

Love FEAR[^] TO RUN

For many non-runners the idea of starting running is scary. These fears are real to them at the time but they will find them unfounded or insignificant once they have started to run. One of our runners expressed it as being fearful of being "too fat, too slow and frumpy".

too slow: Running is different from walking by having a float phase. If both feet are off the ground at one time then you are a runner. It has nothing to do with how fast you run. In fact in most fun runs you will probably be in the top half of the field simply by running the whole way. Most runners walk/run and there is nothing wrong with doing that. Just by doing some running you are in the top 10% of the population which in Australia includes two thirds who are either overweight or obese. Running is mainly a non-competitive sport. We compete in races, but it is mostly to achieve our own personal bests. Our fellow runners are there to help us to achieve our best and to share that achievement when it occurs.

too fat: While obesity is a major problem in modern society the real killer is lack of fitness. By running regularly you can improve your health profile significantly. Being skinny is not healthy if you do not exercise or if you have maintained your low weight by smoking and dieting. Research in exercise physiology has shown that an overweight exerciser is much better off than a sedentary person with an ideal Body Mass Index. Other runners will just be happy to see you trying to improve your health no matter what weight you are when you start. Intraining sponsored athlete and Brisbane Marathon champion Clay Dawson lost an amazing 50kgs while discovering he could run. Running is a great way to lose weight and it is hard to predict where you will end up when you start.

too frumpy: It is a natural human fear to be scared of standing out. Many new runners are fearful that they will be ridiculed by trying to run with the greyhounds. However the fear of standing out by being too old is not born out in the statistics. The average age of runners at many fun runs is over 40. In fact there is usually about twice as many runners over 40 as there is under 30. Running is one of the few non-gender specific sports with more women participating. In last years Twilight Running Festival at St Lucia 59% of participants were women. These demographics help to make running one of the most nurturing of sports. While you may be put down by family and friends for trying to run you will only find acceptance amongst runners. Running gear has become very stylish with new materials and bright colours. Running Skirts and Running tights help to flatter the figure no matter what the shape.

fear of pain: When you first start running it hurts. Your breathing is laboured, your legs burn and side stitches are frequent. After a run it does not get much better as your body aches from the unaccustomed effort for the next few days. Even worse sore shins and painful feet seem to have trouble deciding if they are an injury or not. You have to constantly fight the urge to stop and walk. But if you keep at it your body will adapt. There will come a time when you will suddenly realize that you are running without pain and even without effort. That is when running becomes a pleasure and even an addiction. When missing your run causes more pain then running ever did when you started.

fear of boredom: Non-runners have trouble understanding what you could think about for so long. They often ask "don't you get bored?" Running is similar to meditation. The rhythm of the run and the beating of your heart becomes a relaxing counterpoint to

By Margot and Steve Manning



the hustle and bustle of life. But the main thing that sets running apart is the social side. There are few sports where you can spend hours together with friends each week talking the whole time. You will bond with your running partners by helping each other to achieve a challenging goal. The best way to find these potential new BFF's is by joining a running group or club. The intraining Running and Triathlon Club has over 600 members and training sessions all over Brisbane.

fear of racing: The final fear to overcome for most people is going in a race. After training to run a 5km non-stop the next step is to train for a 10km, a Half or a Marathon. It can be scary when race day looms to find out if all the training has paid off. However what you will find is that racing is the pinnacle experience of running. It is the most fun and the most satisfying part of being a runner.

HOW TO START RUNNING:

- Establish a routine
- Follow a program like the Couch to 5km
- Set an easy goal to start
- Share your major goal with others
- Run with a friend
- Join a running group or club

“ Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would become a runner. I have gained so much confidence and enjoyment from running with InTraining's beginner group & coach, James and from the wonderfully supportive people. I've truly come to love running.
” *Shelley*



“ I had become fearful of running and playing sport. I was scared of not looking the part, and being too old or not the right shape. I love the sense of the intraining community, inclusion and the feeling of being comfortable in the group. I also love the running skirts.
” *Michelle*



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