

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE OUTDOORS



ookie, Newbie, Gumby, Barnie, Greenhorn, Noob, Sperm, Frosh, Grom. These are just a few of the nicknames that seasoned veterans bestow upon novices to a sport. Unfortunately, the humbling nicknames are the easy part. There are a number of obstacles you have to overcome when you're just starting a new sport: finding a mentor, getting the right gear, discovering beginner-friendly locations, finding the time to practice...it can be daunting.

BRO's Beginner's Guide to the Outdoors will make learning a new sport a little less intimidating. Whether it's paddling, climbing, run-

ning, backpacking, or mountain biking, we give you the beta you'll need to get your feet wet. Because it's worth it. Suffering through nicknames, spending entire paychecks on gear, and experiencing a thousand mini failures is worth the feeling you get when you take that first successful downhill, or paddle your first clean class III, or send your first 5.7. And keep in mind that those experienced athletes, those pillars of sport, weren't born great. They too had to endure rookie status.

## -> MOTIVATIONAL MOVIES

# RUNNING

## ASK THE EXPERTS

### How do I select the proper shoes for my specific feet?

Find a running specialty store, where you will find trained, experienced professionals who can assist in fitting you into the best running shoe for your particular needs and biomechanics. Expect to spend 20-30 minutes on average in the store. You will need to discuss your running history, your goals, and any issues you have had in the past with running shoes with the sales person. The sales person should do some sort of analysis to determine what type of shoe you will need (either a neutral cushioned, stability cushioned or motion controlling shoe type).

Try on numerous pairs (at least three or four) to see which feels the best. Ask to run outside a little in the shoes to see how they ride while actually running in them on a hard surface. Expect to pay between \$80 and \$130 for a quality pair of durable, technical, high mileage running shoes.

—Jim Micheels, Raleigh Running Outfitters

### Is it better to stretch before or after a run?

Don't stretch before a run. Your muscles are tight and that could lead to problems. Not only can you strain or pull a tight muscle, but you also won't get as much benefit from stretching a cold/tight muscle as you will one that is warmed up.

The best time to stretch is 15-30 minutes after a run when your muscles have had time to settle down from the actual run itself but while they're still warm and loose. A good idea is to finish your run, grab a little something to eat and drink to replenish carbs and fluids, and then stretch.

—Steve Crowder, Runner, Team Fleet Feet

### Is running really as bad for your knees as everyone says?

The repeated pounding of the foot as it hits the pavement can cause pain. In some cases the soft tissue behind the knee can wear down, causing bone-to-bone contact and excruciating pain. However, many other factors can contribute to runner's knee; genetics, little or no strength training, a sudden increase in mileage (overuse injury), excessive downhill running, improper or worn-out running shoes, the running surface, and insufficient recovery between long runs.

Say what you will about Hollywood, it inspires the world. How many of us wanted to join the Navy after seeing *Top Gun*? How many of us wanted to head to the Himalayas after seeing *Imax's Everest*? Here's a roundup of movies that have motivated us to get outside and try something new (for better or worse):

**Deliverance:** Most Americans had never even thought about running a class V river in a canoe until this movie debuted. *Deliverance* helped jumpstart the intense paddling scene that many of us cherish to this day, which is strange since the trip in the movie went terribly wrong.

**Big Hunter:** Who would have thought pairing John Lithgow against Sylvester Stallone would be a good idea? Horrible plot aside, there are some really cool climbing sequences in this flick, even if they are ridiculously far fetched.

**American Flyer:** Chances are you never even saw this competitive cycling movie starring Kevin Costner and somebody else who never acted again. But it is without a doubt the best movie about cycling ever made. Oh wait, it's one of the only movies about cycling ever made.

**Chariots of Fire:** A dozen men in boxers running through the morning fog on a British beach? Now that's compelling movie making. And how many times have you hummed the theme song during a 5K?

**Alpine Challenge:** There have been a number of ski movies over the years but none were able to combine hot people, kick ass ski sequences, and a semi plausible plot like this one. After it came out, everyone wanted to find their own little caboose by the river.

**Forrest Gump:** Nearly every runner has been harrassed by a "Run, Forrest, Run."

Most of these factors can be controlled. Before you start training for a race, take some time to strengthen the leg muscles—particularly the quadriceps. Increase your weekly mileage or intensity by no more than 10 percent. Also, vary the running surface but avoid concrete. Trails that have a cambered surface for drainage can contribute to knee injuries. Grass is great to run on but watch for the ruts.

If you do not allow sufficient time for recovery between your workouts, you do not give the muscle fibers sufficient time to heal. Give the legs a rest: cross train, walk, take a cold bath, elevate and massage the legs, or take a day off between long runs and speed work. You need to give the recovery process your immediate attention. With the proper preparation, training, gear, and a sprinkle of common sense, one can enjoy years of running without knee injury or pain.

—Thomas Martin, Galloway Program Director, Washington, D.C.

### I've started running to lose weight, but I've actually gained a few pounds this month. What's going on?

When you are in the endurance-building phase of running as a beginner, you usually just jog comfortably in order to get your time in. This phase takes time and enables you to build up slowly in order to get your body acclimated to running. When you are in this phase you start developing muscle, which takes up less room but weighs more than fat. I usually tell my beginners in the very beginning to take their measurements. They will see inches lost but possibly no weight loss.

—Carla Gregor, Running Coach, Starlight Fitness

Sometimes I get a painful side stitch when I run. What causes this, and what can I do to get rid of it?

A side stitch is caused by a spasm or cramping of the diaphragm. It is most often caused by uneven breathing or by running too soon after eating. The most obvious way to stop the cramp is to slow down or stop running. If you are like most runners, this is not usually an option. So you'll need to work on changing your breathing. Take very deep breaths (also known as belly breaths). Deeply inhale and then exhale quickly several times. Another trick is to change your breathing to match your stride. Watch your breathing and exhale when the foot opposite your stitch hits the ground.

—Don Garber, Richmond Marathon Training Team Coach

#### How do I get faster?

Getting faster takes time. First, form a base in your running by increasing the frequency of your runs and by also increasing the distance of your long runs. Depending on the target distance that you want to be faster, you will need to do this for about three months. Once you have a base built, then start working on your speed. This can be accomplished through interval training (repeats of a short distance at fast pace) and tempo runs (longer runs at a sustained, spirited pace). Gradually increase the number of interval repeats and the distance of your tempo runs. One or two speed workouts a week will result in a noticeable improvement in speed.

—Stephen Horan, Fleet Feet Sports

#### Why do so many runners do core strengthening and even upper body strength building? I thought running is all about leg muscles.

Core strengthening is incredibly beneficial for coordination, balance, efficiency, and injury prevention. It has become even more important as our lifestyles have become more sedentary. The majority of people, even runners, spend most of their day sitting at a desk. Upper body strengthening can be beneficial if you focus on improving muscular endurance, especially with muscle groups that can help your form while running. No runner needs bulging pecs or biceps—in fact this will just slow you down. So focus on increasing the muscular endurance, not on building mass.

—Zika Palmer, ZAP Fitness

(Additional "Ask the Experts" advice can be found at [www.blueridgeoutdoors.com](http://www.blueridgeoutdoors.com).)



## -> MY FIRST RUN

Twenty years is a long layoff. Liz Milner had been a casual runner in college, but a little more than two decades had gone by since she had last run. At 47, she was out of shape and being warned by her doctor about her high cholesterol. So in December 2003, the Fairfax, Va., resident decided to join a running training program.

Milner's coach started her with gradual interval training: two-minute running intervals followed by a five-minute walking interval. By week 12 Milner was able to run non-stop for 45 minutes.

"I finally learned how to run so that I could finish a race," says Milner. "I learned how to pace myself and run slower at certain points. I always thought it was about running as fast as I could for as long as I could."

Another component was the group camaraderie. Group training programs help new runners encourage each other to reach their goals together.

In October 2004, Milner ran the Rockville 10K. In her first attempt she clocked a 65:57, and although she was not out to set any speed records, she found herself passing runners that were 20 years younger than her. Today, running is part of her daily lifestyle. Since 2003 her cholesterol has dropped by almost 40 points.

"I went from being a couch potato to a healthy person that gets up early in the morning and gets to work with a clearer head."



## -> BEGINNER BOO-BOOS

### Top Mistakes Made by Aspiring Runners

Mark Lorenzoni is currently coaching 200 people in the Charlottesville Track Club's Marathon and Half-Marathon Training Program. They started running one mile in the beginning of the summer, and by the fall, they're ready to run 13.1 or even 26.2 miles. fall. Here are some common pitfalls he helps his runners avoid:

**Improper and Erratic Pacing:** A weekly long run is the nucleus of a distance-training program. The biggest thing to remember is that you have to start slower than you finish. If you don't pay attention to pace, you'll start fast and finish slower. The first 75 percent of the long run should be steady, and the last 25 percent should be up at your race pace.

**Not Respecting Recovery Days:** In the days following your long runs, you need to take time to rest. You might feel up for a bike ride, but rest is an important and underestimated part of making your body stronger.

**Not Replacing Shoes Often Enough:** If you're running on a regular basis, shoes will start to break down faster. To avoid injury, they should be changed every 300-350 miles.

**Improper and Inadequate Hydration:** Find the right balance between too much and too little. It is just as important to drink after your runs as it is during. You should sip (not gulp) three or four ounces every 12-18 minutes, and make sure to drink before you are thirsty.

**Not Partnering Correctly:** If you're an average runner, you might not be able to run with your best friend that is elite. Trying to keep up is just going to hinder your training in the long term and possibly result in injury.

**No Game Plan:** Setting a goal for your event will keep you focused. If you chart out your pace, you're more likely to finish safely and successfully. Don't just throw yourself into the race without having a plan for the course.

**Bandit:** A runner who competes in a race without paying.

**Bloody Nipples:** Can be caused on long runs when sweat and chafing rub nipples raw.

**Bonk:** Crashing in a race due to running out of fuel or exhaustion.

**DNF:** An acronym for a runner who starts a race but does not finish.

**Fartlek:** Interval training running hard for a certain distance/time, then slower for a certain distance/time.

**Galloway Training:** The technique of walking and running at certain fixed intervals, such as walking one minute in 10, during long runs. The practice was made popular by Olympic runner and coach Jeff Galloway.

**Hitting the Wall:** Slowing down significantly due to fatigue at the end of the race.

**Interval Training:** Repeats of a short distance (1-4 track laps) at a fast pace.

**Negative Split:** Running the second half of a race that is faster than the first half.

**PR:** An acronym for a runner's personal record or best time for a given distance.

**Split:** The time it takes to get to a certain point in a race.

**Tempo Run:** Running an entire planned distance at around 80 percent of total effort.

**5K/10K:** A race that is a distance of 3.1 miles and 6.2 miles, respectively.