



MOVE!

Beginning Runner's Guide

Run – walk – just move! This is what you need to burn calories – you can get a lot of fat burning rewards as well as cardiovascular, muscular, tendon and bone building benefits from moving consistently..... meaning purposely getting out the door and moving! It is one reason walking and running have so many beginners...but new walkers and runners can become disenchanted with the activity because it is harder than most anticipate! Also the cumulative effects can take their toll if you don't nip them in the bud with the right habits!

So many new runners and walkers (runners especially) feel they should have this runners high all time – not so – or that they are going to feel miserable the entire time – also not so!

Starting out – it's tough. Walking and running is relatively simple – but it isn't necessarily easy! So when does it become easier and at what point do you get that runners (walkers) high?

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE???

Everyone is different – right. To answer these questions you need to answer some questions:

- *how fit were you – honestly – before you started?
- *are you overweight, and how many pounds over a healthy weight (according to your doctor) are you?
- *how old are you?

All of these things matter and are asked to give you a little bit of foresight into the original question of “when is this going to get easier?”! If you have been a relatively active person your entire life – athlete in high school and have maintained a fairly consistent schedule of going to the gym 2-3 times a week, well then you will adapt to the vigor of running or walking faster than someone who has been pretty sedentary for months or years prior to starting the sport. The same goes for age and weight....if you are in your 20's or 30's and have 10 or fewer pounds you'd like to lose, well then you'll likely start adapting to this new activity in 2-3 weeks of consistent training.

By adapting - I mean you will become a little bit better at this – you'll feel less winded, it won't feel as difficult when going along at a conversational pace. This doesn't mean it will be a cake walk, but you should feel less fatigue, soreness and less out of breath.

Being older – it will take your body a bit longer to adapt, so don't give up! The key here is consistency...4-6 weeks of consistently doing your activity for this to become easier. If you are heavier, the same rules apply. Give yourself time to adapt.

With walking you strike the ground with 2-3 times your body weight and with running 3-5 times your body weight, and you hit the ground 1,000-1,500 times a mile! That is a lot of pounding – regardless of size! Your bones need to get harder, your muscles need to adapt and get stronger, you can't rush the process! But you can help it out with proper footwear. New shoes that are made for running or walking will help to absorb most of those footfalls.

5 AWESOME TIPS!

There are things you can do to ease this transition from the first hard day of being a “mover” to the day it begins to feel easier. Establish these great habits now to ensure that moving becomes a part of your lifestyle. By following these habits you hopefully won't get sidelined with injury or burnout!

Keep Your Expectations Realistic.

Both running and walking are fairly high impact – running obviously more so. Your body needs time to adapt to the new stress. You will adjust – it just takes time. Our bodies can adapt to any stress we hand it...we just need to limit it to one stress at a time and give it time to go through the adaptation process.

The same is true for progression – just because you and your friend start training together doesn't mean you both will progress at the same rate. One of you will most likely progress faster. Be patient, stick with it, follow the rest of the steps that follow and you'll improve when your body is ready.

Also – there could be a million reasons why a workout doesn't feel particularly good for a day or a stretch of time. I always ask my runners a million questions when they have a bad run. “Did you sleep well last night? Are you stressed about work right now? Are things going well at home or in your relationship? Are there other stressors?” All these things can make running harder.

Don't Run Too Much, Too Soon.

Rest days and cross training days are important. Most times I don't have beginning walkers or runners do the activity 2 days in a row.

There are some cardiovascular exercises....rowing, swimming, biking, elliptical.....that build aerobic base without the pounding. Weight lifting, Pilates, resistance training, all build strength and can improve your aerobic fitness. These activities will make you stronger and more fit, which in turn will make running easier. Plus the physical break from pounding will be a welcome relief and your brain a break from the monotony of running or walking.

Beginners should use the approach of mixing cross-training and rest between workout days – this is a sound approach. It gives the body time to adapt to the stress of running or walking and keeps you from doing too many miles before your body is ready for more.

If you are trying to run and are struggling – start doing a run/walk program. Run a minute and walk for a minute – or until you are recovered. When this becomes manageable, bump up to minutes of running/1 minute walking. Add a minute as your body adjusts to this regimen.

Warm Up Properly.

Many people complain that just don't feel good until they are 20 minutes into the workout. Now, if you are a beginner – that may be your entire workout so it may seemed you are doomed to feel miserable until you can graduate to more miles or time on your feet!

This doesn't have to be. Simply add a warm-up to your regimen to prime your body to run. Might be 10-15 minutes of range of motion drills, or 10 minutes of very slow walking. That 10-15 minutes might seem like a lot of time to be spent warming up, but getting the heart rate elevated and warming up the muscles you'll be using can make the workout much less uncomfortable.

Cool Down and Recover Properly.

Cooldowns are not for the advanced runners or walkers only! Beginners should get into the habit of bringing down the heart rate through walking slowly, stretching and foam rolling after each run. Get some good fuel in you – fueling with a ratio of 4 grams of carbohydrates and 1 gram of protein will help you recover quickly and be ready for your next workout. Think chocolate milk! Make sure you are well hydrated before, during and after your workout as well. Foam rolling helps to keep those muscles loose and flexible and gives you insights on some sore spots you might not realize you have.

Workout With Others Who Hold You Accountable.

It is going to be hard to do this on your own...fact. It hurts – it just does. But having a group will give you a casual accountability, the feeling that you belong to a team, that you are not going through this alone.

Go for group runs or walks that we, at the Lincoln Running Co have. Join a charity fundraising group, hire a trainer or a coach, recruit friends or family to start walking or running with you. Not only having like minded individuals who understand what you're going through to commiserate with, but to also have people to answer to when you lack some motivation! And get several buddies.....one buddy is not enough. When the wind is howling and you are lying in bed it is easy convince yourself your 1 buddy won't show up. But if you have several workout buddies, you know one will show up and that will get you out of bed!

The final rule is:

Never trust a thought while sitting down! If you are situated on that comfy couch, it is going to be tough to convince yourself to get up and go for your walk or run. Get up move around and go. You will always thank yourself afterwards!