

Brought to you by



Ascension



STARTING A RUNNING PROGRAM



BY: JENNIFER STEINHOFF, MD, SPORTS MEDICINE PHYSICIAN

Running is a great exercise option for many people. It is good for physical and mental health, can be adapted to each person's fitness level, can be done outside (roads, sidewalks, trails) or inside (treadmill) and does not require much equipment. A pair of running shoes and comfortable clothes are all that are needed to get started. Generally getting running shoes fitted at a local running store is recommended. If that doesn't work for you, I would recommend starting with a neutral running shoe if you do not already have a running shoe that has worked well for you. Once you are able to walk for 30 minutes consecutively you are able to start a run/ walk program.

By alternating running and walking, and gradually increasing your time running, you will decrease your risk of injury. There are many different plans available to begin running but a couch to 5K program is a good starting place. Usually the plans are 3 days of running per week with non-running days between to allow for adaptation to the increase in exercise. If the plan is increasing too quickly for your level of fitness, you can modify it by repeating a day or a week and then progressing forward as you are able. If you carry a phone with you, an app can be helpful such as C25K (couch 2 5K) which will tell you when to alternate from walking to running during your time exercising. Another program is in the table below. On the non-running days of the week, you can cross-train with another activity such as biking, resistance training or yoga; or take a day of rest. Once you have completed the initial program of building up to 30 minutes of running 3 days per week, you can start to increase days per week running, distance per day or speed gradually if you would like. It is recommended not to increase distance and speed at the same time. Distance or speed should not be increased by more than 10% per week (if you ran 10 miles this week then increase to 11 miles next week). It is easy to get excited when you are starting something new and working toward a goal but increasing speed or mileage too quickly increases injury risk. Happy running!

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Week 1

Repeat 6 times:
walk 4.5 minutes, run
0.5 minute

Repeat 6 times: walk
4 minutes, run 1
minute

Repeat 6 times: walk
3.5 minutes, run 1.5
minutes

Week 2

Repeat 6 times: walk
3 minutes, run 2
minutes

Repeat 6 times: walk
2.5 minutes, run 2.5
minutes

Repeat 6 times: walk
2 minutes, run 3
minutes

Week 3

Repeat 6 times: walk
1.5 minutes, run 3.5
minutes

Repeat 6 times: walk
1 minute, run 4
minutes

Repeat 6 times: walk
0.5 minute, run 4.5
minutes

Week 4

Run 30 minutes

Run 30 minutes

Run 30 minutes

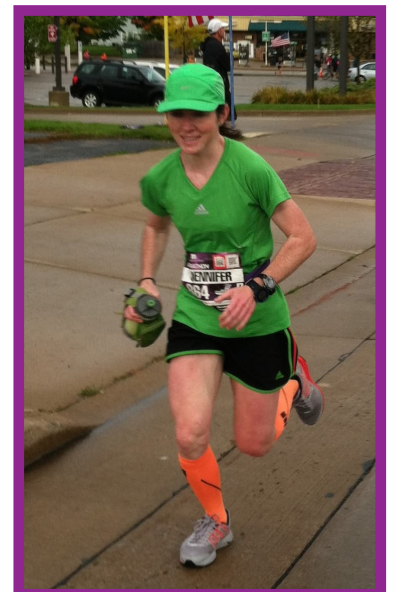


Table adapted from Johnston et al. (2003) Canadian Family Physician 49: 1101-1109