

SO YOU WANT TO START RUNNING

So you watched the marathon and it's inspired you to take up running for yourself.

You are far more likely to continue with running and far less likely to experience problems if you follow a few simple guidelines.

The first thing to think about is the "kit" you will need. The average recreational runner does not need trendy and expensive clothing and state of the art running shoes. Initially, choose something lightweight and comfortable and then if you do continue with your running you can invest in more specific clothing later. Women, however, should buy a well supporting sports bra.

Similarly with running shoes, you do not need to spend £100+ to start your running. If you are not very heavy and do not have particularly high or low arches in your feet, an average pair of trainers will do the job. Getting advice from experts is a good idea though and Warwick Sports are very helpful with this.

Once you have assembled your basic equipment, try to get a family member or friend to run with you. You are much more likely to get out there and run if you have arranged the time with somebody else.

Get yourself into the routine of some good simple stretching every day. Without good flexibility, injuries are a lot more likely. Don't stretch when you are "cold" however, or directly before a run; stretching is most effective when the muscles are warm. Also, get into the habit of warming up and cooling down before and after a run – this can be as simple as just starting your run with a walk or a slow jog before moving up to your set pace. And then do the reverse at the end of the run, this helps to remove any lactic acid from the muscles.

Your first few runs should be very gentle and it is advisable to start with a walk/run mix; alternate a couple of minutes walking with a couple of minutes jogging and limit yourself to about 15 minutes to start off with. Over the following few weeks you can then gradually increase the proportion of time running.

Finally, injuries. It is a lucky runner who never experiences any injury. Most are short-lived and settle after a few days rest. If aches or pains are not clearing up quickly, get the area assessed by a Chartered Physiotherapist; you do not want the problem to become established.

Enjoy your running.

Karen Smith MCSP. MMAPCP



