

RUNNING 101

OR HOW TO RUN



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ERASMUS+ PROJECT
THE CHALLENGE TO A HEALTHY LIFE
2021-1-RO01-KA220-SCH-000024460



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This publication was created during the Erasmus+ project, The Challenge to a Healthy Life. The project's aim is to help people, students, teachers, parents and others to embrace a healthy lifestyle, to be more physically active and adopt healthy eating habits.



With this book, we had in mind one goal, simple yet profound: to capture the basics of running, to equip you, the reader, with some knowledge and courage to embrace this awesome sport, which is running, running for life(style).



May these pages inspire you to embrace the freedom, the joy, and the shared experiences that running brings to our lives.

Best thoughts,
Romanian CHL team
June 2023



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LACE UP YOUR SHOES LACE UP YOUR SHOES

“Running is a great form of exercise that can improve cardiovascular fitness, strengthen muscles, and help maintain a healthy weight.”

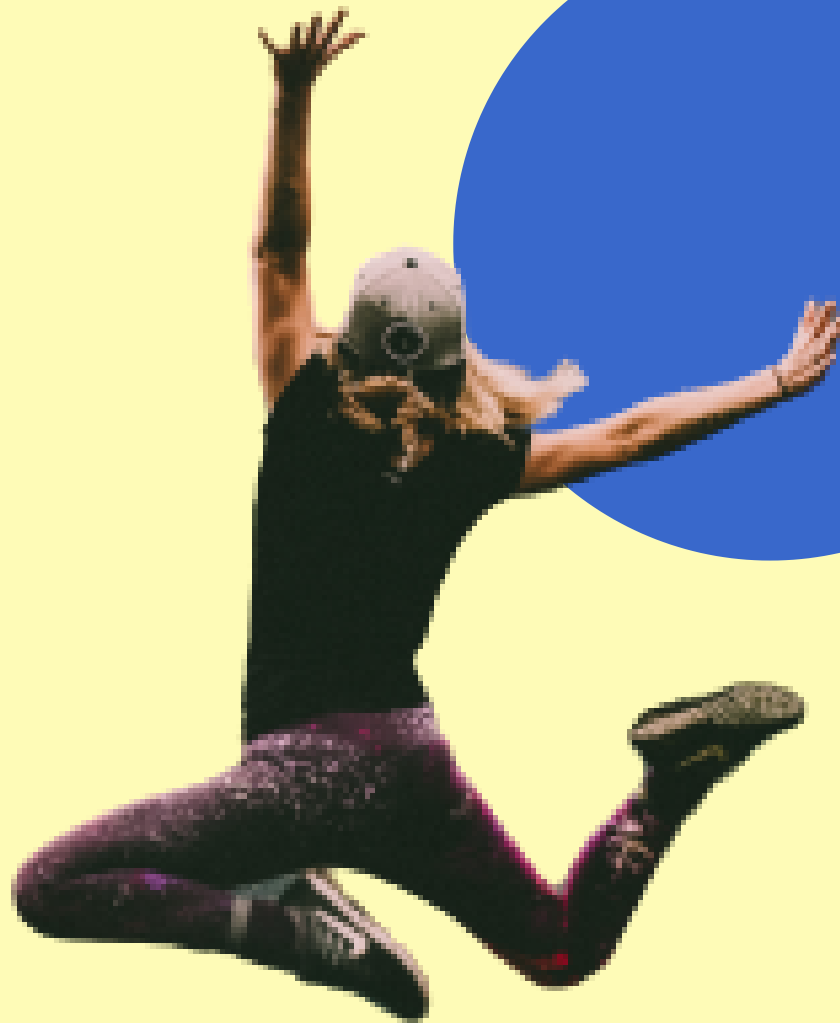


Photo by Peter Conlan on Unsplash

“Because it brings joy and wellbeing, in my life.”



World Health Organization recommendations, regarding physical activity, are:

Children and adolescents should do at least an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous-intensity, mostly aerobic, physical activity, across the week.

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activities, as well as those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least 3 days a week.

All adults should undertake regular physical activity. Adults should do at least 150– 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity; or at least 75–150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity; or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity throughout the week, for substantial health benefits.



An example of moderate-
and vigorous-intensity
activity is... running.

Running



Running is a simple way to maintain fitness or to gain fitness. It is simple because you can run wherever you want, whenever you can, alone or with friends.



The popularity of running grows and more people find different reasons to spend free time running.



Some chose this sport because running is one of the most accessible forms of exercise. You don't need special equipment or a gym membership; all you need is a pair of running shoes, making it easy for anyone to start.



Others do it because running offers a multitude of health benefits, including improved cardiovascular fitness, weight management, reduced stress, increased endorphin production, and enhanced mental well-being



Running fosters a sense of community and social connections. Group runs, running clubs, and races provide opportunities to meet like-minded individuals and build supportive networks.



Many people turn to running as a way to alleviate stress and clear their minds. The rhythmic motion of running can have a calming effect.



Running allows individuals to set and conquer personal challenges, from completing a first 5K to tackling ultra-marathons. The sense of achievement is immensely rewarding.



For others running is an effective way to burn calories and manage weight. It's a versatile exercise that can be adapted to various fitness levels and goals.



Not last, running means adventure. Trail running have gained popularity, appealing to those seeking outdoor adventures and a break from routine



If you've never run before but are eager to start, this guide will walk you through the fundamentals of running, step by step. Whether you're looking to improve your fitness, set new goals, or simply enjoy the outdoors, this guide is designed to help you embark on your running journey with confidence.



PREPARATION AND MINDSET

- **Setting Clear Goals**
- **Right Gear**
- **Motivation**



SETTING CLEAR GOALS

Setting clear and achievable goals is essential for anyone looking to start running. Here are a few things to keep in mind.



Determine **why** you want to start running. Is it to improve your fitness, lose weight, relieve stress, or compete in races? Understanding your purpose will help you set meaningful goals.



Set specific goals that clearly outline what you want to achieve. For example, rather than saying, "I want to run better," specify, "I want to complete a 5K race in 3 months."



Ensure that your goals **are attainable** based on your current fitness level and available time. Starting with achievable goals will prevent frustration and keep you motivated.



Establish a **timeline** for your goals. This adds a sense of urgency and helps you track your progress. For example, "I will run 2 miles without stopping in 6 weeks."



If your ultimate goal is significant, **break it down** into smaller, manageable milestones. Achieving these smaller goals along the way can boost your confidence and keep you on track.

SETTING CLEAR GOALS



Be open to **adjusting** your goals as you progress and as life circumstances change. Adaptability can help you overcome obstacles and setbacks.



Putting your goals in **writing** makes them more tangible and reinforces your commitment. Post them where you'll see them regularly, like on your fridge or as a screensaver.



Share your goals with a friend, family member, or running buddy. Accountability and support can help you stay motivated and on track.



Celebrate each milestone you reach. Recognize your efforts and accomplishments, no matter how small they may seem. This positive reinforcement can fuel your motivation.

Remember that goal-setting in running is a personal journey. Your goals should align with your own desires and abilities, not someone else's. Whether your aim is to run a marathon or simply enjoy a daily jog, setting clear and meaningful goals will help you stay focused and make steady progress in your running journey.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT RUNNING GEAR

Running gear can help improve comfort, performance, and safety during a run.

Moisture-wicking clothing

Moisture-wicking clothing is designed to wick sweat away from your body, keeping you dry and comfortable during your run. Choose clothing made from lightweight, breathable materials, such as polyester or nylon.



Running shoes

A good pair of running shoes is the most important piece of running gear. Look for shoes that provide good support, cushioning, and stability.

Running socks

Running socks are designed to prevent blisters and provide extra cushioning and support.



PREPARATION AND MINDSET



GPS watch or fitness tracker
A GPS watch or fitness tracker can help you track your distance, pace, and other important metrics during your run.



Headphones
Music can help motivate you during your run, so consider investing in a pair of headphones that are designed for exercise and won't fall out of your ears.



Sunglasses
Sunglasses can protect your eyes from the sun and other environmental hazards, such as wind and debris.

Reflective gear
If you run in low-light conditions, such as early morning or evening, reflective gear can help you be seen by drivers and other pedestrians.

Remember that running gear can be expensive, but it's important to invest in high-quality gear that fits well and meets your needs. With the right gear, you can run comfortably, safely, and with confidence.

RUNNING
GEAR

MOTIVATION

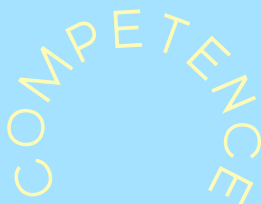
An option when you want to understand what motivate others on running or any other activity, or what could motivate you to run is understanding how the three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness work, on others and of course on you.

Here are some tips on how to fulfill those three needs.

Competence

Competence involves the need to feel effective and capable in one's actions. In the context of running, competence refers to the feeling of being skilled and proficient in running activities. Here's how competence contributes to motivation:

- Gradual Skill Improvement: Runners who see consistent progress in their running abilities, whether it's increased endurance, faster times, or better form, tend to stay motivated. Achieving small milestones reinforces the belief that they are becoming more competent.
- Feedback and Monitoring: Providing runners with feedback, such as tracking their runs using GPS apps or receiving coaching advice, helps them gauge their progress. Knowing they are on the right track boosts their sense of competence.
- Setting Realistic Challenges: Encouraging runners to set challenging but achievable goals aligns with their competence needs. Overly ambitious goals can lead to frustration, while achievable challenges can boost confidence and motivation.



Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the need to feel in control of one's actions and choices. In the context of running, autonomy involves feeling that your running activities are driven by your own interests and values rather than external pressure or coercion. Here's how autonomy contributes to motivation in running.

Setting Personal Goals: When runners set their own goals, whether it's completing a certain distance, improving their pace, or achieving a specific milestone, they are more likely to stay motivated. This sense of ownership over their goals increases intrinsic motivation

Choosing Running Activities: Allowing runners to choose their preferred type of running (e.g., trail running, road running, sprints, or long-distance) and when and where they run can enhance their sense of autonomy. It makes the activity more enjoyable and self-directed.

Listening to Body Signals: Runners who listen to their body, adjusting their pace and rest as needed, are more likely to feel in control and motivated. Ignoring pain or pushing too hard against one's will can lead to burnout and reduced motivation.

AUTONOMY

Relatedness

Relatedness pertains to the need to feel connected to others and to experience a sense of belonging. In running, relatedness involves social connections and support.

·Running with Others

Participating in group runs or joining a running club provides a sense of community and support. The social aspect of running can make the activity more enjoyable and motivate individuals to continue.

·Sharing Experiences

Discussing running experiences, challenges, and achievements with friends, family, or fellow runners fosters a sense of relatedness. Sharing the journey with others can be motivating and create a sense of belonging.

·Online Communities

Engaging with online running communities, such as forums or social media groups, allows runners to connect with like-minded individuals and seek support and advice.

RELATEDNESS

THE BASICS OF RUNNING

06/ RUN

- **Form**
- **Warm-up**
- **Cool-down**



Photo by [Quino Al](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Remember that running form can vary slightly from person to person, so it's essential to find a form that feels comfortable and efficient for you. Gradually incorporating these elements into your running technique and practicing good form over time will help you become a more efficient and injury-resistant runner.

16/RUN

FORM



Maintaining proper running form is essential for efficiency, injury prevention, and overall enjoyment of your runs. Here are some key aspects of running form to keep in mind:

Posture

Keep your upper body upright, with your chest open and shoulders relaxed. Avoid slouching forward or leaning backward.

Head Position

Look forward, not down at your feet. Your gaze should be directed ahead to help maintain balance and a straight neck.

Arm Position

Bend your arms at approximately 90 degrees at the elbows. Your arms should swing naturally back and forth, not across your body. The motion of your arms can aid in propelling you forward.

Hands and Fists

Keep your hands relaxed, with your fingers lightly touching your palms. Avoid clenching your fists, as this can lead to tension in your arms and shoulders.

Core Engagement

Engage your core muscles to help stabilize your upper body. A strong core contributes to overall stability and posture while running.

Hip Alignment

Your hips should remain level and square to the front. Avoid excessive hip rotation, which can lead to inefficient movement and potential hip or lower back discomfort.

THE BASICS OF RUNNING

FORM

Stride Length

Focus on a natural stride length. Overstriding (taking too long of a step) or understriding (taking too short of a step) can lead to inefficiency and increased risk of injury.

Foot Strike

Aim for a midfoot or forefoot strike, where your foot lands under your center of gravity. Avoid striking the ground with your heel, as this can lead to jarring impacts and potential injuries.

Cadence

Cadence refers to the number of steps you take per minute. Aim for a cadence of around 170-180 steps per minute. A higher cadence often leads to a more efficient and comfortable run.

Relaxation

Keep your body relaxed while running. Tension in your muscles can lead to fatigue and discomfort. Focus on staying loose and letting your legs move naturally.

Breathing

Pay attention to your breathing rhythm. Develop a comfortable pattern that matches your pace. Deep, rhythmic breathing can help reduce fatigue.

Terrain Adaptation

Adjust your running form based on the terrain. For example, on steep inclines, you may take shorter, quicker steps, and on descents, you may need to control your speed and balance.

Listen to Your Body

Be attentive to any discomfort or pain while running. If you experience pain, adjust your form, slow down, or stop to address the issue. Ignoring pain can lead to injuries.

Warming up and cooling down are essential components of any running routine. They help prepare your body for physical activity, reduce the risk of injury, and promote recovery. Here's a breakdown of warm-up and cool-down routines for running:



WARM-UP

Start with Light Aerobic Activity

Begin your warm-up with 5-10 minutes of low-intensity aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, slow jogging, or jumping jacks. This gradually increases your heart rate and gets your blood flowing to your muscles.



Dynamic Stretching

After your light aerobic activity, perform dynamic stretches. These are active movements that mimic the motions you'll use while running. Examples include leg swings, high knees, and butt kicks. Dynamic stretching helps improve flexibility and mobility while activating your muscles.



Activation Exercises

Incorporate exercises that activate the major muscle groups you'll be using during your run. Squats, lunges, or leg lifts are excellent choices. These exercises prepare your muscles for the specific demands of running.



Gradually Increase Intensity

Gradually increase the intensity of your warm-up by picking up the pace during your aerobic activity and incorporating dynamic stretches with a wider range of motion.



Mental Preparation

Use your warm-up as a time to mentally prepare for your run. Focus on your goals, visualize a successful run, and set a positive mindset.

COOL-DOWN



Slow Down Gradually

As you near the end of your run, reduce your pace gradually. This allows your heart rate to decrease gradually, preventing blood from pooling in your lower extremities.



Light Jog or Walk

After slowing down, jog or walk at a slow pace for 5-10 minutes. This helps your body gradually transition from running to rest.



Static Stretching

Perform static stretches during your cool-down. Focus on stretching the major muscle groups used in running, such as your calves, quadriceps, hamstrings, hip flexors, and lower back. Hold each stretch for 15-30 seconds without bouncing.



Deep Breathing

Engage in deep, diaphragmatic breathing to promote relaxation and help reduce post-run tension.



Hydration and Nutrition

Rehydrate with water or a sports drink after your run to replace fluids lost during exercise. Consider consuming a balanced snack or meal with carbohydrates and protein to aid recovery.



Foam Rolling

Using a foam roller, target areas of tightness or soreness in your muscles. Foam rolling can help reduce muscle tension and improve flexibility.

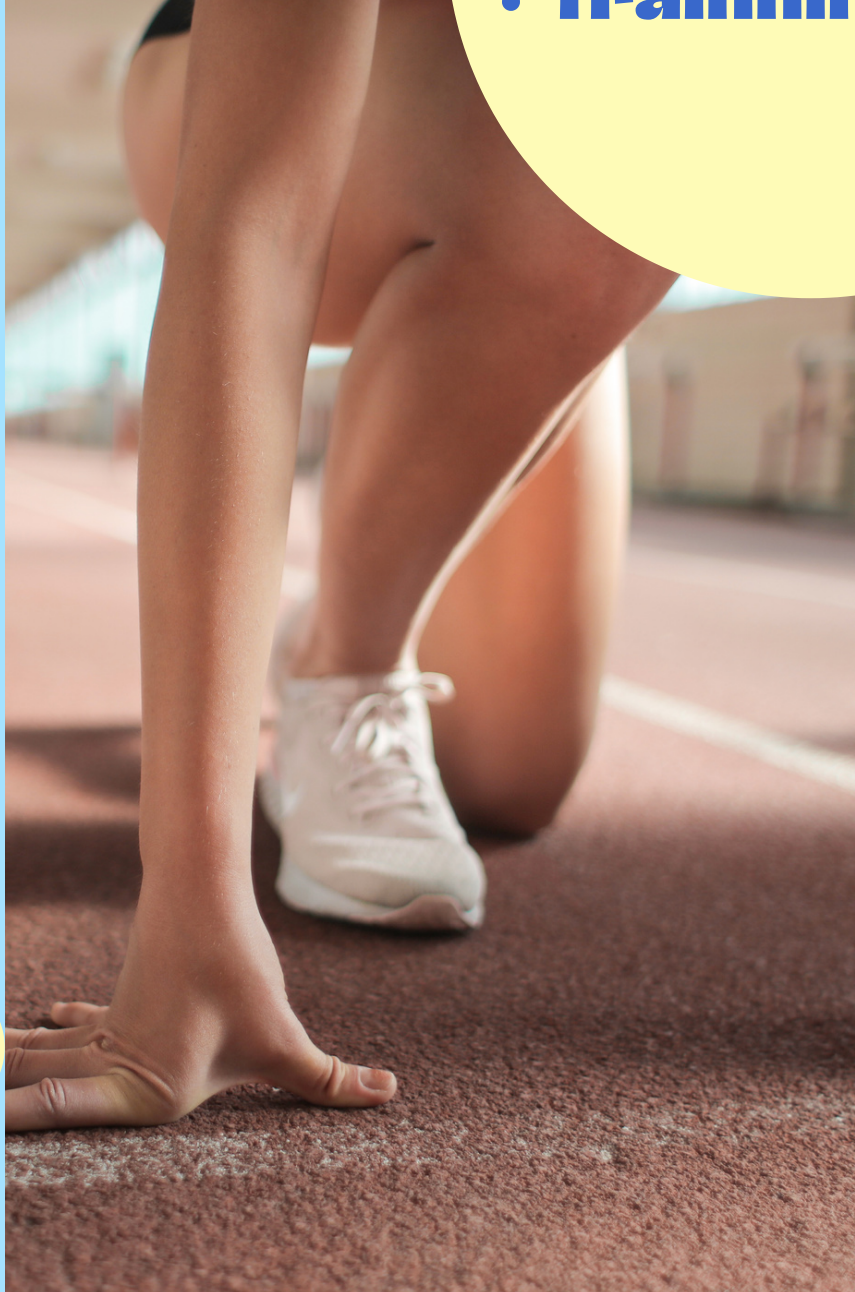


Reflect and Review

Use your cool-down time to reflect on your run. Consider what went well and what you can improve next time.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

- **Walk**
- **Track progress**
- **Training plan**



Every healthy person who can walk, can run too. Running is as simple as walking. It is a form of locomotion characterized by a faster pace and a gait where both feet are briefly off the ground during each stride. It involves a rapid, continuous motion with an increased intensity compared to walking.

START WITH WALKING

Starting with walking when transitioning to running is an excellent approach, especially for beginners or individuals who are new to running or returning after a period of inactivity. This gradual progression allows your body to adapt to the physical demands of running while minimizing the risk of injury. Here's how to effectively start with walking when trying to run:

Set Realistic Goals

Begin by setting achievable goals for your running journey. These could include objectives like running for a specific duration or distance, completing a 5K, or simply improving your overall fitness.

Assess Your Current Fitness Level

Before you start running, assess your current fitness level. If you've been inactive for a while or have any underlying health concerns, it's a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional.

Warm Up

Start each session with a warm-up. Spend 5-10 minutes walking briskly at a comfortable pace. This helps increase blood flow to your muscles and prepares your body for more intense exercise.

Incorporate Intervals

Begin your training by incorporating intervals of walking and running. For example, you might walk for 2-3 minutes and then run for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Repeat these intervals throughout your workout.

Increase gradually

With each walk-run session, decrease the amount of walking and increase the time spend running. This way you will soon be able to give up walking intervals in favor of running.

TRACKING PROGRESS

Tracking progress as a runner is a valuable practice that helps you stay motivated, monitor your improvement, and adjust your training as needed. Here are some effective ways to track your progress:

Running Log or Journal

- Maintain a running log or journal where you record details of each run. Include information such as the date, distance, time, pace, route, weather conditions, and how you felt during the run. This historical record provides a comprehensive view of your progress.
- Utilize running apps and GPS watches that track your runs, including distance, time, pace, and route. Many of these apps also provide data on your heart rate, elevation, and cadence. They often sync with online platforms, allowing you to analyze your performance over time.

Set and Track Goals

- Establish specific running goals, whether it's completing a certain distance, achieving a target pace, or participating in races. Track your progress toward these goals and celebrate your achievements along the way.

Performance Metrics

- Monitor key performance metrics like your race times, personal bests, and the number of runs you complete each week or month. Tracking improvements in these metrics can be motivating.

Cross-Training Progress

- If you incorporate cross-training activities into your routine, track your progress in those activities as well.

Body Measurements

- Keep tabs on your body measurements, including weight, body fat percentage, and measurements of specific body parts. While running is not solely about weight loss, these measurements can provide additional insight into your overall fitness journey.

Personal Records (PRs)

- Keep a list of your personal records in various race distances and other running achievements. Updating this list when you achieve a new PR can be incredibly rewarding.

Rest and Recovery Tracking

- Don't forget to track your rest and recovery. Note your sleep patterns, energy levels, and any signs of overtraining. Proper recovery is essential for long-term progress.

Listen to Your Body

- Beyond numbers and metrics, pay attention to how your body feels. Are you recovering well? Do you experience less fatigue during runs? Are you injury-free? These subjective factors are essential indicators of progress.

Periodic Assessments

- Periodically assess your overall running performance and set new goals. Adjust your training plan based on your progress and aspirations.

Remember that progress in running is not always linear, and there may be periods of stagnation or setbacks. However, consistent tracking and a growth mindset can help you stay motivated and work through challenges. Celebrate your achievements, no matter how small, and use your progress as inspiration to continue pushing your limits in your running journey.

TRAINING PLANS

Using a training plan in running can be highly effective for achieving your fitness goals, whether you're aiming to complete your first 5K or preparing for a marathon. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to use a training plan for running:

Determine your running goals.

Are you looking to improve endurance, increase speed, or complete a specific race distance? Having clear objectives will help you choose an appropriate training plan.

Choose the Right Plan.

Select a training plan that aligns with your goals and fitness level. Plans are often categorized by distance (e.g., 5K, half marathon, marathon) and experience level (beginner, intermediate, advanced). Look for one that suits your needs.

Understand the Plan.

Familiarize yourself with the training plan. It typically includes a structured schedule detailing the duration, distance, and type of runs you should do each week. Pay attention to terms like "easy run," "long run," "tempo run," and "rest day."

Plan Your Schedule.

Determine when you'll do your runs each week. Consider your daily routine, work commitments, and personal preferences. Consistency is key, so choose days and times that you can stick to.

Track Your Progress

Use a running app to record your runs. You will have records about the distance, time, pace, and you can add any additional comments about how you felt during the run. Tracking your progress helps you stay accountable and adjust your training as needed.

Follow the Plan

Adhere to the schedule outlined in your training plan. Be consistent with your runs and try to stick to the prescribed distances and paces.

Listen to your body

Pay attention to how your body responds to training. If you experience persistent pain, fatigue, or signs of overtraining, be prepared to modify your plan or take extra rest days.

Adjust as Necessary

Training plans are not one-size-fits-all. They can be adjusted to accommodate changes in your life, unexpected events, or variations in your fitness level.

Cross-Training and Rest Days

Many training plans include cross-training activities like swimming, cycling, or strength training. These can help improve overall fitness and reduce the risk of overuse injuries. Rest days are equally important for recovery, so don't skip them.

Gradual Progression

As you follow the training plan, you'll gradually increase the intensity, duration, and frequency of your runs. This progression is essential for building fitness and avoiding injury.

Celebrate Milestones

Acknowledge your achievements along the way. Whether it's completing a long run, hitting a personal best, or finishing a race, celebrate your progress to stay motivated.

Using a well-structured training plan provides guidance, structure, and accountability for your running journey. It can help you make steady progress and achieve your running goals while minimizing the risk of injury. However, always remember that individual needs vary, so be flexible.

#1 Injuries

As any other athletes, runners also are expose to injuries. Running injuries can be both frustrating and painful, but with proper prevention strategies and awareness, you can reduce your risk of experiencing them.

It's essential to remember that individual factors, such as your running form, body mechanics, and training history, can influence your risk of injury. Therefore, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare professional or sports medicine specialist if you experience persistent pain or discomfort while running. Additionally, a gradual and progressive approach to training, proper footwear, and regular cross-training can significantly reduce the risk of common running injuries.

#2 Cross training

Cross training, also known as cross-training or cross-training workouts, refers to incorporating different forms of exercise and physical activities into your fitness routine, in addition to your primary or main sport or exercise activity. The goal of cross training is to improve overall fitness, prevent overuse injuries, break up the monotony of a single activity, and potentially enhance performance in your main activity

#3 Stay Hydrated and Eat Well

Proper hydration and nutrition are crucial for training success. Fuel your body with a balanced diet and stay hydrated before, during, and after your runs.

#4 Run for life(style)

Incorporating running into your lifestyle can be a rewarding and sustainable way to improve your fitness and overall well-being. Whether you're new to running or returning to it after a break, you can make running a regular part of your life.

Set Clear Goals

Determine your running goals, whether it's completing a 5K race, improving your fitness, or just enjoying the process.

Create a Schedule

Establish a running schedule that aligns with your daily routine. Decide on the days and times you'll dedicate to running.

Start Slow and Gradual

If you're new to running, begin with a walk/run approach. Gradually increase the running intervals as your fitness improves.

Invest in Proper Gear

Buy a good pair of running shoes that fit your feet and running style. Proper footwear is important for comfort and injury prevention.

Warm Up and Cool Down

Prepare your body for the physical demands of running, minimize the risk of injury, and promote recovery with warm-up and cool down.

Join a Running Group or Club

Consider joining a local running group or club. Running with others can provide motivation, accountability, and a sense of community.

Use Technology

Use running apps or GPS watches to track your runs, monitor your progress, and set goals. These tools can help keep you engaged and motivated.

WHAT OTHER RUNNERS SAY ?



"Embrace the freedom, the joy, and the limitless possibilities of running. Every step is a journey, a funny journey, regardless your age. Lace up those shoes!"

ALINA CREȚ

START

"I started 4 years ago and have run 8000 km since then. Every one of these was a pleasure!

If you are alone, you let your mind fly, if you run with friends, you talk about different things and time also runs with you. Either way, running allows you to detach yourself from everyday problems and think about beautiful things!

If you're not sure you can run, try! You will surely succeed!"

SILVIU CANDALE



WHAT OTHER RUNNERS SAY ?

I started running because my friends and colleagues were doing it and they were very excited. To my surprise I succeeded! I exceeded my expectations, it gives me an excellent physical and mental state, I feel motivated and full of energy.

Every race is a competition with myself, because every time I aim to be better than before. Moreover, I made new friends and a community that supports and encourages me.

I am grateful to my friends who showed me the way to one of the most beautiful and healthy hobbies I have.



ALICE TRIF



WHAT OTHER RUNNERS SAY ?

It was the 13th of June 2019 when some colleagues invited me for my first run with them and some of my students. It was a difficult run for me, even though I was playing football at least 2 times a week since I was a child. I survived.. Looking back, after almost 700 runs and more that 9000km, the 13th of June 2019 was a lucky day for me.

CIPRIAN MUREȘAN



I used to hate running a while ago.....now, I cannot live without it; it is my daily habit that heals my mind and body. You won't understand what I am saying, unless you try it!

GEORGIANA MARTI



If you wonder...

WHAT'S NEXT?



Well, fair is fair, your turn now.
Get out and run.

Do it by the book (this book)
and you will be fine!

You will have also fun, we
promise that.



Erasmus+ project

The Challenge to a Healthy Life

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TO FEEL ENERGETIC
ENERGETIC AND HAPPY



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