

Starting a Training Program

Running comes easily for some and with a bit more effort for others. To smooth the way, here are some tips for good running form that will help you feel more relaxed and run more efficiently.

Run relaxed:

Your neck, face, shoulders and arms should all feel relaxed.

Run tall:

Your body should be upright, not leaning too far forward or backward.

Look up:

Keep your eyes looking forward and your chin up.

Arms and hands:

Relax your hands and unclench your fists. Your arm swing should be straight forward and near waist height. Imagine an invisible line down the center of your body; your arms shouldn't cross over this line side to side.

Easy does it:

Start out slowly and as you warm up, ease into a steady and comfortable pace. If you feel strong, pick up your pace for the last 1-2 minutes or the last 200-300 steps.

Hills:

Your effort should stay constant no matter what the terrain. Slow down a bit on the uphill and use gravity to help you speed up a bit on the downhill.

Warm up before you head out:

Do some light stretching (toe touches, reach for the sky, side to side rotation with hands on hips) to warm up your muscles, while incorporating movement (jumping jacks, brisk walking) to get your heart pumping.

Keep it short and sweet:

Set small goals along the way to your final goal. Try running conventional distances (quarter mile, half mile, mile) as well as unconventional; run to the next mailbox, to the next fire hydrant & back, around the soccer field, etc.

Alternate running and walking:

Both build your fitness, so don't be discouraged! For example, count houses - run by five, walk by five. Then repeat.

Talk to each other:

Talking while you run will ensure you don't start out too fast. If you can talk and run you've chosen a good pace.

Keep it fun:

Run 3 days a week and alternate run days with other activities such as biking, in-line skating, hiking, swimming, etc.

Record your progress (steps or minutes):

10,000 steps = 1 mile, 12 minutes jog = 1 mile. Watch how quickly it adds up! Add up progress individually or as a classroom or family and watch the numbers grow.

Reward yourself:

A heart-healthy fruit smoothie? New running shoes? A family running event?