Running for health – scientific, theory and practical

A complete fitness program should include the basics of aerobic exercise, strength training and stretching or flexibility. For many people, running is the preferred form of aerobic exercise, offering physical, emotional and financial advantages.

Running requires little equipment; running can be done nearly anywhere and running burns more calories than any other exercise because it is a weight bearing exercise compared to swimming or cycling which are non-weight bearing exercises. Other types of exercise can burn a lot of calories too.

It is important to choose exercise activities that you enjoy so that you will be motivated to work out regularly. Running is the most effective exercise activity for burning calories.

However, the number of calories you will burn depends on the speed and duration of your running and on your body weight. The more your weight, the more energy your body must exert to keep moving and the more calories you will burn.

For example, in a 60-minute period a 70kg person will burn approximately 560kcal when jogging at eight kilometres per hour and approximately 780kcal when running at 13 kilometres per hour.

A 90kg person will burn even more calories in 60 minutes, burning 730kcal when running at eight kilometres per hour and 1,230kcal running at 13 kilometres per hour.

Aerobic fitness is the ability of your heart to pump stronger and more efficiently and your muscles to consume more oxygen with each beat and your muscles to contract more powerfully and for longer during endurance exercise. For many individuals, running is the preferred form of aerobic exercise, offering physical, emotional and financial advantages.

Cardiorespiratory fitness or aerobic fitness is the ability of your heart to pump stronger and more efficiently and your muscles to consume more oxygen with each beat and your muscles to contract more powerfully and for longer during endurance exercise. For many individuals, running is the preferred form of aerobic exercise, offering physical, emotional and financial advantages.

School of Education & Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) suggests a five-minute out, five-minute back program.

From your starting point, jog five minutes, turn around, and jog back for five minutes. She said of course not everyone can jog for 10 minutes as a start, and that’s okay. Try an informal interval-training method as a way to get started if jogging continuously for 10 minutes is beyond your ability. Keep in mind that the most important thing is to get started even if it is from the baby steps. You can always add more later on.

Here’s an interval plan that will get you started.

1. Select the amount of time that you plan to jog, let’s say, 30 minutes. 2. Start with a five-minute brisk walk to warm up. 3. When you feel ready, start to jog slowly. If you’re out of breath, walk slowly until you catch your breath and continue to jog slowly again. 4. Repeat this series of walking or jogging intervals for 30 minutes, or whatever duration you intend to do.

ACSM recommends that all healthy adults should do the following: 1. Frequency of training: three to five days per week. 2. Intensity of training: 55/65%-90% of maximum heart rate. 3. Duration of training: 20-60 minutes of continuous or intermittent cardio or aerobic activity. 4. Modes of activity: any activity that uses large muscle groups, which can be maintained continuously, and is physiological and aerobic in nature. (example: walking, hiking, running, jogging, cycling, aerobic dance/group exercise, rope skipping, rowing, stair climbing, swimming and various endurance game activities or a combination of two or more exercises)

Programs for running

The simplest thing to do is to get out there, and jog or run for five to 10 minutes. Pace yourself, slow down if you are out of breath, and keep moving. For beginners, Stephanie Chok, a lecturer from

Besides keeping myself healthy, I love the camaraderie and it is the greatest way for me to release stress," Karen, 29, student.

“...” I used to be 90kg and now I’m 53kg, being around with physically active people, somehow influenced me to venture into running,” Michelle, 29, student (ex-flight stewardess).

I used to be 100kg; after all the hard work, now I’m 75kg and able to join races and guess what, I even got top 10 in a Triathlon Race,” Nuruljit, 11, student.

I love running and my mommy will always make us run during weekends before we are allowed to watch cartoons,” Nurulmajid, 11, student.

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