Fitness Basics: Running for Your Life

Experts offer advice to get you started.

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WebMD Feature

Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD

You don't have to be an athlete -- or even aspire to be one -- to start running.

Just look at Jim Scott. In January 2003, a month after he turned 60, Scott began running. That November, he finished the New York City Marathon (it took him six hours).

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How to Exercise in the Hot Weather

By Alison Stuart When the temperature's high, motivation can be low. Plus, you have the excuse that exerting yourself might be dangerous! Sorry, pal, but you can still walk, jog, or bike without suffering sunstroke. Just take these precautions: - DRINK UP BEFORE YOU'RE THIRSTY Once you start craving water, you're already 3 percent dehydrated. To avoid that, drink two to three cups a few hours before you work out. Ten minutes before, have another cup-and one cup every 15 to...

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Scott, a radio-talk show host in Cincinnati, Ohio, didn't do much in the way of exercise before then. He played golf as often as he could but never found the time for regular workouts.

"When I turned 60, I thought it was a good time to reassess things," says Scott. "I started thinking, 'These 36-inch (waist) pants I've worn all my life are getting a bit tighter.'"

Scott decided he wanted to get in better shape, feel comfortable in his pants again, and improve his golf game. Oh, and there was one more impetus to try running: "I'm married to a marathon runner," he says.

Scott himself never intended to run a marathon. He simply wanted to go on Sunday morning runs with his wife, Donna Hartman, and keep up, he says. But sometimes running can surprise you.

Maybe you just want to run around your neighborhood, or explore a new one. Maybe you want to challenge your body in a different way, to tone up, or lose weight. Whatever your goals, says Scott's coach, Julie Isphording, running is an excellent exercise for a beginner to try.

"It's cheap, easy, and the perfect thing to do with a friend," says Isphording, a former marathoner and host of two health and fitness radio shows in Cincinnati.

Running's benefits include improved cardiovascular hearth, lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, a revved-up metabolism, and a sense of self-esteem, says Isphording.

"You can go for a run in the morning and finish at your driveway with your hands in the air and you've had success before 7 a.m.," she says. "This is a gift from you to you."

Getting in Gear

Before you take your first step, get yourself a good pair of running shoes.

"It's the most important investment you'll make," says Isphording. She suggests going to a store specializing in running gear, where the staff tends to be knowledgeable about the products, and trying on as many pairs as necessary to find the right ones for you. A good fit is essential; blisters and shin splints are not going to inspire you to run.

And don't even think about running in your regular cross-trainers, tennis shoes, or regular sneakers.

"Running is very traumatic," says Forrest Dolgener, exercise physiologist and professor of exercise science at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. "The mechanics of running creates specific kinds of forces on the body. Running shoes are designed to absorb and minimize those kinds of forces."

But don't get too attached to your favorite pair. Running shoes have a limited lifespan, says Dolgener, co-author of *The Non-Runner's Marathon Trainer.*

"Generally speaking, running shoes have 500 miles of life," he says. "Even though they make look good, shock absorption diminishes after 500 miles."

Circle the best answer in the following multiple choice questions.

1. In the above article Jim Scott stated:
    a. You have to be an exceptional athlete to start running!
    b. You don't have to be an athlete to start running!
    c. You have to be in shape to start running!
    d. All the above

2. According to Julie Isphording the following statement about running is true:
    a. It's cheap!
    b. Easy!
    c. Perfect thing to do with a friend!
    d. All the above

3. In the article running benefits:
    a. Cardiovascular Endurance
    b. Lower blood pressure
    c. Lower blood cholesterol
    d. All the above

4. Before you take your first step what important factor that you should consider when running:
    a. Wear any kind of shoes when running.
    b. Buy yourself a good pair of running shoes
    c. Go to any store and buy flip flops.
    d. All the above

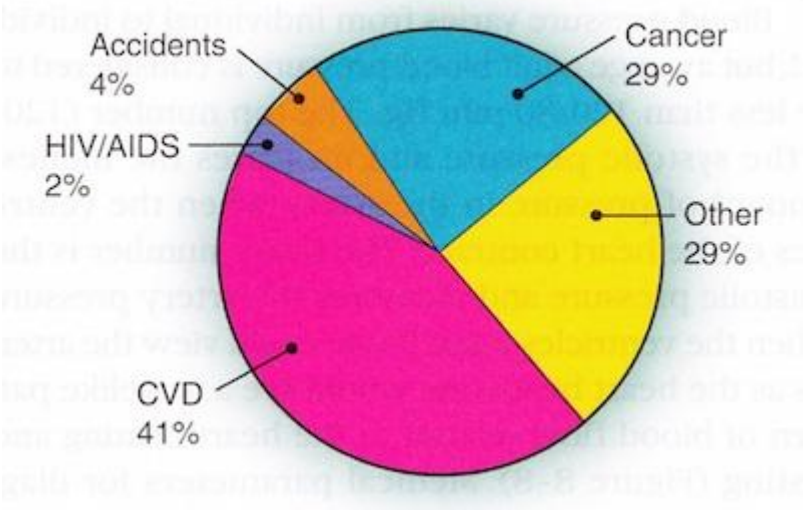
5. How many miles of life you can get out of a new pair of shoes:
    a. 300
    b. 400
    c. 500
    d. 600

Answer the following Questions using the pie Chart.

http://www.laflemm.com/snippets/heartdisease.html

Snippet 2: Cardiovascular Disease is a Killer

Studies have shown that many people worry about the things that are less likely to harm them while ignoring real risk factors. Some heavy smokers, for instance, worry more about flying in a plane than they do about the cigarettes they put in their mouths. A similar situation exists where heart disease is concerned. Heart disease is a major killer. But it's not the disease most people worry about. That disease would be cancer. Yet the figures don't lie. We are more likely to die of cardiovascular disease (CVD) than we are of cancer.



1. What is the leading cause of deaths in the U.S.?
   A. CVD
   B. Cancer
   C. HIV
   D. Accidents
2. What per cent of deaths are caused by accidents and cancer?
   a. 4%
   b. 29%
   c. 33%
   d. 25%
3. Which disease do people not take seriously?
   a. HIV/AIDS
   b. Throat infections
   c. CVD
   d. Accidents