



THE PHYSIO CLINIC

Movement Health Performance

Adapting to Your Training

THE RUNNING CLINIC[®]

“When does running get easier?”

This is a very common question among beginners and there is not one answer that fits all. Building cardiovascular fitness and making physiological adaptations to your body takes time. It is important to stick with it and stay patient. Before you know it, you’ll look back and realise how much progress you’ve made!

After just a few weeks of training, many runners find that they can work a bit longer or run a bit further, without feeling so out of breath. However, it is the body that tends to be the limiting factor (bones, muscles & tendons). It is not uncommon to pick up little aches and pains at this point. This is because the cardiovascular system

(heart & lungs) adapts slightly quicker than the bones, muscles and tendons. So, make sure you stick to your programme, as it will be designed to progress you at the right pace.

In the meantime, there are some things that you can do that will help make running more comfortable and enjoyable:

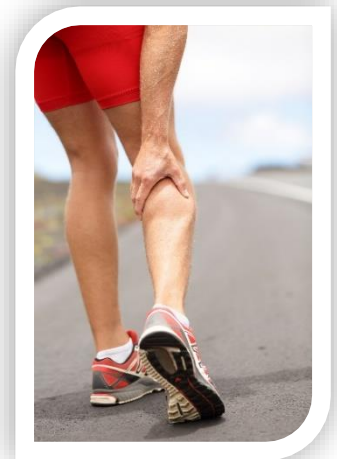
1. Make sure you are breathing easily

You should be breathing deep from your belly, not taking shallow breaths from your chest.

2. Watch your form

Keep your shoulders back and practice good posture. If you are leaning forward it’s much harder to breathe and you’ll

feel out of breath much sooner. Staying upright will keep your lungs open so you’ll breathe much more efficiently.



Did you know...

Your muscles, bones and tendons take longer to adapt than your cardiovascular system does. Stick to your program to allow your body to adapt at the right pace

3. Win the mental battle

Some beginner runners are actually physically fit enough to run a certain distance, they just don't have the confidence or mental strength to push themselves further. In many cases it is simply 'mind over matter'. Try to distract yourself by choosing different routes, or running with someone else.



4. Don't worry about your pace

Struggling through the run portions of the run/walk? Don't worry! As a beginner your runs should be at an easy 'conversational pace'. You should be able to talk with someone as you're running. If you are unable to maintain a conversation, then don't be afraid to slow the pace down!

Common Questions from Beginners

Should I eat before a run?

It's not a good idea to run immediately after eating because it may lead to cramping or side stitches. But running on an empty stomach may cause you to run out of energy. Your best bet is to eat a snack or light meal about 1 1/2 to 2 hours before you start running. Try to choose something high in carbohydrates and lower in fat, fibre and protein. For example: a bagel with peanut butter; turkey and cheese on whole wheat bread; a banana and an energy bar; or a bowl of cold cereal with a cup of milk.

Should I breathe through my nose or my mouth? We suggest you do both! It's normal and natural to breathe through your nose and mouth at the same time. It's good to keep your mouth slightly open and relax your jaw muscles.

I always feel out of breath when running. Is something wrong? You're probably trying to run too fast! Concentrate on breathing from deep down in your abdomen and use the walk portions of your walk/run to recover as best you can.

I often suffer from a stitch when I run. How do I get it to go away? Unfortunately, stitches are more common among beginners. Most people find that as they get fitter, they suffer less from this. Try not to eat too close to when you run. When you get a stitch try to breathe deeply, concentrating

on pushing all the air out of your abdomen. This will stretch out your diaphragm which is usually where the stitch occurs.


Is it normal to feel pain during running? Some amount of discomfort is normal as you add distance and intensity to your training. Your body must adapt. However, if a part of your body feels so bad that you are running with a limp or you are altering your stride because of it, stop. If you are unsure about your pain, it is best to get it checked out by a physio.


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Looking for more information?

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