Get Started Running

Tips for running and race preparation from Gary Rittenbach

1. **Follow a training plan that includes five run days per week.** Free plans are available at halhigdon.com/training/51135/Marathon-Training-Guide. Plans for purchase are available at TrainingPeaks.com and RunnersWorld.com.

2. **Get proper clothes and equipment.** A Garmin GPS is a big help. Good running shoes are a must. Not sure what shoes to get? Let the shoe dog fetch your shoes at roadrunnersports.com/rrs/product/shoe-dog.jsp.

3. **Vary your runs.** Options include:
   - Hill repeats.
   - Speed intervals with 60-second sprints followed by 60-second recovery periods.
   - Tempo runs where you run at maximum pace for 15 minutes or more.
   - Long, slow distance runs.

4. **Work on your running form.**
   - Run erect. Don't lean forward or backward.
   - Foot falls should land directly under you, not out in front.
   - Use a high leg lift in front followed by a long follow through out back.
   - Move your arms forward and backward, not side to side. Your hands should not cross the centerline of your body. Keep your forearms and upper arms at about a 90-degree angle.
   - Keep your cadence at about 180 strides per minute.
   - Find great tips at www.runnersworld.com/running-tips/does-form-matter.

5. **Hydrate and fuel.**
   - Hydrate well and fuel up for training runs that last more than one hour. A good option is to drink an energy gel dissolved in about eight ounces of water every 30 minutes.
   - During races take an energy gel at a water station every three or four miles. Wash down the gel with water from the station. Don't carry water during a race.
   - Have a recovery drink ready to drink at the end of training runs.

6. **When the race gets tough, focus on the basics of your running form.** Everyone can run a good first half marathon, it's the last half marathon that makes the difference. That's when your form breaks down. Focus on lifting your legs and driving them back behind you. If your form and cadence are right, your speed will be better.

7. **Get eight hours of sleep at a regular time.**