



5 Mistakes Most Women Make When They Start To Run

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Use these 5 action points to guide you towards your first 30 minute run!

"What I really like about Learn to Run is it doesn't seem hard. It really feels like you could keep running forever."

Mistake #1: No Consistency

The way your body gets fitter is by placing a stress on it (such as running or any other form of exercise). Yes, there is such a thing as good stress, and running fits into that category, as long as you don't overdo it.

Your body has short term responses to individual bouts of exercise, then if it isn't stressed again, it returns to the way it was before your single bout of exercise. However, if the body is repeatedly stressed by say, a running session three times a week, and those sessions are getting progressively harder, the body is stressed just that little bit more each time you run. Your body then thinks to itself, "Boy, if she's going to keep doing this to me, I'd better get stronger".

It's on your rest days, when you are recovering, that your body makes itself just that little bit stronger, that little bit fitter than it was previously, to cope with the added stress it's expecting.

Consistently running 3 times a week, slowly building the length of time you're running for, whilst maintaining a slow steady pace will definitely get you real results in 6 weeks. You'll then most likely notice another big jump in your fitness in another 2-3 months, if you keep your training up.

One important point to note is that not only do you need to give your body rest days each week, you also need to have a much easier week of training each 3-4 weeks.

There'll be days when you don't feel like training. There'll be days when you feel like you're getting nowhere. When days like this hit you, it's good to be prepared. Here are a few pointers to help you maintain consistency.

Take Action

1. Create a realistic training plan, which includes three walk/jogs a week. Make sure you don't increase your distance too quickly.
2. Mark your training times out on your calendar NOW and stick to them. Make sure your run is your priority at these times. Don't let anything else get in the way.
3. Set up a reminder system that will let you know what you'll be doing, and when you'll be doing it, on a daily basis.
4. Be patient. I don't like to be the one to break the news to you, but it's a while since you were 10 years old and carefree, running through the schoolyard at breakneck speed. If you haven't run since you were that 10 year old, your body is going to take a while to get fit again. Acknowledge to yourself that Rome wasn't built in a day.
5. Be accountable. Get yourself a training buddy who is at a similar level to you, or join a group. You'll find it a lot harder to let other people down, then you do to let yourself down!
6. Stick at it. One day you will get out of bed and realise you're a runner.

Mistake #2: Worrying About What Other People Think

In pretty much every Learn to Run course I have ever conducted (and I've been helping women to run for over 10 years now), at least one person has had a close friend or family member scoff at the idea of "learning" to run. Their thinking follows along the line of "it's just running, and everyone can run".

Well you naysayers, walk a mile in the shoes of the busy mum/wife/worker/business owner who hasn't had the time to do anything for themselves since their first kid came along, or walk a mile in the shoes of the woman who, as a young girl was never the "sporty" type, who avoided exercising so as to avoid being made fun of, or the woman who used to love exercise, but hasn't run for many years, finding that each time she tries to get back into it, it all seems too hard or too hopeless-they'll never get back to where they were before.

All too often, there are people around us who are eager to tell us we're doing it wrong. Be prepared for this, accept that they don't know what's right for you, and move on.

If you haven't run for a while, or never run, you might not feel particularly comfortable with it at first, and that's OK. It's perfectly natural to feel a bit unsure of yourself when you're trying something new.

Take Action

1. Take courage in the knowledge that there are lots of women starting to run for the first time, right now, just like you. Don't feel like you're the only one who can't do it yet.
2. Surround yourself with people who will support you and celebrate your efforts, and ignore the knockers.
3. Be guided by what feels right for you.

Mistake #3: Getting Injured-Doing Too Much Too Soon

When you start out on a new exercise programme, you can be at risk of injury if you go at it like a bull at a gate. To minimise the risk of injury, you need to be sure not to do too much too soon. You should build up your running slowly. If you do feel a niggle that doesn't go away when you've warmed up, or that you can feel after you've finished exercising and during the day, see someone who can help you. Your best bet is a physiotherapist in most cases. You might find that all you need to do is follow a simple strengthening routine at the same time as you're building up your running.

Take Action

1. Be prepared to run less than you feel you can. For the first 6-8 weeks of running you should walk away from each session feeling like you could have done more.
2. Find yourself a grassy area to run on. For most beginners, the soft surface of grass helps to minimise the risk of injury due to the cushioning effect. This is not always the case, but is a good rule of thumb.
3. Don't run around and round the same oval in the same direction. You'll be putting stress on knees, hips, and ankles on one leg far more than the other if you're running round in circles. If you're running round an oval, change directions every lap to even out the load. Better still, try to not to run around in a circle at all. Run on the sidelines of a footy field, rather than on the perimeter fence of a round oval.
4. Start with a walk/jog for 20 mins. Alternate a large amount of walking with a small amount of jogging, and very gradually increase the amount of time you jog for, and decrease the amount of time you are walking.

5. Within each individual session, include a brisk walk to warm up and cool down, as well as some stretching at the end. Jog slowly, and walk before you feel you need to.
6. Don't push through a little niggle because you don't want to stop running. If that niggle develops into a full-blown injury, you won't be running anywhere anytime soon.

Mistake #4: Breathing in Through Your Nose

You may have been told to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth whilst you're running. Putting it simply, don't. This may be why you are getting puffed out quickly. While you're running, you need to take in as much oxygen as possible. You can't get nearly as much oxygen in through your nose as you can through your mouth, in the same amount of time. The best runners rarely nose breath, because it slows them down.

Try it for yourself. Jog for a couple of minutes trying to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Walk for 5 mins or so to get your breath back, then jog for two minutes again at the same pace, but this time without thinking about breathing. If you're like most people, you'll breathe in and out through your mouth.

So, how much should you be puffing?

Feeling puffed is OK. It's kind of the point in fact. Exercise will make you breathe more heavily. One of the aims of exercising is to place stress on your body to make it stronger, so if you're not finding yourself a bit puffed when you're running, you probably aren't going to get much fitter aerobically speaking. If you do not have any circulatory, respiratory or heart conditions, and there is no history of any of these conditions in your family, being a bit puffed is fine. However, you don't want to overdo it. As you get fitter, you'll find breathing becomes much easier. And the only way to get fitter, is to be consistent with your training and stick to your plan.

Take Action

1. You should be able to talk easily in sentences whilst running. If you're running with someone, talk to them. If you can't hold a conversation, in sentences, slow down.
2. Make sure your running buddy is of about the same ability as you are, or that they are prepared to run more slowly than they usually would. If you can't talk to them whilst running, you shouldn't run with them till you get fitter. Don't simply keep running with them and let them do all the talking!
3. If you're not running with anyone, say the alphabet out loud, or belt out a few bars of "Row Row Row Your Boat". If you can do either of those with only a bit of breathlessness, you're running at about the right pace. Enough to know you're doing something, but not so much that you can't talk. (You might want to make sure no-one's around before you start singing to yourself. You don't want to be known as the mad woman who sings nursery rhymes to no-one!)

Mistake #5: Not Running at the Right Pace

Establishing a good pace is crucial to enable you to run for longer than you ever have before. If you've been finding running too hard, you're in for a pleasant surprise.

Most likely, right now, when you start running, you run at a pace you can only keep up for a minute or two, then you pretty much run out of steam. If that's the case, you're starting out way too hard.

I'm going to let you into a little secret here. Good runners (who know how to train to get the best out of themselves) spend about 80% of their training time running at a pace 25-50% SLOWER than they race over 3-5km.

A runner who runs 20 mins for 5 kms (that's 4 mins per km) will do a lot of her training between 5-6 mins per km, (the pace will depend a little on the distance they are training for). And that's why you see some people on the footpath running towards you looking fresh as a daisy. They aren't running anywhere near as fast as they can. You should follow their lead.

Take Action

1. Mark a starting point on a footpath or in a park (a park is generally better as the grass offers more cushioning for your joints). You don't need anything sophisticated – a street light, a tree, a drink bottle will be fine. You are going to run over this route twice, so make sure you can replicate your first run. If you're on an oval for example, follow the marked lines of the footy field or stick to about one metre inside the perimeter fence. You just need to be able to cover the same distance for both runs in this exercise.
2. From your starting point, run out for one and a half minutes, and mark the spot where you finish. During the run, take note of where you are at the halfway point -after 45 seconds.
3. Walk briskly back to the start – give yourself 3-4 minutes walking rest.
4. Run over the distance again, from your starting point to where you finished your one and a half minute run. But this time, you're going to take longer to do it. I want you to slow down, and take 2 minutes to cover the same distance from your start point to your finish point. You can check how your pace is going by taking notice of where you are at the one minute mark. It should be roughly where you were on the first run after 45 seconds.
5. Whilst you're running, take notice of how you feel. The second time around should feel a whole lot easier, and it's the pace you'll need to get used to if you want to extend the amount of time you can run for, whilst minimising your risk of injury.

Get Your Training On Track Fast

If you've tried running before and found it all just a bit too hard, or if you've never tried before and don't want to go it alone, our Learn to Run course can help. With the support of a fabulous group of women, and experienced coaches, you'll be running for 30 minutes without stopping in no time at all.

[Find out more about Learn to Run](#)

Bonus Tip: Use the Rating of Perceived Exertion

The Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) is a scale you can use to assess the amount of effort you are putting into your running. At least for the first six weeks, you should be running with no more effort than 3/10. This will probably seem quite slow. You might even thinkg "I could walk faster than that". Truth be told, you probably couldn't but it really doesn't matter. When you first start running, you're aiming to increase the amount of time you can run for without stopping, not to break a speed record!



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You accept full responsibility of any risk of injury or harm to yourself when performing any exercises that may be described in this ebook.

This information should not be relied upon or considered as a replacement for medical advice for specific conditions or as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. You should always consult with your medical health care provider in the first instance if you have any questions about your health. If you have a pre-existing injury or medical condition, or suspect you may have a medical condition, you should consult with your physician or other medical health care provider in the first instance for medical advice and ensure you are cleared before undertaking any form of exercise.

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