

“Fall into Running”

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If you are returning to running or a novice, fall is a great season to get into action. First, begin with buying the right shoes. Running sneakers are the most important equipment a runner has, so it’s imperative to get this right. Begin by talking with your physical therapist and searching for specialty stores that target runners. Your physical therapist in conjunction with the specialty stores will be better able to determine your foot type as well as running surface and suggest a shoe type/brand. Remember to replace your sneakers after 350 to 500 miles regardless of wear.

Once you’ve got your sneakers, the next step is to make a plan. Determine where you will run and how much time you will spend doing it. Keep in mind that trails, parks, and tracks are better than streets and sidewalks. Soft ground such as dirt and grass is better than asphalt and cement. Also, you will be more likely to stick to a route if it is close to home.

Most importantly, run safe. Choose roads that have low traffic volume and wide shoulders. Run facing traffic and obey all traffic laws. With your running program, you want to begin slowly to avoid injury. Your training sessions should occur at a frequency of 1 session 3 to 5 times per week, for 30 minutes at a comfortable pace. The easiest way to find your pace is the Talk Test. If you can talk without gasping while running, you’ve found your pace.

Don’t forget that your training sessions should consist of a warm-up and cool down period. These periods should not be counted into your running time or distance. The easiest warm up is to walk briskly for 5 minutes before breaking out into your pace, and at the end of your run, slow down to a walk for 5 minutes for your cool down period. At the end, add in your stretching routine while your muscles are still warm. Pay attention to your running form. Run upright and look towards the horizon. Drive with your arms during uphill running with a shorter stride and lean slightly forward when running downhill. During sessions, take into account that walking is not cheating. Walk breaks can help you run longer, faster, and easier. These breaks are most effective if you walk for at least 1 minute, but no longer than 5.

Let pain be your guide during training. Talk to your physical therapist about understanding the difference between muscle soreness and pain. Take frequent walk breaks to recover. If pain is persistent with running, allow yourself to walk instead of run. If need be, take a few days off to recover. Remember not to increase mileage and speed at the same time. Use the 10% rule: Do not increase your mileage or speed by more than 10% per week. Here is a beginner’s guide to a 10 week running program from Runner’s World. Before beginning this program, be sure that you are comfortable with walking for 20 to 30 minutes. Good Luck!

Week	Run	Walk	Repeat	Total Time
1	1 min	2 min	7x	21 min
2	1 min	1 min	10x	20 min
3	2 min	1 min	7x	21 min
4	3 min	1 min	5x	20 min
5	4 min	1 min	4x	20 min
6	6 min	1 min	3x	21 min
7	9 min	1 min	2x	20 min
8	12 min	1 min	Run 7 min	20 min
9	15 min	1 min	Run 4 min	20 min
10	20 min			20 min

(<http://www.runnersworld.com/article/0,7120,s6-380-381--2201-3-2X3X6-4,00.html>)