



The right track for teen runners

Here are a few helpful tips for teen runners looking to get the most out of their run.

Water is awesome

You've probably heard your coach, your doctor, or your parents tell you, "Make sure you drink water while you run." And it's oh-so-true! Your body needs to reload on the water it loses while you sweat, otherwise you will get dehydrated (a not-so-fun condition which can be serious). So drink water or sports drinks before, during, and after a run. If you are thinking that the iced mocha latte you want to get will be just as good—sorry, *it's not!* Caffeinated drinks and alcoholic beverages sap the fluids that your body needs during exercise, and end up doing more harm than good. So stick with water or a sports drink.

Run with a pack

Yes, you can run alone. But it's much smarter (and safer) to run with a friend or a group. This will not only help you keep pace, but more importantly, if you start not to feel well, someone will be with you to help. A truly smart move.

Getting the right gear

Did you know that running sneakers can help you not to get hurt? This all depends on getting the right sneaker for your foot type—normal, high-arched, or flat. You can test your foot type at home by taking several wet barefoot steps on concrete.

According to experts at *Runner's World*:

- If you have a **normal** foot type, the best running shoes to get would be stability shoes with moderate control features.
- If you have a **flat foot**, try to get motion-control shoes, or high-stability shoes with firm midsoles and control features. And stay away from highly cushioned or highly curved shoes.
- If you have a **high-arched** foot, ask for cushioned (or "neutral") shoes with plenty of flexibility. Stay away from motion control or stability shoes.

Feel the stretch

Looking for some stretching exercises you and your running buddies can do? Log on to www.oapa.com/general_fitness.html#stretching to see stretching poses and tips on how to stretch right (yep, there is a wrong way to stretch).

It's YOUR body

Running is supposed to be fun, but if your body signals to you that something is wrong...listen to it! If you feel a muscle cramp, pull over and start doing some light stretching, and make sure you drink something. Feeling dizzy, nauseous, or have a headache? Is your skin cool or clammy to the touch? There could be signs of heat exhaustion—another not-so-fun condition. If you feel these symptoms, get to a cool area and take some sips of your water or sports drink. If you don't feel better, tell your running buddy or your coach.

Most shoe sales clerks will know this info already, but feel free to share it with them or your parents the next time you buy running shoes. On average, you should switch out your running shoes after 300 to 400 miles of use.

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