

Fulfilling a healthy New Year's Resolution: Beginning Running 101

Greetings to another new year and another new set of new years resolutions! If one of your resolutions is to burn some calories, improve your physical and mental health and challenge yourself to new heights, consider a running, walking or run/walking program! Are you already an avid runner or walker? Then why not challenge yourself to a new distance this year?

No matter what distance or goal you have in sight, the most important step is taking the first step. There is no reason to feel intimidated by beginning a running program. This article is meant to act as only a guideline and to provide basic recommendations. It is best to consult with running coaches and/or find a running club in your area for guidance, assistance, and support. Lucky for us in and around Galveston, Fit TRI Run offers a range of social run/walk training opportunities as well as coached training sessions. Smile and enjoy the journey on your feet!

Here are the basics of getting started with a running program:

1. Make certain that you are in good physical condition to begin. It is best to obtain medical clearance from your doctor.
2. Make sure you get the right running shoes for your foot type! This is extremely important for injury prevention as well as comfort. Visit your local running store (FIT TRI RUN) and be fitted properly. Don't cheat yourself on this smart investment – it could be the one issue that will help you continue or stop you in your tracks.
3. Make sure you are properly hydrated (water) before, during and after. Sport drinks are not necessary before these workouts-- that just provided unnecessary calories at this time. Hydration is important all of the time – not just when it's hot outside.
4. Clothing: avoid cotton and jean materials when running or walking for fitness. Cotton absorbs and retains sweat. These materials can also cause irritation and chaffing. When possible, purchase “technical” clothing – clothing made for running. It breathes, it dries quickly, and it will not cause skin breakdown.
Women should invest in a *good* sports bra. No cotton bras. With the right bra, you should only need 1 bra at a time – regardless of your cup size. Visit Fit TRI Run to be properly fitted.
5. Socks: avoid cotton for the same reasons as above. Technical socks made for running will keep your feet dry – even in the hottest of weather. Your feet should not be blistered, callused or wrinkled after you exercise – if they are, consider new socks.

6. Before you start your workouts, make sure you “warm up” your muscles by walking briskly for 5-10 minutes and or skip, hop, jump a little. *Do not* stretch cold muscles. Only stretch after you have warmed up and increased your heart rate somewhat. Always end your workout with a “cool down” (lesser intensity walk, run, or jog) and stretch gently.

THE PROGRAM

There are many programs and recommendations available for running. If you are not currently a runner, I strongly recommend following a slow, progressive program. Doing too many miles too soon or going too fast too soon is an invitation for injury or complications. Take it slowly and patiently. Allow your body to become a fat-burning machine. Running can be for life if you approach it smart.

WEEK 1: walk for 6 minutes, then jog at an easy pace for 1 minute. Repeat 3 times. Try to do this at least 3 different days during this first week. Just do the best you can!

WEEK 2: walk for 5 minutes, then jog for 2 minutes. Repeat 3 times. Try to do this at least 3 days this week. Remember to stretch when you finish.

WEEK 3: walk for 3 minutes, then jog for 4 minutes. Repeat 4 times. Try to do this 4 days this week!

WEEK 4: walk for 2 minutes, then jog for 5 minutes. Repeat 4 times. Do this 4 days this week.

WEEK 5: walk for 2 minutes, then jog for 8 minutes. Repeat 3 times. Do this 4 days this week! You're doing great and look how far you've come! Don't forget to smile...it makes your body feel better.

WEEK 6: walk for 2 minutes, then jog for 9 minutes. Repeat 3 times. Do this 4 days this week.

WEEK 7: walk for 1 minute, then jog for 11 minutes. Repeat 3 times. Do this 4 days this week. Try not to make these days consecutive. Whoohoo!! Be proud of your accomplishment!

WEEK 8: Repeat week 7 workout. Walk for 1 minute, then jog for 11 minutes. Repeat 3 times. Try to do this 4 days this week. Give yourself rest days. Doesn't this seem easier than last week? Great job!

WEEK 9: Warm up by walking briskly, jogging a few seconds, then walking again – do this for 5 minutes. Then jog for 15 minutes. Then cool down by walking briskly for 5 minutes more. Repeat this workout 4 days this week.

WEEK 10: You can do it!! Walk fast/ jog a few seconds for 5 minutes. Then jog/run for 20 minutes. Then cool down by walking fast for 5 minutes. Do this 4 days this week.

WEEK 11: Increase the challenge! Warm up for 5 minutes by walking fast/ jogging for a few seconds. Jog/run for 30 minutes, then cool down by walking fast for 5 more minutes. Try to do this 4 days this week. Stretch after each run.

WEEK 12: Repeat week 11. This should feel easier and you may be able to run faster. CONGRATULATIONS!! Do you agree that the hardest part was taking the first step?

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Returning USA FIT members = \$100.

Sign up at: www.usafitgalveston.com

Kimberly Bachmeier is co-owner of FIT TRI RUN, is a former Occupational Therapist, a certified Run Form Coach and has her Specialist in Fitness Nutrition Certification.