FAQ for Beginner Runners

Congratulations! If you are reading this, then it probably means you are considering joining us to train for your first 5K! We hope that this document answers all of your questions, but please feel free to send us an e-mail at beginner@bellevillerunningclub.com should you have any additional questions. Continue to check www.bellevillerunningclub.com for updated information.

Training Program Specific Questions

- **What will this do for me?**

    o   Our goal is to introduce you to a moderate exercise that you can do with friends and family, enjoy exercising together and to relax and socialize outside of the house for a while.

- **Do I have to run?**

    o   No. Walk, jog, or run. Do what helps you feel better. That's why you are here.

- **If I run, how fast should I run?**

    o   These should be *easy* runs (we know, *easy* is relative). Easy runs should be run at a pace that feels fairly comfortable. You should be breathing hard, but should be able to carry on a conversation. If you are breathing so hard that you cannot talk, you are running to hard. If you can sing, you are running too easily.

- **At the end of the program, do I HAVE to participate in the race or can I just use the training as part of starting an exercise program?**

    o   This program is for you to use how you'd like. We believe that training for a race is a good motivational tool to keep you on track. However, we really just hope that you learn to love running as much as we do.

- **I can't run three miles without walking. Can I register for a 5K?**

    o   Absolutely! We can (almost) guarantee that there will be plenty of other people walking.

- **If I am unable to run with the group, will there be any other group times set up or should I complete the scheduled training on my own?**

    o   You are on your own. However, please get to know the other people involved in the program. Maybe you can train with them on the off days.

- **I have (asthma, arthritis, cancer, etc) but I really want to participate, am I able to?**

    o   Please consult your doctor before you begin this endeavor! However, we have plenty of members with medical conditions (asthma, etc) that are very active runners.

- **Will I need sports drinks and energy bars for this program?**

    o   The Beginner's Training program workouts are generally less than an hour in length so water is a good beverage choice. You wouldn't need the extra calories or electrolytes from sports drinks or energy bars.

Running Gear

- **What kind of shoes should I wear for this program?**

    o   If you're a walker, then a comfortable pair of athletic or walking shoes. Running shoes are the best choice if you'll be running more than walking. It is a good idea to go to a dedicated running store (such as Running Start in Shiloh) to be fitted for your first pair of running shoes.

- **Isn't cotton the best thing to wear when you run?**

    o Be comfortable. Avoid cotton if you are going to sweat. Cotton absorbs and holds sweat and gets very heavy. It can be good for an outer layer in winter.'Technical' materials, which are synthetic, wick away sweat. That means they get it off your skin, and allow it to evaporate, keeping you much more comfortable.

    o General rule of thumb: When running, dress like its 10 to 20 degrees warmer than the temperature says. So, if it's 50 degrees out, dress for 60 to 70 degree weather.

- **What is body glide and why might I need it?**

    o Body Glide or Vaseline is applied anywhere that you might chafe (applied in the crotch, underarms, etc.). It's unlikely that you will need it for this program, but you will if you get into longer distance running.

Running Technique

- **How should I breathe?**

    o Most runners naturally breathe through both their nose *and* mouth. Your jaw should be relaxed, your mouth slightly open. The oxygen will come through your nose and mouth to your lungs, to your blood and to your muscles without you needing to give it a lot of thought. Breathing is a very natural activity--and so is getting out of breath when you run.

- **Should I stretch before and after I run?**

    o Sounds like a simple enough question, right? Unfortunately there is a lot of conflicting information out there about stretching. This program incorporates 5 minutes of brisk walking prior to every workout. Most traditional resources recommend stretches before (after a warmup walk) and after you run. Please do some research to make your own decisions about what type of stretching (static vs dynamic) you will do.

- **My knee (ankle, foot, shin, butt) hurts when I run. Should I stop?**

    o One of the most important rules when running is to listen to your body. If you start to feel pain while out - stop! Don't take the risk of damaging your body further by trying to carry on through the pain. Remember, if you hurt yourself by pushing yourself too hard, you will be out of action much longer.

Race Day Questions

- **Should I save my new clothes, shoes, etc for race day?**

    o No. Never wear or try something new on race day.

Miscellaneous

- **Should I eat a big meal right before I run?**

    o When you begin a run, you should feel neither starved nor stuffed. You don't want to eat immediately before running because it may lead to cramping. Running on an empty stomach may cause you to run out of energy. You best bet is to eat a light snack or meal about 1 1/2 to 2 hours before you start running.

- **Should I run with a partner?**

    o Many runners enjoy running on their own as a way of letting off steam and getting some peace and quiet from the hectic work day, but having a companion can be a really strong motivator when just starting out.

    o If another person is depending on you, you may find it easier getting off that sofa when it's a bit cold out.

    o As you both progress and develop at different stages, you may find running at your own pace is easier, so talk about meeting points ahead of your run to ensure you both get the best possible work out.

- **How the hell long is a marathon, anyway?**

    o 26.2 miles (or 26 miles, 385 yards).

Other References

- **Here are some links to some additional references:**
  - http://www.runningintheusa.com/More/Beginners.aspx
  - http://fitness.suite101.com/article.cfm/top_tips_for_the_beginner_runner
  - http://www.runningplanet.com/training/beginners-guide.html
  - http://www.runnersworld.com/channel/0,7119,s6-380-0-0-0,00.html
  - http://www.coolrunning.com/engine/2/2_3/index.shtml
  - http://running.about.com/od/runningforbeginners/u/Beginners.htm