**Running for Beginners**

**The best thing about Running is its free, you can do it anywhere, and it burns more calories than any other mainstream exercise.**

**Before you start**

If you have not been active for a while, you may want to build your running fitness levels gently.

Running requires little equipment, but a good pair of running shoes that suit your foot type may help improve comfort.

There are many types of trainers on the market, so get advice from a specialist running retailer, who'll assess your foot and find the right shoe for you.

The shoe's structure weakens over time, especially with regular use. Running experts advise replacing running shoes every 400 to 600 miles.

Women should also consider a sports bra, which is sturdier than a regular bra and provides additional support.

Plan your runs. Work out when and where (the exact route and time) you're going to run and put it in your diary. That way, it will not slip your mind.

If you feel out of shape, or you're recovering from injury or worried about an existing condition, see a GP before you start running.

**Starting out**

To avoid injury and enjoy the experience, it's essential to ease yourself into running slowly and increase your pace and distance gradually over several outings.

Start each run with a gentle active warm-up of at least 5 minutes. This can include quick walking, marching on the spot, knee lifts, side stepping and climbing stairs.

Start walking for an amount of time that feels comfortable.

When you first start out, try alternating between running and walking during your session. Such as run a minute walk a minute. Then increase that to maybe run 2/3 minutes walk a minute and so on until you feel a bit more comfortable running for say 10 minutes with a recovery period of say 2 minutes walking before running again.

As time goes on, make the running intervals longer until you no longer feel the need to walk.

Give yourself a few minutes to cool down after each run by walking and a doing few stretches. Try our [post-run stretch routine](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/how-to-stretch-after-a-run/).

Regular running for beginners means getting out at least twice a week. Your running will improve as your body adapts to the consistent training stimulus.

It's better to run twice a week, every week, than to run 6 times one week and then do no running for the next 3 weeks.

**Staying motivated**

**Set yourself a goal**

Whatever your level, setting challenges is useful to stay motivated. Training for a race, such as a 5K, or a charity run is a good way to keep going. Theres regular Park Runs around the country you can take part in every weekend for all abilities and these are free to enter. Check out the Parkrun website

**Run with a friend**

It really helps to have someone about the same level of ability as you to run with. You'll encourage each other when you're not so keen to run.

You'll feel that you do not want to let your running partner down, and this will help motivate you. But don’t be afraid to go it alone.

**Keep a diary**

Keep a diary of your runs. Note down each run, including your route, distance, time, weather conditions and how you felt.

That way, whenever your motivation is flagging, you can look back and be encouraged by how much you have improved.

**Mix it up**

Keep your running interesting by adding variety. Running the same route over and over again can become boring. Vary your distances, pace and routes.

**Join a club**

A running club is the perfect way to commit to running regularly. Most clubs have running groups for different levels, including beginners.

Clubs are also a great way to find running partners and new friends to run with outside of club sessions.