

## **Beginning to run**

If you really want to run so that it becomes a healthy habit and not one of those resolutions that you soon abandon or never even begin, starting now you should keep two things in mind: patience and perseverance.

A beginning runner should do so with caution, little by little, so that the body can adapt to its new routine (even without considering poor eating habits, being sedentary and/or overweight). The body with the mind. If we decide that in one month we'll be running a 10-kilometer race in less than an hour (for example), we will probably accomplish two things: injure ourselves, and never put on another pair of running shoes for the rest of our life.

For anyone who asks, I recommend starting with a brisk walk for the first two weeks. A long walk between 30 and 60 minutes at a fast pace, three days a week, is more than enough to get us accustomed to running. Then with each new week, keep the three training days and exchange five minutes of rapid walking for a light jog. This lets us introduce running into our life a little at a time, in a way that is natural and safe.

Although it seems counterintuitive, in order to run slowly you need strong muscles, bones, tendons, and joints.

Later we'll have advice for those wishing to attempt more difficult challenges, but for now, walking quickly and then gradually adding jogging should be enough for our body to safely adapt to the changes that we demand of it. In the table below I have made a simple plan of several weeks to guide your initiation into this very popular thing called running.

After completing this timeline, by the eighth week we'll be in perfect condition to jog lightly for half an hour. It will only cost us effort, and the risk of harm to us is zero. We only have to watch out for the ground beneath our feet.

During the first two months we can run anywhere, although the flat paths in any park are ideal. But pavement or sidewalks won't do us any harm either, since we are still not demanding very much from our body.

In any case, my recommendation is that you always run in the plain light of day (no matter if it's morning, noon, or late afternoon) and in a park. The air you breathe will be cleaner and the terrain is ideal because it absorbs and cushions part of the impact on your joints from running.

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>ACTION PLAN</b>
<b>1</b>	Walk 30 minutes at a rapid pace; three days a week
<b>2</b>	Walk 25 minutes and jog the last 5 minutes; three days a week
<b>3</b>	Walk 15 minutes, jog 5 minutes, walk 5 minutes, jog 5 minutes; three days a week
<b>4</b>	Walk 10 minutes, jog 5 minutes, walk 5 minutes, jog 5 minutes, walk 5 minutes; three days a week
<b>5</b>	Walk 10 minutes, jog 5 minutes, walk 5 minutes, jog 10 minutes; three days a week
<b>6</b>	Walk 5 minutes, jog 10 minutes, walk 5 minutes, jog 10 minutes; three days a week
<b>7</b>	Walk 5 minutes, jog 20 minutes, walk 5 minutes; three days a week

When going out for a run, try to wear some appropriate shoes that are a half-size larger than usual (to prevent abrasions, nail problems, etc.). But there's no need for you to make a big investment at this time. You're just beginning and any midrange name-brand footwear (which on sale would be an investment of around 50 dollars) is more than enough to keep you from injuring yourself. In any case, if you have questions get some advice from the specialists in the sporting goods

stores. But please, don't spend 100 or 150 dollars on shoes at the beginning, as I see many novices do. With all this fabulous technology you don't need to do that. There's time later, if you so choose, to take on tougher challenges.

For now, your clothing should be comfortable. You don't need to pay a lot for specialized clothing (you can find store-brand running pants and shirts that are very inexpensive). In summer your clothing should be light and allow perspiration to wick away, so sweat doesn't become a problem. In winter you should have a little more protection but always feel slightly cool as you go out, because when you are running you will warm up. What matters is not that you feel cold at the start, but that you don't stay cold at the end of your workout. So don't forget, especially in winter, to dress warmly when going out to run, and then jump into the shower immediately after running.

The second premise, perseverance, needs a lot of contribution from you. You must honestly commit to finding three days a week (one day of running alternating with one of rest) where you can spend 30 minutes at any time during the day on your health. You should make a schedule and put it in

your agenda, on the fridge door, your computer screen, your mobile, over your bed, at work, and even in your bathroom. You must remember that you have committed, and these notes serve as a reminder. It's also important that you tell your friends and loved ones about your training schedule. That will not just encourage, but also greatly increase, your level of commitment. They will be on your side, and perhaps someone will be inspired to accompany you on your runs! But what really matters is that YOU are convinced that you want to start this fantastic adventure. In no time you will feel proud of your accomplishments and running will become a fun part of your life. I promise you.