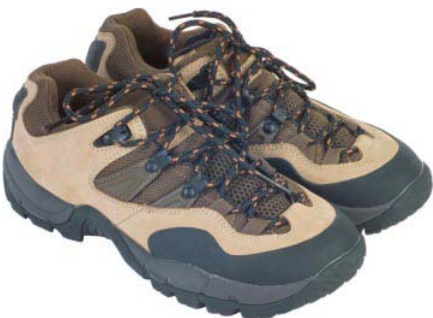


Shoes

Appropriate shoes are essential for enjoying your running and also helping to prevent the development of serious problems, some of which may not become obvious until years later.

A specialist store and your medical advisor can give you qualified advice about what is best for your particular build, the type of running which you do, and your type of foot.

This section will give you some general information.



Manufacturers change their styles and introduce new models of shoes every season just like car companies do. Some of the changes are genuine improvements but you need to sort those out from the cosmetic changes which are just for the sake of fashion

and designed to encourage runners to update their equipment without offering any real advantages; except for those who value having the latest styles on their feet.

Most people will take more than 700 steps each mile with each foot. This is at much higher speed than normal walking pace so you can see that your feet are subject to a lot of impact.

Before changing the type of shoe you are currently getting good results with, you need to be sure there is a real advantage.

Does the advance which the manufacturer claims is incorporated in their new shoe something which will benefit your specific needs?

This needs careful consideration because your feet will need to adjust to the design of any new shoes. You will probably have a period of discomfort while your feet adjust.

If you go to a consultant or a specialist store for advice about the best type of shoe for your needs, take a pair of your old shoes so that they can see the wear pattern which your current running action produces.

Some people may need to have special inserts (orthotics) for their shoes supplied by a podiatrist or a specialist consultant.

There are three common foot types: High arch, low arch, and regular. All three types are within the normal range so don't worry which you have. Just make sure that you take it into consideration when choosing your shoes.

Most people can get a fair idea of their foot type by walking barefooted through some water and then on to a sheet of cardboard so that they get a clear imprint from the sole of their foot.

A person with a regular foot where the print shows all the toes, the ball and heel of the foot joined together and clearly defines the blank area of the arch, can wear almost any type of quality running shoe.

If your foot print shows all the toes, the ball and heel of the foot joined together by a wide band and not much blank area for the arch, you will need running shoes that give you some support and firmness.

Getting the right shoes can reduce the tendency of your foot to roll as it lands and also reduce the pressure on particular toes.

When you find a particular style of shoe which you like, consider buying an extra pair. The shoe companies change their styles frequently and you might find the style you want has been discontinued if you leave it until your current pair of shoes has started to wear.

I have heard that many runners experience problems when they change to a different style of running shoe.

It is also worth remembering that you need to choose good quality walking shoes for day to day use.

Examine your shoes for wear or other deterioration regularly so that you can replace them before they start to cause problems for you. This is much better than waiting for your feet to start to ache – by then, some injury has already occurred.

When you are choosing your running shoes, you need to consider these points:

Do your toes have sufficient room to flex without a lot of empty space which would cause them to spread too much?

Does the arch support suit your feet?

Is the style and amount of tread suitable for the type of running you will be doing and the surfaces you run on?

Are the innersoles removable? This can be handy for cleaning the interior of the shoe and you can also replace the innersoles if they become worn.

What, if any, support is provided in the shoe? This may be foam, gel or a small balloon-like packet. Each type of support has its advantages and possible failings. The balloons may be punctured and the foam may become compressed so that it no longer gives the support you need.

Does the back of the shoe provide support for your heel and grip it to prevent rubbing and chafing of the skin?

Hats

A hat can provide some protection from melanoma and other harmful effects of the higher than average exposure runners have to the sun’s UV rays.

It also keeps rain away from our eyes which can be a real problem, especially if you have to wear glasses.

I wear a baseball style cap but any type which suits your climate and is snug enough that it won’t be blown away is fine.

In cold regions, caps with earmuffs might be worth considering. An alternative is to wear a headband that will protect your ears.

But, I suggest that you don’t wear one of them or a waterproof hat in warm weather because they may cause your head to become too hot.

Accessories

These are optional items which can assist your comfort and safety when you are running.

Bum bag: These bags are useful for carrying small items which are needed for your comfort or convenience during or after your running session.

Problems can occur when you try to carry too much in the bag or if you do not make it secure against your body. It will slide around or flap against your body and distract you and anyone that is running with you.

Carry only the essentials and make sure that you balance the weight of the bag so that it does not affect your running style or move around as you run.

Heart Monitor: There are now reasonably priced devices which you strap to your wrist like a watch. They’re useful for serious athletes when used in consultation with a qualified sports medicine specialist. But, I think they are not much use for the average amateur athlete. If you think you need testing,



sign up for a full series of tests under medical supervision.

Stopwatch: Get a cheap but accurate stopwatch so that you can check and record your time for

each run. You can get a more sophisticated model if you get serious about competitive running.

Most of us just want to know if we are improving our time for a specific distance. Don't worry if your times don't always improve. There can be many factors which cause us take a bit longer on some runs. It's more important that you finish the run and enjoy the experience than you set a personal best each time you put on your running shoes.

Sunscreen: Everybody knows they should carry it and use it, even when the sun is not beating down. I've seen the effects of an untreated melanoma on the person and their family. I hope that you will never have such an event in your family. Check that the type you use carries the best rating according to independent government testing. Replace your sunscreen every year as some types lose some of their effectiveness over time.

Sunglasses: They will protect your eyes and improve your comfort when the sun is very bright. You don't need the latest and most expensive styles but it is worth paying a little extra to get pair that are strong enough for the constant pounding as you run and fit snugly so that they don't chafe your skin or fly off when you reach you best speed.

Toilet paper: Almost nobody mentions it but you may find having a small packet with you very handy if you are running in rural areas or even in a city where the public facilities are not well maintained.

Many runners are affected by diarrhea, possibly because of their running action, diet, and nervousness if they have only started running recently.

Umbrella: This is not something which is convenient or necessary for a runner. A light, zippered jacket and your cap will give you almost equal protection to most light weight folding umbrellas and they are easier to manage.

Whistle or Personal Alarm: This is one more thing to carry but can be worthwhile if you are unlucky enough to have a fall or be attacked. My

preference would be a self-contained screech alarm because it may be easier to use and be heard for a longer distance in those situations than a whistle.

How to Run Well

We have all been running all our lives.

So, many people think that they don't need to adjust the style which they have developed naturally over that time.

However, think about these points which can help you smooth and improve your natural style, based on research and experience of many runners.

Arm Movements: Your arms help to propel you forward and maintain your balance. But, any movement across your body is wasted and may sometimes cause interference to other runners. Concentrate on keeping your arms moving forward and back for best results.

Don't push your arms forward, they will do that without you applying any pressure, put your strength into bringing your arms back.

Adjust the speed of your arm movements according to the type of running you are doing. Ease off when you are jogging or doing a practice run and apply more energy when you are racing.

Keep your wrists and hands loose. It will have a negative effect if you run with your hands tightly clenched.

Feet: It's also important that you keep your toes flexible when running so they can better handle the impact of landing and the push forward. Different people will land on different parts of their feet. The important point is to land when that foot is under your body's center of gravity.

Knees: Many people learn at school to raise their knees when they run but that can be wasted effort and cause your feet to impact harder on the ground you are running over.

Your focus is to move forward, so bend your knees enough to push your leg forward which will help give you a more efficient leg action.

Legs: Let your lower leg swing when the knee applies pressure. Holding it rigid will reduce effectiveness of the action and may cause undue stress.

Many runners try to improve their speed by making longer strides. This can be counter productive as your body has a natural stride which ends with the foot under your center of gravity.

An extended stride will have the foot forward of the knee and this will slow your pace as well as putting more pressure on your body. This extra, unnecessary exertion causes more oxygen to be consumed for each stride that you take. It's inefficient and unproductive.

Head up: It might seem obvious that you should keep your head up and over your neck. But, craning their head forward or back is a very common fault with many runners. This interferes with the balance of their body and may also apply unwelcome and possibly damaging stress to their back and neck.

Focus on where you are running to.

Don't look down when you are running unless, of course, you are running over unfamiliar, bushy or uneven surfaces. In those areas, never run fast and always examine the area for possible hazards before running over it.

Pelvis: You need to keep your pelvis level as much as you can or you will affect your balance and may contribute to serious stress on the affected areas.

You will benefit from special exercises to strengthen the muscle groups which support this area. Work them out in consultation with a qualified trainer.

Video: You might get someone to film you as you run so that you can see your style and think about how to improve it. Try to get more video from time to time so that you can see the improvements in your style and performance. But, don't take video of every run and search each one for small errors to correct.

Focus on improvement over time. No athlete can expect to be doing everything in a perfect manner every time they run.

Don't become obsessed about something in your style which is not exactly what any book says is correct. Many champion athletes have had particular

actions which have been as non standard as they have been effective for that individual.

Not all exercises have equal value: When you start to concentrate on a particular type of event, you should closely examine the exercises you do to ensure that they are the most beneficial in preparing you for that sort of running.

Doing the wrong sort of exercise may actually increase the risk of some injuries during your races because your body is not prepared as well as it could be for the demands of that event.

Preparing for Competition



I think there is value for every runner in entering some competitive events.

Even if you are only interested in improving your general fitness and keeping yourself healthy, you will get a much better idea of how you are progressing when you compete against other runners.

You will also meet and mingle with other people that share your interest and have a similar healthy, active focus.

You may learn from them and, like me, form some lasting friendships.

Don't rush yourself to making the decision. I suggest that you connect with a local running group and go to one or two events so that you can get an idea what is involved.



When you have been running for more than a few months, you should have some idea when you are ready to take part in a race yourself.

Make your first couple of events fairly short, even if your focus is on distance running, so that you can get a good idea of your ability to

handle the distance and also the interaction with other runners.

You will find information about events in your area in sports stores and the local paper. But, the best source is usually your local running club where you can get information from people that have taken part in the event previously.

You need to find an event which:

- Fits your other commitments
- Is at a convenient location
- Is not too long or hard for your current fitness level

You should choose an event where you will have a couple of days afterward to recover if the race is more stressful than you expect.

I suggest that you will need to start your preparation about two months before the event.

Submit your entry as soon as you decide on the event you will run. This makes it easier for yourself and the organizers as well. It also helps to boost your enthusiasm once you have made a physical commitment to doing the race.



Contact the organizers or check their web site or the instructions they send to you, to ensure that you have everything you need and you have obeyed all the rules for the event. Check directly with them as soon as possible if anything at all is not clear to you.

Your aim should be to build your general fitness in stages through the pre-race period.

You should be able to run the distance over similar terrain at least a couple of weeks before the day of the event.

Have everything you will need prepared and packed the day before the event. Prepare a written checklist and put it with your supplies so nothing is overlooked.

Try to travel over the course at least a day before the event, especially if it is in an area which you are not familiar with.

Don't be surprised if you feel nervous or if your stomach is upset on the day of the event. That's normal and the only antidote is experience.

The nervousness and doubt will vanish when you start to run but it's not unusual for even experienced athletes to feel the butterflies to some extent.

Use your own stopwatch to check your running time for the race. Don't be disappointed or too excited about the result. You can expect better and also some slower times in later events. Nobody just runs faster in each race they do.

If there are a large number of people in that event, put yourself near the back of the group at the starting line. If you are near the front when they start, you could block some of the faster runners. You might collide with another runner or be pressed to run faster with them than you are comfortable doing.

Warm Up Tips

Warming up is a very important part of every athlete’s routine.

There are two main reasons for this:

A good warm up gets your body ready for the extra demands which you will put on it during your run.

This will also reduce, but cannot prevent, the risk of injury during the session.

The warm up should be done very close to the start of your regular session or race. If there is any significant delay, the beneficial effects of the warm up are likely to be lost.

Most people find that a warm up of between ten minutes and twenty five minutes is sufficient. Less than five minutes would probably not have any benefit at all.

Most of the activity in your running is in the lower body but your warm up session needs to prepare all your joints and ensure that no part of your body is tense when you start to run.

“Loose” and “light” are the keywords to keep in mind.

You could start by loosening your joints with light exercise; bend and gently stretch each part so that your whole body can better handle the stresses and impact of your running.

I follow that with some walking and build up to a jog; still well below my regular running pace. Some runners will run on the spot.

You can add some exercises which focus on particular aspects of your running that you believe need some attention.

Cool Down

After you've finished your run, it's natural to want to stop and rest or get a refreshing and cleansing shower as soon as possible.

But, when you finish a training session or a race, your blood is being pushed faster than normal through your body and you may feel a bit unsteady.

A quick change of pace can reduce the good effects of the session.

You will probably find that you can get greater benefits from your effort if you use a light jog and perhaps a few stretches to ease your body more slowly back to the normal daily pace.

Another benefit of this winding down is that you can think about your session, congratulate yourself on your successes and consider how you might improve anything that did not go as well as you expected.

Don't beat yourself up if your session was less successful than you had become used to. That is something which some people are inclined to do but it's unpleasant and tends to reduce your general motivation so that each subsequent session becomes more like a task than an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Cross Training to Improve Your Running

Cross training is using other forms of exercise to improve your ability to perform the main type of exercise which you like to do.

My favorite is running and I do more swimming than I used to which has also helped to improve my running performance.

Many of my friends who are runners use various other types of exercise to improve their running and report that, like me, they also get benefits for their general health as well.

You may find some of these suggestions useful and also be able to fit them into your routine. Adding one or more of these other activities will give you more of the same benefits you get from your running program, but put the pressure on different muscles and other parts of your body. Increasing the amount of running that you do could increase the risk of damage to your feet, so you are better off to “spread the load” by using different forms of exercise.

Adding some variety to your exercise program will help you to avoid becoming bored which is a risk when you keep doing the same routine in the same way over an extended amount of time.

They also may be useful when you want to maintain your level of exercise but are not able for any reason to do your usual amount of running.

Most of these other forms of exercise boost your strength in various ways but do not put as much pressure on your feet and lower legs.

I recommend that you consider doing your exercise sessions with a friend that shares your interest in fitness. You can support and motivate each other.

Yoga

Yoga is considered by many runners to be a great way to improve several different aspects of your running.

Earlier advice was that yoga might make runners too flexible but careful organization of specialized routines has reduced that concern.

If you learn to assume and maintain the postures which are a central part of yoga, it will help you to increase your endurance and the breathing routines may increase your ability to use the oxygen which you inhale more efficiently.

Cycling

This is a good way to give a workout to your quadriceps leg muscles which are not as heavily used as your hamstrings while running.

You could use a cycling session to check out new routes for future runs. You'll cover greater distances than you would when running and get a better idea of the terrain and any possible hazards than you might if you drove through the same area.

Keep in mind the safety factors which I explain in another section when you are riding in an unfamiliar area.

You can use a stationary bike for some of your exercise but most people will find that the changing scenery and the interaction with other people make road and track riding more enjoyable.

You need to keep yourself safe. Wear a helmet and make sure that you are easily visible to other road users. Never assume that motorists will obey the rules or give you sufficient space.

It's important that your bicycle is as well maintained as your own body if you want to get good results from your riding sessions. An out of alignment bike can cause you injury as well as frustration.

To broaden the types of muscles which are exercised when you ride your bicycle, pull the opposite pedal up as you are pushing the other down.

Don't push yourself too hard. This is exercise, not punishment. But, maintain a good pace and try to increase the distance you travel in a set time over similar surfaces as you become more comfortable with your riding.

Swimming

Swimming will improve your cardiovascular performance and give your feet some rest.

There are also well proven benefits for your general strength which will help you in your running.

If you are not an experienced swimmer, consider joining a class or getting a couple lessons so that you do your strokes properly or you will not get the most benefit from your swimming sessions.

Weight Training

This is another type of exercise where you can improve your results by getting some help from an experienced friend or professional trainer when you start.

Advice about those exercises which are likely to be of most benefit to you are also valuable. In fact, I think it's essential.

If you are running regularly, you probably won't need to put your legs through much work in the gym.

You can, of course, use exercises like push ups and squats which use your own weight to create resistance as well as using barbells and the like.

Buying small pieces of equipment such as a set of dumb bells, wrist, or ankle weights will let you add some variety to your exercising.

Stay Safe

Safety when running is important for all of us though many people consider it most important for women runners.

Unfortunately, attacks by people, vehicles and animals can happen to anyone.

Always let your family or partner know where and when you'll be running and about what time you expect to return. Leave details of your route in a prominent place before you leave. Although many runners love to wear their MP3 player while running, it is important to realize that blocking your ears reduces your awareness of your surroundings and decreases your ability to avoid an accident or attack.

It is a good idea to vary the route you take when you run. If someone sees that you always follow the same pattern as to time and location for your running practice, they can choose the place to attack and the time. Don't make it easy for them.

Running at night should be avoided where possible, especially in areas that you are not familiar with.

If you do run at night or in bad weather, you should wear light-colored clothing and carry something which you can use to attract attention if you are injured or feeling threatened.

If you run on the side of a road, always run toward oncoming traffic. Some drivers are unwilling to share even a small part of the highway with runners and some are outright aggressive. Avoid confrontation and be aware of the best means of getting completely off the road if you are harassed by some fool in a vehicle.

Body language is important when you are walking or running through an unfamiliar area. Act strong even if your stomach is knotting up.

Keep your eyes and your pace steady.

Don't look directly at anyone because they may use that as an excuse to start a conversation or even attack you.

If someone approaches you, the best strategy is often to just keep going. Getting away and causing as much noise as you can are usually the best tactics.

If someone is very close, watch them but don't speak unless you have to.

Carrying a whistle or personal alarm is worth considering but they are only warning devices and will not stop or even slow down most attackers.

If you are attacked and cannot escape, use you're running strengthened knees and legs to do the most damage you can as quickly as possible. Aim for his testicles and the front of his legs.

Aim punches at his face and throat.

Don't make long kicks as you will become unbalanced and more vulnerable.

A comb or some coins in your hand can make your punch more effective but, of course, may cut your hand and are only a measure of last resort.

Wild Animal attacks on runners are probably more common than you may realize. Some of the attacks are caused by the runners who run toward the animal as if it was a domestic pet.

Give them space, whether it is a strange dog, bear, or any other creature. Most will try to avoid humans but they may not have an easy way to get away from you, or they may have their young close by. That's when they are likely to attack.

Avoid all snakes. Even non-poisonous ones can cause serious injury if they bite you because of germs and etc in their mouths, as well as the actual bite. I have read about runners who have tried to run and jump over snakes! Snakes can strike at least half their body length above the ground and jumping at them is likely to provoke an attack.

Self Defense Training: Self-defense courses can help but you should carefully check the reputation of the course with other people in your area.

A traditional martial arts course will probably have long term benefits but it may take quite a long time before you develop your skills to the point where you can gain sufficient skills to protect yourself.

A friend that has a couple of black belts in different disciplines told me that someone who had only had gym based lessons without using what they learned in the street or the armed forces would probably have little chance against an attacker unless their trainer was exceptionally thorough.

But, a good course can provide you with self-confidence, which might make a potential attacker, look for an easier target.

Always meet the instructor before you sign up for any course.

The best possible referral would come from satisfied students.

If you think you may not be comfortable when you are in close contact with them or have any other doubts, you should look for a different course and instructor.

Try to get another runner you know to attend the same course so that you can discuss and practice what you are taught when you are away from the class.

The Mind Game of Running

This ebook demonstrates that there is a lot to think about when you start to improve your running action. Running well depends as much on how you think about your running as the effort you put into the physical actions.

Every runner soon realizes that their ability to achieve the goals they set for their running will depend to some extent on their mental strength and the level to which they control and avoid negative thoughts about their own potential.

You might be focused on just losing some weight and becoming fitter or you might really like competitive running and aim to build up to where you win some races.

Feeding your mind with positive impressions and preventing the development of negative thoughts and attitudes is just as important as choosing the right sort of running shoes.

That starts the first day when you decide that you will give running a good try.

I can tell you that running is not easy and many find the early weeks too hard to adjust to.

Some are extremely enthusiastic and start too fast. They usually develop some small injury from their rushed entry to running and may never attain their potential.

If you are mentally determined to stick with it through this early stage and smart enough to let your body adapt to the new demands at its own pace, you will find that it gets easier and more satisfying.

Your running diary and your connection with other runners are two important ways to reinforce your motivation.

But, you can also help yourself a lot too.

When you start to feel comfortable with the demands that your running routine is making on your time and your body, set yourself some goals and

think how you can reward yourself when you attain them. Doughnuts are not a good way!

Many motivation courses talk about “shooting for the stars so that you will at least have a good chance of reaching the mountain tops”.

I think it’s more important to set up a good base for your efforts first. That’s the way the experts do it.

Then, you have a better chance of reaching the stars, but you will also enjoy the journey and are less likely to crash land seriously short of your goal.

Something you need to decide on and keep in mind, especially when you strike the inevitable bumps and disappointments with your running are the reasons which you are putting in your on going time and effort.

I mean your long term goals which should be substantial enough to keep you motivated but not too grand for you to believe that you can’t achieve them.

You will also get some on going satisfaction from the smaller but valuable benefits of your regular running routine; reduced stress, better physical performance in all areas of your life, and an improved ability to deal with minor ailments.

It may be hard to believe but many people sabotage their physical effort to improve their running and general health by filling their minds with negative thoughts. This is not a conscious act but the result of slowly developing a negative attitude because of their habit of focusing on disappointments in various areas of their lives through previous years.

You should focus on replacing this destructive self talk with positive thoughts and celebrate even the smallest successes as you improve your running.

While a positive attitude is a great help in getting through the bad days and disappointments, some people become too focused on their running and try to push themselves beyond their current capacity.

That can cause injury and disappointment.

If you remember the importance of patience, persistence, and a positive attitude, reaching your running and other goals will probably be much easier.

Your running diary can be a great help with maintaining your motivation.

When you go through a disappointing run, you can look back at your previous successes and know that you have done better and will do so again.

When you are running by yourself or just with your dog for company, you can think through your strategy for your next race.

I try to put work issues out of my head while I am running. But, you may find that your subconscious has been busy while you have been focused on preparing and starting your run and sometimes a solution to some business problem will jump into your head while you are running.

Running with a group or even just one other person can help restore your motivation too.

Running with Others



Some people enjoy running by themselves but most of us enjoy our running more when we are with other people that share our enthusiasm.

Check the Yellow Pages or with your local sports equipment store to find local runners' organizations. They can be a great source of information about the best areas to run in and feedback about the best running gear and support services.

Being part of a group provides motivation for you to give your best effort, support for you on those days when you are feeling below par and greater safety for everyone in the group.

When you are running in a group, don't be tempted to run faster than is comfortable for you so "you don't slow down the group". Putting extra stress on your body before it is ready for it could bring on injury that might affect your running and other physical activities for some time.

Don't worry too much about your appearance or your speed. Clubs usually have members with all levels of experience and ability.

If you have the time, offer to assist as a volunteer with races and other activities. This will be much appreciated with most clubs and it will bring you into contact with more runners at all levels than you would meet and get to know just by attending regular club activities.

You might find that some of your friends or colleagues at work are interested in running and could join you for some of your runs.

Running with Your Dog

Some runners take the family dog with them on some runs for companionship, protection, and to give the dog some extra exercise.

Before you do that, you should consult your veterinarian about whether the dog is able to handle the extra stresses of running compared to its regular walks.

If that's okay, you will need to introduce the new activity in careful stages which encourage the dog without putting any strain on it.

Do your first runs as short loops which come back to your home so that the dog can get a break or stop altogether if it becomes tired or stressed.

Some breeds could develop joint problems if they have to run too fast or too far.

Be careful about the surfaces which you will both be running over. The dog's feet may not be able to handle some hard or broken surfaces which your shoes protect your own feet from.

Your dog will need water during or soon after your run and you should be cautious about letting it drink from any water source which you are unfamiliar with.

Dogs can overheat in a fairly short time when exercising because they cannot control their internal temperature the same way that we can. This can be dangerous so be very cautious.

Your dog will do its best to please you and you may be slow to notice any deterioration in its condition as it runs since you have many other things to occupy your mind at the same time.

Tips for Better Running

Don't let a bad run get you thinking that you are a bad runner. Everyone has them. Bad runners are blocked by them; good runners learn from them and then forget them.



Take the few seconds to **thank the volunteers** at checkpoints and aid stations. You would be surprised how much it is appreciated because so few do it.

Leave your music at home and listen to the sounds of your feet, which will help you to become a better runner.

Mental toughness is as important as physical strength. If you cannot maintain a positive attitude about your potential when you suffer the inevitable disappointments we all strike, you will damage your chances of future success more than when you losing a race or even suffer a minor injury.

Running solo is preferred by some people but the support and increased safety offered by **running with a friend** who has similar ability and goals will improve the results you get and also make each run far more enjoyable.

The commitment you make with them to run together regularly will also be a great motivator on those days, which we all have, where you are tempted to skip your run.

If you are not getting enough quality sleep, take steps to correct that. Lack of sleep or interrupted sleep can affect the quality of your performance in your running and your work.

If your body is unable to get sufficient sleep to recuperate from the demands of the previous day, it may also start to exhibit reduced resistance to colds and other infections.

Making a Comeback

If you have only been running for, say, less than a year and you have to give up running for a period, whether due to injury, work commitments, a family holiday or other personal circumstances, you will be surprised how quickly you lose the conditioning which you took so long to build up and the effort, as well as the length of time you may need to return to the level you had reached.

A break of as little as a couple of weeks can cause a noticeable drop in your fitness. It will probably take you as much as twice as long to get back to your previous level.

If the break is longer, then it might take you much more time to rebuild your condition.

You can reduce the effects of a break by doing some light running or other related exercise, perhaps at a reduced level, during that period.

Keep this in mind when you get up one morning and think you'd like to skip your regular session. The cost could be more than the perceived benefit is worth.

Wonderful Water

If you are not a habitual water drinker, it is important for you to get the habit.

Our bodies are composed in large part of water and it is as important for our well being as motor oil is for your car.

Water loss is one of the most common problems for athletes. We use water and we lose water constantly through our breath, sweat, and urine.

The commonly accepted measure is that the average person needs about eight glasses of water a day. Runners probably need more because the extra activity increases the amount we lose.

Water serves a variety of purposes.

The body needs adequate supply to be able to use stored minerals properly and it helps to keep our blood pressure at the appropriate level.

When the water available to our system is reduced, one of the first organs which are negatively affected is our brain in both its thinking ability and the vital task of controlling and monitoring our body functions.

The way we drink is just as important as the amount. It's not a good idea to take on a large amount at any stage. We need to have a steady intake through the whole day and increase it at a reasonable rate during the period of maximum activity.

So, most people will find it works best to have a couple of glasses of water well before they start any exercise and pace themselves through the session.

It's also important to keep drinking some water after the exercise session has been completed as you need to replace the water you have expended.

Drinking tea or coffee is not a good substitute for plain water. Even fruit juice is not as beneficial as plain water. They all increase the amount of water you excrete.

Drinks which have high sugar levels will also reduce the amount of water your body can use for muscle activity and other important purposes.

Alcohol is another diuretic which will cause a net water loss. You may have a habit of drinking with other runners after a race or training session. That’s for you to decide, but I believe it would be wise to have a couple of glasses of water before you take in any alcohol. You will also need to drink more water later on to compensate for that which the alcohol causes your body to excrete.

You will probably find that you cannot adequately monitor the amount of water you are losing. The negative effects can creep up on you.

If you don’t like the bland taste of plain water, add a little fruit juice. But, avoid flavorings and sweeteners which add to sugar levels in your systems.

Some people prefer drinking through a straw or from a plastic bottle rather than a cup or glass.

If you want to drink the heavily promoted sports drinks, check the benefits of those available in your area. Water will give you most of what you might need to replace what your system has lost because of your increased activity but there can be some value for some people in the additives in the drinks.

These drinks are probably of most value to long distance runners who may risk water poisoning if they only drink plain water which can cause hyponatremia; a lower than normal blood sodium level.

Water Poisoning

Given the acknowledged importance of maintaining an adequate amount of water in our bodies, it may seem strange that too much water can also cause a serious problem for long distance runners.

The problem is believed to be that we lose sodium as well as water in our sweat and many runners don’t replace the sodium during their run because they just drink plain water.

But, sodium is important for our bodies for proper nerve and muscle function. Some people have actually died from the effects of this condition.

The symptoms of this condition are very similar to dehydration; nausea and cramps as well as impaired thinking ability which may affect your speech as well.

The natural reaction is to drink more water but, of course, this can increase the problem.

This potential problem should be discussed with your doctor when you are considering taking part in a long distance or high intensity event.

I cannot give you specific guidelines because I am not a medical professional and you need to check for the latest advice based on current research.

Each person’s needs are closely related to their own physical state and medical history. That is another reason for keeping a sports diary as I suggested in another section.

I use a sports drink which contains sodium when I take part in longer events. I believe this is important because the pressure of many other runners and the long distance even though I do not run hard myself.

I take in a little more salt in the days leading up to these events. You should not do this, of course, if you have any signs or history of hypertension or your use of salt is restricted for any other reason.

Check with your doctor about your use of anti-inflammatory drugs. Some may affect your risk level for hyponatremia.

Useful Websites for Runners

Important Note: The author and publisher of this book have no connection with these sites. The author, publisher and eBookwholesaler Members who distribute this book do not accept any responsibility for these sites and any information on or about them.

The information was obtained from the sites and has not been independently verified. The links worked when the book was prepared for publication.

Your use of the links is entirely at your own risk.

United States of America

American Running Association

A nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and supporting *runners*. Provides useful suggestions and resources.

<http://www.americanrunning.org/>



Road Runners Club of America

“The RRCA (Road Runners Club of America) was founded in 1958 and is dedicated to supporting the growth of grassroots running clubs, running events, and promoting the interests of runners throughout the US.

The RRCA is the oldest and largest organization in the US dedicated to distance running, with over 1000 member clubs and events representing over 200,000 running club members”

<http://www.rrca.org/>



Active Life and Running Club

“The largest marathon running club in America. We promote this philosophy through organized events and social functions.”

<http://www.alarc.com/>



The University of Kentucky Official Athletic Site

The Official Site for athletics at University of Kentucky This is a local site rather than a national one

I added it to show how a web site name can confuse searchers. It came up in my search for athletics sites in the United Kingdom, not the United States of America.

<http://www.ukathletics.com/>



Australia

The Australian Track & Field Coaches Association

The Australian Track & Field Coaches Association was founded in 1974 as an association to which all interested in coaching track and field athletics could belong. It is recognized by all Athletics Bodies in Australia as responsible for the coordination and development of athletics coaching."

<http://www.atfca.com.au/>



Australian Masters Athletics Inc

Australian Masters Athletics, previously Australian Veterans Athletics Club provides Track and Field competition for athletes over 30 years of age.

<http://www.australianmastersathletics.org.au/>



Australian Masters Athletics

Athletics Australia

"Athletics Australia was founded in 1897 and is recognized by the Australian Sports Commission as the National Sporting Organization responsible for administering track and field athletics in Australia.



It provides information about teams, related links, pictures, upcoming events and coaching information for individuals interested in athletics.

<http://www.athletics.com.au/>

<http://www.athletics.com.au/news> has the latest official news releases from Athletics Australia

Australian Little Athletics

Australian Little Athletics Governing body for children's athletics in Australia. Organization details, championship results, information for

parents, and training tips.

<http://www.littleathletics.com.au/>

United Kingdom

United Kingdom Athletics

“The national governing body for athletics, UK Athletics oversees the development and management of the nation’s favourite Olympic and Paralympic sport, from grassroots right through to podium.”

<http://www.uka.org.uk/>



The image shows the top portion of the UK Athletics website. At the top right is a red triangle. The logo features the letters 'UKA' in a stylized red font, followed by a vertical line and the words 'UNITED KINGDOM ATHLETICS' in blue. Below the logo, the text 'LATEST UPDATE' is on the left and 'Victory for GB&I' is on the right. A navigation bar consists of four red buttons with white text: 'HOME', 'GOVERNANCE', 'WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCE', and 'UKA MAJOR EVENTS'. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here » [Home](#) » [Governance](#) » [About UKA](#)'. The main heading 'ABOUT UK ATHLETICS' is displayed in large, bold, black capital letters, underlined.

The UK Running Track Directory.

The UK Running Track Directory contains comprehensive details on all the 600+ tracks in the UK. It includes latest track certification details and links about clubs etc.

<http://www.runtrackdir.com/>

Search this site

powered by FreeFind

- UK Track List
- GB map
- London map
- Old tracks
- Query tracks
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- Credits
- Contact
- Links

UK Running Track Directory

Contains comprehensive details on all the 600+ tracks in the UK

Includes latest track certification details. See also [UKA info](#).

Latest news

3 Jan - New track at [Winchester](#)

15 Jan - Lee Valley Athletics Centre officially opened on 16th Jan 2007 [Click for more](#)

3 Aug - [Litherland](#) - new track

British Athletics

An organization dedicated to the interests of British athletes at all levels.

<http://www.british-athletics.co.uk>



Directory of Clubs | Search Athletics Films | Championship Points

**Directory of
British Athletics Clubs**

British Masters Athletic Federation

The official website of the *British Masters Athletic Federation*, with information about fixtures, results, records, affiliated *clubs* and much more.

<http://www.bvaf.org.uk/>



English Schools' Athletic Association

Established in 1925, the English Schools' Athletic Association is dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of athletics in schools.

<http://www.esaa.net/>



Run On!

I've covered many possible problems in the course of this ebook because I believe you need to be aware of them.

But, the message I want to leave you with at the end of our time together, is that running is a relatively inexpensive and adaptable means of improving your health and general well-being.

Almost everyone, whatever their age, background or other circumstances can get some lasting benefits from a program of regular running sessions.

You can also meet new people who are, like you, interested in better health and willing to actively do something about it.

Other runners can become good friends or, at least, great supporters for your own running goals.

Remember, patience, persistence and passion will get you almost anything you desire in this World.

Amanda Whiston

2010

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)