

A Women's Running Training Program

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Our objective is to get women to the starting line of fitness. Regardless of your age or ability we aim to create opportunities in walking and running around the world. The resulting good health and personal empowerment is truly transformational.

Whether you want to begin a program for fitness, lose weight, reduce stress, reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, become a competitive athlete, or just run or walk in a local fun run, consistent running and walking will get you there.

First you have to get started.

As with all exercise programs, please consult your doctor before starting.

Good information is essential, and the following brief programs have been used successfully by thousands of women. They are from my best selling book, *Running and Walking for Women Over 40...the Road to Sanity and Vanity*. No matter what your age-- or gender! -- this book is an invaluable source. (It even has been used to train children).

Visit my website to purchase: www.kathrineswitzer.com

Running: Form and Fundamentals

One of the most frequently asked questions is: How do you run? The answer seems obvious to some of you: put one foot in front of the other. But it's not that easy. There are a few rules to follow:

- You've already mastered the shuffle, so now it's time to move a bit faster. Land on your heels and roll forward. This should happen naturally, but be aware of the motion. And guess what? You're jogging! It should feel as easy as fast walking.
- Run with your shoulders back and your arms and hands loosely cupped. Don't clench your fists. Bend your elbows at your waist, with your hands facing each other -- as if you're putting your hands in your pants pockets.
- Keep your head up and your eyes focused about ten to fifteen yards in front of you, not at your feet. Your chin should be parallel to the ground.

TIPS *Patience provides the best results.* Don't be discouraged if your progress seems slow. We all want immediate results, but we need to be patient. This is all new to your body, even if you've been active in the past. It is far more important to build a strong, healthy base -- even if it takes longer -- than it is to progress too quickly and risk being discouraged or injured.

A Running Program: Making Strides for Sanity and Vanity

After you have done the beginning walking and running program for a few weeks, and are comfortable with your workouts, you may be ready to take the next step. The following schedule is designed to turn you into a continuous 30-minute runner in 10 weeks. Try to run three or four days a week. On the days you don't run, either rest or do some other training - biking, swimming or weight training - to give your body time to recuperate from running.

Not everyone can complete this program in ten weeks. If you need more time, take it. You're on your own schedule, and nobody is judging you!

However, this is the time you need to invest in a good pair of running shoes. Go to a store where the sales people themselves run, and they will listen to you, watch your foot strike as you run, and fit you properly. They will advise you on the best socks to wear and you should wear those socks when getting fitted for the shoes. Remember: fit more important than looks or price.

Begin each running session with easy walking, shrugging your shoulders, rolling your head and starting very slowly. Work into your stride gradually. Finish of each run walking slowly, followed by light stretching.

Week 1: Walk 4 minutes, Run 2 minutes - Repeat four more times per workout for a total of 30 minutes of walking and running.

Week 2: Walk 3 minutes, Run 3 minutes -- repeat four more times.

Week 3: Walk 2 1/2 minutes, Run 5 minutes-repeat three more times

Week 4: Walk 3 minutes, Run 7 minutes -- repeat two more times

Week 5: Walk 2 minutes, Run 8 minutes -- repeat two more times

Week 6: Walk 2 minutes, Run 9 minutes- repeat once then run for 8 minutes

Week 7: Walk 1 minute, Run 9 minutes, repeat two more times

Week 8: Walk 2 minutes, Run 13 minutes, repeat once

Week 9: Walk 1 minute, run 14 minutes -- repeat once

Week 10: Run 30 minutes

TIP: You should always be able to carry on a conversation while you're running. If you can't, you're going too fast.

Getting Longer, Getting Stronger: Becoming a One-Hour Runner

A personal note: *Running is incredibly addictive--not only because it feels good, but when you accomplish a distance, you are often instinctively challenged to try to go farther. Many women have never attempted this kind of physical test before. Once you know you can do it, you become curious about how much more you can do and thrilled by the excitement of trying.*

Becoming a thirty-minute runner may be your ultimate goal, or you may wish to revise your goal and crank it up a notch or two.

One of the best new goals for the thirty-minute runner is to try to run for a longer time. Not only is it easily measurable but it also gives a tremendous sense of satisfaction. Once you've finished a longer run, it's a real kick to drive over the same roads and see how much distance you covered on foot. You'll feel a sense of ownership over the territory you've run.

Treadmill runners don't experience this same kind of claim to territory. However, you can get a similar sensation by seeing the treadmill odometer register more mileage, or by watching the clock and seeing your staying power during a workout grow.

Becoming a One Hour Runner

The key component of this program is the one long run per week. It builds up endurance and lays the foundation for further progress.

Weeks 1 - 3: Right now you are running 30 minutes a day, 3 days a week. Your weekly commitment of time is 90 minutes. Continue doing this for three weeks.

Week 4: Run 30 minutes, 29 minutes, 35 minutes. Weekly total: 94 minutes

Week 5: Run 30 minutes, 32 minutes, 38 minutes Weekly total: 100 minutes

Week 6: Run 30 minutes, 33 minutes, 41 minutes Weekly total: 104 minutes

Week 7: Run 30 minutes, 34 minutes, 45 minutes Weekly total: 109

minutes

Week 8: Run 30 minutes, 36 minutes, 49 minute Weekly total: 115 minutes

Week 9: Run 30 minutes, 38 minutes, 54 minutes Weekly total: 122 minutes

Week 10: Run 30 minutes, 40 minutes, 60 minutes Weekly total: 130 minutes

A personal note: *When you are trying to increase your distance, some days feel good and others feel awful. Listen to your body. Be willing to back off. There is no hurry. These schedules are designed for the best possible circumstances, and sometimes you just need more time to adapt. Never move on to the next higher distance until you feel totally comfortable with the one you did today. I can remember once doing the same mileage for three weeks before I felt I had the strength to add a bit more.*

The Ultimate Challenge: The Marathon and Beyond

Do you have a dream goal of running a half (13.1 miles) or full marathon (26.2 miles)? Or maybe even further, like an ultra-marathon (52 miles)? That must mean you already feel that magical sense of accomplishment from your running. If you train for and complete a marathon—and I won't kid you, it's not easy and it's very time consuming-- you will have a victory in life that nobody can take away from you. It's magic.

My first advice is to take the one-hour runner schedule from above and make sure you work up just as slowly to the point where you can do 3 one-hour runs a week. Then, once a week, on day 4, crank up the one-hour by 10% a week to the point where you can run for 3 hours. This, however, is just laying a base.

My rule of thumb is that you have to be able to run at least 20 miles two times in practice before you can think of finishing 26.2 miles. And so, at this stage, I strongly recommend you join a running club or training group to share this base-building process. A buddy shares the road and the dark as well as the joys. A group leader will erase the doubts. One of the best ways to find a local running club is to ask at the running store, ask the local high school running coach, and certainly ask other runners you see!

I have many more tips and personal stories to help you be a better runner, to safely enjoy the sport, to eat properly and to help you

select the right kind of shoes, clothing and sport bras, and for that I encourage you to buy my book, *Running and Walking for Women Over 40*. For those of you who are on your way to becoming marathoners, my book *Marathon Woman* will both inspire and make you laugh as it tells you about my own journey to become a marathoner. Our book *26.2 Marathon Stories* will excite and motivate you with the history and heroes of this great event.

Welcome! And embrace the joy.