

Ten mistakes to avoid when you start running

So you've taken the excellent step of deciding to improve your health and fitness by taking up running. But how can you make your New Year's resolution become a way of life? Follow our advice and avoid making the following mistakes to ensure you keep on running into February and beyond.

"I can run in any old trainers"!

Running in old, worn out trainers or ones not specifically designed for running – like pumps or tennis shoes – could give you an injury and even cause long term damage to your joints. Visit a specialist running shop where they have shoes developed to offer you the support and cushioning you need. Getting the right trainers will lessen the impact on your joints and ensure your foot is properly supported when it strikes the ground. Read more about why you should invest in running shoes here.

http://www.lsfit.co.uk/lifestyle_health_running.html

"I'll run the same route round the block every day so I can see if I'm improving"!

Treading the same path every time you run will soon make you bored and less motivated to go out. Instead, look at a map of your local area and discover different routes to explore. As well as road runs, go off road on woodland trails and across parks to give you a change of scenery. You could still return to the same route once a week or fortnight to see if you are getting quicker. There are also apps to measure routes, click here to help

http://www.lsfit.co.uk/fitfor_running.html

"I'll eat straight before I go for a run so I don't feel weak and hungry"!

You do need to eat well to fuel your running – particularly carbohydrates and proteins – but eating too close to exercising will give you a stitch and could even make you throw up. If you are having a meal, make sure it is two to three hours before running. If you get hungry again in between, have a small snack like a cereal bar or slice of toast.

"I'm heading out on a short run, I need to drink lots and carry a water bottle with me"!

Being hydrated is essential to run well but there is also a danger in drinking too much. It could make your stomach feel bloated, give you a stitch, and in extreme cases, can result in death. Unless it's a hot day or you are going out for a long run of 30 minutes plus, you shouldn't need to carry a water bottle with you. Instead make sure you have been drinking adequately throughout the day before your run and that you drink extra when you get back. Sports drinks should only be necessary if you are going on a long run (60 minutes plus), doing a session or a race where you push yourself, or on a hot day when you sweat more.

"I need to wear lots of layers and thick clothing to stay warm"!

It is important to wear layers if you are running on a cold day but stick to ones made of light, thin fabrics. You'll soon warm up once you start running. If you run in thick jogging bottoms and a big hooded top, not only will you feel too hot, you'll feel heavy and weighed down and less able to run efficiently. Leggings are a better alternative to jogging bottoms while layering with a t-shirt and long sleeved running top will be better than a jumper.

"I need to run non-stop"!

Don't run before you can walk! Start out doing some brisk walking before going into a jog. If you are struggling, walk for a few minutes before running again. It's fine to walk-run while you are building up your fitness. Listen to your body and ease back by walking if you need to. In time, you'll find you can keep running for longer and won't need as many walking breaks and eventually you will be able to cut them out altogether. Read our beginner's training guide

"I'm too embarrassed to be seen out running, I'll go somewhere quiet or when it's late and dark"!

Not only it is dangerous to go out to isolated areas alone or late at night but what have you got to be ashamed of about running? It will make you toned, burn calories, give you glowing skin and healthy hair, strengthen your heart and lungs and lower your cholesterol. Yes, you may have to endure the odd taunt of "get those knees up" or "go on 118" but you can take the high ground knowing how much that run is improving your health and well-being.

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“I’m only a novice, I’ll be too slow to join a running club”!

Running clubs cater for all abilities from absolute beginners to the elite. Different runs and sessions will be on offer so you can run at your own pace without having to worry about being left behind. Read our top reasons why you should join a running club article on the 'Fit For...Running' Page.

http://www.lsfrit.co.uk/fitfor_running.html

“I’ve been running for a week now, it should be getting easier”!

Don't expect too much, too soon. It will get easier and you will get fitter but don't expect to see vast improvements overnight. Even professional athletes have to work at their fitness if they've had an extended period of time off. Remember with running, you get out what you put in. Keep going when it gets tough and after a couple of weeks you will notice an improvement and soon you'll find where you couldn't run for five minutes without stopping, you'll be able to run for 15 and more.

“My friend and I started running at the same time, I should be able to keep up with them”!

Everyone will progress at different rates when running depending on how fit they were to begin with and how much they are training. As in all aspects of life, different people will also have different strengths and weaknesses. While your friend may be faster than you over a shorter distance, you may have more endurance and be able to run for longer than them. Don't compare yourself to others but focus on your own running and you'll enjoy it much more.