



Run 50 Miles This Month*

CHALLENGE

Start training and work up to completing 50 miles during the month.

Requirements to Complete this WELLNESS CHALLENGE

1. *Keep a written record of the days you jog or run and how far you go. Record the activity on your monthly Wellness Challenge Calendar.*
2. *Read “Walk, jog, run” below.*
3. *To complete the Challenge, jog or run 50 miles this month.*
4. *Keep a record of your completed Challenge if your organization requires documentation.*

*If not exercising regularly now, you will need at least 1 to 2 months to build up your endurance and strength before taking on this challenge.

Walk, jog, run

There is strong evidence that spending time each day—or most days—in physical activity is beneficial to your health. Running is one of the most efficient ways to burn calories, improve cardiovascular endurance, and build strength.

Most people who are reasonably healthy, have no serious medical conditions such as heart disease or lung disease, and don't have an injury that would preclude running can safely start a running program. However, anyone with chronic disease such as diabetes, a heart condition, arthritis, or lung disease, should consult their physician for specific guidance before significantly increasing their activity level.

Training ideas

- If you are sedentary or have chronic health problems like heart disease, diabetes, or asthma **see your doctor** before you begin any training program. In most cases you can continue with proper medication and precautions.
- **Set a schedule and stick to it.** For example, if you walk or jog 2 or 3 miles 1 day, take it easier the next day. As you get fit you can

increase your mileage. Write your plan on a calendar—then write down what you actually do. For example, Goal: 4 miles, Actually Ran: 2 miles.

- **Don't hurry your training.** Trying to run/walk too far too soon will lead to sore muscles or even injuries.
- **Shoes! It's all about good shoes.** Don't run in old tennis shoes or basketball shoes. Get a pair of good running shoes. Go to a running or sports store, take an experienced runner with you, and find training shoes that fit well, provide support, and of course look awesome. Your feet will thank you.
- **If you really want to get in shape, incorporate hills into your running schedule.** Running hills helps you get into good condition more quickly. Run harder while going up the hills and take it easy when going down.
- **Get enough sleep.** You may find that you need more sleep when you start running regularly. Get at least 7 hours each night. You might find that you need 8 or even more while you're increasing your mileage. Sleep helps you recover from the wear and tear of working out.
- **If something hurts—slow down or stop.** Find out what happened. Do you need different shoes? Do you need to run more on grass and less on pavement? Do you need to do some pushups or curl-ups to strengthen other parts of your body? It's perfectly OK to take a day or 2 off and relax. If pain persists when you run, go see your doctor.
- **Train with a partner or group if possible.** It will be easier, you might learn something, and you will probably work harder. Many communities have running clinics to help people prepare for a race or run. Join one if you can.
- **Don't over-dress.** You will probably need fewer clothes than you think. You produce a lot of body heat when you run. Good running gear is lightweight, wicks moisture away from your body, and actually helps keep you warm enough, too. In cold weather, wear layers so you can take something off when you get too warm.

- **Drink lots of fluids.** Hydration is the most essential health factor in running. Water and sports drinks keep you from dehydrating and overheating. Experiment with which drinks work best.
- **Cross training.** You say training already makes you cross? In this case, the term refers to doing other activities in addition to running. Swimming or biking once or twice a week, for example, can help increase your fitness and reduce your risk of running injuries.
- **Set your schedule and start—now.**
- **Get out your calendar or make one that allows you to write in your training schedule—both what you plan and what you actually do.** The first week you may walk and jog 2 or 3 miles 3 or 4 times, bike a few miles, and go swimming once. Be sure to stretch. How do those new shoes feel?
- **As you get started you can increase your running by about 10% each week** until you reach your goal of 10 or 15 miles a week. If you increase mileage too rapidly you are more likely to injure yourself.

More benefits

- **Regular activity, such as running, decreases feelings of anxiety and depression.** It also enhances mood and helps you feel happier. This may be due partly to the affect of endorphins released in the brain when you exercise. Runners often talk about the natural “runners high,” a feeling of euphoria following physical activity.
- **Running boosts self-esteem and feelings of well-being.** Accomplishing goals and meeting physical challenges seems to carry over into mental health, helping you feel more confident.
- **Running improves muscle strength, tone, and body shape.** Exercise helps you look and feel your best. It also helps prevent injury to muscles, ligaments, and joints by keeping them stronger.
- **Your family and friends will be impressed with your success and new look** (probably).

Out of shape?

No matter how inactive you have been, you can decide to be physically fit. Even if you have tried and failed more times than you care to remember - you can make regular physical activity part of your life, gradually working up to your running goal. It may have taken you years to get out of shape. Don't try to get back into shape overnight. Give your body time to adapt and strengthen.

When beginning, choose moderate activities you enjoy and that are within your current level of capacity. You may only be able to walk 5 or 10 minutes when first starting. Gradually work up over several weeks to a full 30+ minutes. When you can easily complete that, gradually increase intensity by alternating walking with jogging or running from one telephone pole to the next or every other lap around the track.

Keep your training fun. Vary your walking or running route to keep the scenery interesting. Listen to music or a book on tape while you exercise. Jog on a treadmill while watching television. If you're social, you might enjoy joining a running club.

Set small goals and reward yourself for reaching them. Buy a new pair of shoes or running shorts. Treat yourself to a massage. Get your picture taken by your favorite photography shop to help you keep track of the physical improvements happening.

Easier than you might think

50 miles a month sounds achievable when you break it down to a per day figure. You can walk 1.7 miles a day, can't you? Maybe not today, but by month's end. And before you know it, you will have run 50 miles in a month!

References:

1. Platoni K. *Fitness and Nutrition, Getting Started.* Aerobics and Fitness Association of America. Updated 2005. Available online at: www.abealthyadvantage.com/topic/topic13885
2. American College of Sports Medicine. *Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription.* Sixth Edition. Lippincott Williams and Wilkens. Philadelphia. 2000.
3. *Tips for Exercise Success.* American Heart Association. Updated 2006.





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Instructions

1. Post this record sheet where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the miles you jog or run each day.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of miles you ran. 50 miles in a month is less than 2 miles a day, on average. So, completing 10 miles (or so) in the first 2 weeks and 15 (or so) in the final 2 would meet your goal.
4. Enter your completion of the Wellness Challenge on your Health Activity Tracker report for the month. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:

WC = Wellness Challenge • ex. min. = exercise minutes

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of miles I actually ran this month

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Signature _____ Date _____

