

Run For Your Life

By Nancy Moffett



"There is no magic exercise," for getting and staying fit, says Budd Coates, employee health and fitness director at Rodale, Inc. "The best form of exercise is the one you're going to continue." So if you've ever thought about running, give it a try. You may find that you love it and will make it a lifelong habit.

According to Coates, running is easy to do because it can be done anywhere, any time...indoors on a treadmill, outdoors, in hotel fitness centers...and doesn't require a lot of equipment or a special setting. So, once you've started, there's no excuse not to continue. And, it's the most efficient at burning calories—more so than biking, swimming, aerobics or other kinds of exercise.

Coates should know. He's been an avid distance runner for more than 30 years and was ranked in the top 10 among U.S. marathoners in 1989. Coates coaches runners of all abilities and has been with Rodale for 27 years.

So, how do you get started? The best way is to walk every day. Walk for 20 minutes a day for four days, then 30

minutes for four more days. This continuous walking will prepare your legs for beginning to run.

The next step is to run for two minutes, then walk for four minutes, repeating the sequence five times. Repeat for four days and then adjust to run for three minutes and walk for three minutes in five sequences. As you move along, you'll increase the amount of running, while decreasing the amount of walking. Coates says this is a good way to ease into running and to give you the feeling of accomplishment that will spur you to continue.

Benefits include more than weight loss and muscle gain: Running is a great cardiovascular workout, increases bone density, lowers blood pressure and maximizes lung capacity. "It has psychological benefits as well," says Coates. "You have the sense of accomplishment of reaching a new goal, plus you're outside and will meet people along the way. It also gives you a mental boost."

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There is one piece of equipment that is vital for runners—the right running shoe. Both Chris Schmidt, owner of The Finish Line, and Bruce Haines, owner of Aardvark Sports Shops, say wearing the wrong shoe can lead to injuries and giving up. “The foot portion of the shoe is very important,” says Schmidt. “Color, looks and price don’t matter. What matters is getting a shoe that works with the natural motion of your foot as you walk or run.” What is needed is a shoe that accommodates for high arches, flat feet or other conditions that would keep the foot from “pronating” properly (the rolling motion that absorbs shock).

Haines agrees. “Without proper shoes, it’s difficult to enjoy a running routine...stress on the lower legs can lead to shin splints, back, knee and hip pain.” What do they cost? “Shoes go from \$80 up to \$165, but for the average runner, the cost is usually \$85 to \$95,” Haines says. Both stores custom fit each customer to make sure they are using the right shoe for their foot type.

Need some motivation and coaching? Many running organizations offer programs to help you start and maintain a running routine. The First Strides® program is a 12-week workshop for women who want to start walking, jogging or running. Other resources include the Lehigh Valley Road Runners Club and the Road Runners Club of America.

With spring arriving soon, picture yourself out in one of the Valley’s many beautiful parks, running your way to better health and a longer, happier life.

RESOURCES:

Rodale has made a limited number of copies of the Runner’s World Training Log, authored by Budd Coates, available to Lehigh Valley Marketplace readers. It provides detailed instructions on how to start and maintain a running program. Ask for your copy at the Bethlehem Aardvark Sports Shop or at The Finish Line in Allentown.

Aardvark Sports Shop

571 Main Street Commons, Bethlehem
610-866-8300
www.aardvarkssportsshop.com

The Finish Line

17 S. 12th Street, Allentown
610-432-9939
www.finishlinerrunningstore.com

Lehigh Valley Road Runners

www.lvrr.org

Road Runners Club of America

www.rrca.org

First Strides®

www.firststrides.com