10 Benefits of Running, and How to Do It

When you envision running, you probably will fall into one of two categories. Either you love it or you hate it; sometimes it is even a love/hate relationship. Its painful, tedious, and exhausting. So what makes people love it? What makes people who hate it keep doing it? It is likely that the benefits of running outweigh the hatred (if there is any).

Many runners probably begin their running program with a physical goal foremost in their minds, like losing weight or toning their legs. These are definitely some potential benefits that come from running, but theyre not the only ones. One of the greatest benefits of a runners lifestyle is that it strongly contributes to overall health in so many ways. It could even be a way to meet people or to compete with others in races. Well, the fact is, running has a lot of benefits. And heres a list of some of the best.

1. Win the battle of the bulge.

> Many people start running in order to win the battle of the bulge. Whether they are obese or just want to lose that last ten pounds, or even if they just want to stay at the weight they are at, approximately 60 percent of runners start running to manage their weight. Running is one of the top activities for burning fat. In fact, with the exception of cross country skiing, running burns more calories per minute than any other form of cardiovascular exercise.

2. Prevent muscle and bone loss.

> Our bones are made to accommodate the demands placed upon them. By sitting in front of the monitor all day many of us allow our bones to grow weaker, but by running regularly our skeleton gets the demand it needs to stay healthy. In addition to keeping our insides from aging quickly, regular, high-intensity exercise, like running, has also been proven to promote the human growth

hormone, which celebrities have taken injections of for years to keep them looking young.

3. Fight disease.

Running reduces the risk of stroke and breast cancer. Regular running has become a treatment option for doctors to prescribe to patients who are at a high risk, or early stages, of osteoporosis, diabetes, and hypertension. It reduces the risk of heart attacks, by strengthening the heart and lowering blood pressure. Running maintains the elasticity of arteries incredibly well because as you run your arteries expand and contract nearly three times as much as usual.

4. Maintain and improve general health.

Running is one of the best activities most people can do to improve their health. It raises HDL (or good) cholesterol, reduces the risk of blood clots, and encourages use of the 50 percent of your lungs that usually go unused. Running also boost the immune system by creating a higher concentration of lymphocytes (white blood cells that attack disease).

5. Get confident.

Jogging builds confidence and self-esteem like few other individual sports can. It allows the runner to defeat trial after trial, growing stronger and more sure of themselves with each footstrike. It allows you to truly climb hills and clear obstacles. It provides a feeling of empowerment and freedom that comes with knowing that your legs and body are strong and capable. Confidence is even more a product of running for those who lose weight and gain a better self-image through running.

6. Stress relief.

This is another huge benefit of jogging. Whether by allowing you the time to think about lifes problems or time to escape them for awhile, tension easily flies by the wayside as you fly over the miles. Distance runs are great for solving headaches and problems that are nagging at you. What could be better than a three hour

run all by yourself to clear your mind and allow you to pin down an answer? Speed runs are great for tearing through aggression and anger. Focus all that emotion into a few sprints and youll feel better in no time.

7. The famous Runners high.

Aside from just the stress relief, jogging has also been proven to improve attitude. Running, especially outside and on trails, creates a release of endorphins that can cause euphoria (runners high) or just a general sense of happiness. Running has been used for years to treat clinical depression and addictions of all kinds. Less tension, less depression, less fatigue, and less confusion are just a few of the changes that patients have seen after beginning a regular running program. Running gives something for them to focus on, allowing them to see something besides their depressed state or addiction.

8. Train your mind.

Along that line, running can help train the mind as much as it trains the body. By making yourself overcome the obstacles that running brings, you learn focus and determination. The will and strength that gets your body through long runs or those runs youd much rather skip is what in turn strengthens your mind and gives you focus and determination in other areas of your life.

9. Improve coordination.

Another worthwhile benefit which may be gained from running. This may seem surprising to many who assume it is not possible to gain these types of benefits from running simply because it is such a simple sport. However, there is some coordination involved in running. Trail running which involves running on unpaved trails especially requires a great deal of coordination. The uneven surface combined with obstacles such as rocks and tree roots can make trail running quite difficult. However, runners who regularly run on these types of services, quickly learn to maintain better control over their bodies to prevent tripping and stumbling while running.

10. Versatility.

> Not many sports can be done almost anywhere with almost no gear. Im sure the ancient Greeks would argue that even shoes and clothes arent required, as their Olympians were quite the minimalists. Today, we just need a good pair of running shoes and off we go. From urban sidewalks to rural trails and all the real estate in between, the world is loaded with places for runners to explore. Travel a lot? Theres always room in your suitcase for a pair of sneakers. The world is your gym, go re-discover it.

Starting a running program is far simpler than most people believe. If youre new to running or have any health impairments, its advisable to make an appointment with your doctor to be sure you are healthy and ready to start. Then, find a good pair of running shoes, get off the couch and go!

Running for Health Benefits

http://running.about.com/od/runningforbeginners/a/whatisrunning_2.htm
By Christine Luff, About.com Guide

Studies have shown the health benefits of running to be tremendous, reducing your chances of everything from the common cold to cancer. Running is among the best aerobic exercises for physical conditioning of your heart and lungs. It helps ensure the efficient flow of blood and oxygen throughout the body, things that are proven to help to decrease the risk of a heart attack.

Running -- like other types of exercise -- is a great stress-reliever and may even relieve mild depression. Many runners enjoy reaching the "runner's high" -- that euphoric, clear, and calm state they feel after a long run.

Research shows that healthy adults who exercise regularly are generally happier than those who don't. As a runner, you'll likely feel more energetic and creative.

Running helps you improve your fitness and stamina. As a weight-bearing exercise, running also increases bone density, which can fend off osteoporosis.

Although running is a healthy activity, you should get [medical clearance](#) before you start a running program.

Running for Weight Loss

Weight loss is one of the biggest reasons why people start running. As one of the most vigorous exercises out there, running is an extremely efficient way to burn calories and drop pounds. Running burns about 100 calories per mile for a 150-pound person. Because running also builds muscle mass, your resting metabolism will increase, which means that you'll burn more calories at rest. If you combine running with a healthy diet, you'll definitely notice a difference in the way you look and feel.

Running for Social Benefits

Many people run because they like to socialize and be part of a running community. Running clubs and charity training groups give people the opportunity to meet and train with other people. Some runners participate in local events or travel to race destinations with their running buddies.

Psychological Benefits

http://running.about.com/od/running101/a/mentalbenefits.htm
From Jesslyn Cummings, former About.com Guide

Aside from the health benefits jogging or running imparts, there are also many psychological benefits to a regular running or jogging program. Some of these include the confidence and character that running builds, the stress relief, and the attitude boost. Oh, and let's not forget the runner's high.

Running builds confidence like few other individual sports can. It allows the runner to defeat trial after trial, growing stronger and more sure of themselves with each footstrike. It allows you to truly climb hills and

clear obstacles. It provides a feeling of empowerment and freedom that comes with knowing that your legs and body are strong and capable. Confidence is even more a product of running for those who lose weight and gain a better self-image through running.

Stress relief is another huge benefit of jogging. Whether by allowing you the time to think about life's problems or time to escape them for awhile, tension easily flies by the wayside as you fly over the miles. Distance runs are great for solving problems that are nagging at you. What better than a 3 hour run all by yourself to clear your mind and allow you to pin down an answer? Speed runs are great for tearing through aggression and anger. Focus all that emotion into a few sprints and you'll feel better in no time.

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Along that line, running can help train the mind as much as it trains the body. By making yourself overcome the obstacles that running brings, you learn focus and determination. The will and strength that gets your body through long runs or those runs you'd much rather skip is what in turn strengthens your mind and gives you focus and determination in other areas of your life.

As you can see, the benefits of jogging affect the health of your body and your mind. But running still has [more benefits](#) to provide.

Why Exercise Works Against Depression

Exercise works against depression in a number of ways:

- By reducing the stress hormone cortisol, which is linked to depression.
- By restoring one's sleep and eating patterns, and raising energy levels, all critically important to feeling alive.
- By releasing endorphins, which are associated with good mood.
- By raising serotonin levels, according to one study.
- Finally, getting in shape improves self-esteem.
- By increasing brain cells in the hippocampus, according to a study done on rats.

How to Run Away Your Anxiety

By quixotic222, eHow Contributor

The key to anxiety release is endorphins. The key to endorphins is exercise. Going for a run/walk can relieve anxious moments and you can feel better by the time you return home. This physical reaction to exercise and the resulting emotional stability is due to the endorphins released during a workout. Read on to learn more.

1. 1 Exercise seems to have an effect on your emotional reaction to stress. It does this by altering your as endorphins are released in the pituitary gland in the brain. This is known as "runner's high" and it can last for several hours afterwards. The word "endorphin" is a combination of "endo" and "morphine," which means endogenously-produced morphine, or internally-produced painkillers. Endorphins are the body's natural pain reliever.
2. 2 You don't have to do a lengthy workout to get the effects. Even moderate activity can relieve anxiety. The brain sees exercise as a form of "pain" and it may be that the rise in fatty acids caused by long, gentle exercise acidifies the blood, which triggers the release of endorphins. Moderate-intensity exercise lasting at least 20 to

30 minutes produces the greatest increase of blood endorphins. It's better to exercise slowly and aerobically. If you run too hard or fast your body has the opposite effect and causes anxiety. You have to find your own pace to get the best results.

3. 3 Cool down correctly after your workout to get longer lasting effects of this "runner's high". This will increase the length of time you can be anxiety-free. The best thing about this easy solution to tension is that you can do it anytime you need to. Just throw on your running shoes and get out the door. Once you start walking or running the effects will kick in and the benefits can last you all day.