

Activity Guide

for beginners



Any physical activity you do will improve your heart health, and your overall health. Being more active will help your heart, improve your sleep, help your mental health, reduce stress, help manage your blood pressure and help manage your weight.



This guide gives you the information you need to start MyMarathon. It offers advice to keep you on track and stay motivated when walking or running your chosen distance over the next month.

Preparation

Make sure you have supportive footwear from the start. Running shoes should have plenty of tread with suitable cushioning and support. Your running shoes should not be heavily worn or falling apart!

A shoe's structure weakens over time; that's why running experts recommend replacing your shoes at the first signs of wear and tear. Wearing supportive footwear can help to avoid any trips or falls, aching muscles or joints, and other injuries.

What should I wear?

Ideally, your clothing should be light in colour (if outdoors), the fabric should be thin, breathable and comfortable. It should enable freedom of movement to avoid any rubbing on your skin. Chafing isn't pleasant and could prevent you from running or walking regularly.

Before you start, plan when and where you are going to run or walk. Take the time to decide if you will complete your activity in the morning, afternoon or in the evening. Will you run or walk on a hard surface like a pathway or a soft surface like a sporting field? Maybe a bit of both?

Running or walking on softer surfaces is gentler on your body, especially when you are starting out. Choosing where you go for your run or walk should be a seamless part of your routine, over-thinking can create a barrier to getting active. Remember to get the balance right for YOU; this will help to create a long-lasting routine which you are more likely to stick to.

If you are recovering from injury or are worried about an existing condition, always check with your doctor before you start.

Starting out

If you haven't walked or run before, start out by alternating between an easier and faster pace to build up your ability and stamina. When you feel ready, increase the time you exercise for. **Try this:**

Walking:

Week 1: Comfortable walk, brisk walk for 1 minute, slow to a comfortable walk, then brisk walk and repeat.

Week 2: Start with a comfortable walk, brisk walk for 2 minutes then walk comfortably and repeat.

Running:

In week 1, start with a brisk walk, then run for 1 minute, then walk briskly and repeat; in week 2, start with a brisk walk, then run for 1.5 minutes, then walk briskly and repeat, etc.

Continue to build up your faster pace each week as you feel comfortable to do so.

Set your mind on going the distance, rather than on how fast you are going. Using a fitness app, such as Strava, MapMyFitness, Fitbit or Garmin which you can link to your MyMarathon fundraising page, to track your kilometers, can be an excellent source of motivation. If you are running or walking in the same location, being able to go further in a similar time is a great goal.

As you progress, extend the time your run or walk session goes for. In week 1, you might exercise for 15-20 minutes each time; in week 2, aim for 20-25 minutes; in week 3 – build up to 25-30 minutes,

etc. For runners, alternating a run with a walking session every second day is a good way to start out. Remember to be consistent and persistent: before long, you will build up a great routine.

Be kind to yourself and don't stress about your performance. As a guide, you should be able to talk, but not sing, as you run or walk. Being more physically active will deliver many physical and mental benefits. If you have any concerns or start experiencing pain of any kind, see your regular doctor. If you are experiencing warning signs of a heart attack call 111.

Recovery

At the end of your training session, cool down with an easy walk and then stretching for a few minutes. This can help to prevent injuries. Areas to stretch include your hamstrings, calves, quads, glutes and lower back. Be sure to rehydrate; water is the best option.

Your body needs a break, so plan rest days: having at least one rest day between training days will reduce your chance of injury and make you a stronger runner. Rest days enable your joints to recover and your muscles to repair and strengthen.

Strength

To help build your running ability, we recommend adding strength exercises into your routine; get going by doing strength exercises 2-3 times a week. Bodyweight exercises can be a great way to get you started: try squats, lunges, calf raises and glute bridges. These exercises can be completed 8-12 times each, and you can repeat them, as a way to progress.

Keep going: These tips can help to keep you motivated



Set a goal!

Imagine how you'll feel when you reach it. This may include a short-term goal (in the next few weeks) and a long-term goal (within the next few months).



Have fun!

Exercise shouldn't be a chore. Discover those perfect opportunities in your day and kick-start a routine you can stick to; your heart will thank you!



Mix it up!

Remember that you can do MyMarathon at any pace, in any place; mix up the speed, the intensity and the scenery. Doing this can help keep you motivated.



Talk it up!

Tell family and friends about your running/walking goals: this gives you a sense of accountability and you may even pick up a running buddy!



Find a training buddy!

Having someone to run or walk with can add to the fun and motivation.



MyMarathon

Find out more
mymarathon.co.nz

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