

Baby steps

Get your jogging routine off on the right foot

by 2nd Lt. Chuck Widener
photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Allen

So what's the key to starting a successful jogging routine? Simple. Put one foot in front of the other.

Fitness experts across the country all agree jogging is a great way to exercise and keep fit. After all, there's nothing easier than lacing up a pair of shoes and starting on your journey. However, just like that wobbly 10-month-old, taking that first step is often the hardest.

It's important to remember that everyone's different in the ability to adapt to exercise. The wonderful thing about jogging is it can be done anytime, anywhere and involves only one person. Also, it's the most efficient way to achieve cardiovascular fit-

ness and will burn more calories than walking.

There are a variety of ways people can start a jogging routine. Many fitness experts such as Patti Danner, a personal trainer who specializes in strength and endurance coaching, say to begin walking for a couple weeks — then combine walking with jogging as you progress.

The one fact medical professionals agree on is you should exercise at least three days each week for 20 to 60 minutes, ultimately working up to five days a week. If you can't exercise or jog for 20 minutes, simply go as far as you can. Researchers at the University Health Service at the University of Rochester found that, in

general, untrained joggers can start jogging about 10 minutes a day.

The most important factor for beginning joggers to keep in mind is you should only be jogging aerobically. Don't confuse the word "jogging" with "running." Naturally, you'll become out of breath, but you shouldn't be gasping. If you're able to hold a conversation while jogging, it's a good sign you're not overexerting yourself.

Once you begin a routine, start increasing the length of time or mileage you're exercising each week. To safely increase your regimen, fitness trainers recommend the 10 percent rule.

"It's one of the most important and time-proven principles in running," said Amby Burfoot, author of three

running books and winner of the 1968 Boston Marathon. "It states you should never increase your weekly mileage by more than 10 percent over the previous week."

The rule gains importance from the fact that most running injuries are overuse injuries. They occur when you run too much or increase your weekly training program too quickly. So your best bet to avoid injury is to increase your workouts gradually in small amounts.

After several months, you'll no longer be a beginner and will have to decide whether you want to just jog for fitness or to go one step further — jog for conditioning, endurance or competition. ☘



Equipment start-up

Perhaps the greatest aspect of jogging is it doesn't require a lot of equipment. Avid runners may invest in watches, sunglasses and other running apparel, but the only piece of equipment absolutely necessary is a pair of running shoes that can range from \$30 to \$150.

However, the importance of choosing the right shoes can't be overemphasized. Proper footwear prevents injuries.

Here are a few steps to get you started; however, talk with a fitness professional, athletic trainer or physical therapist for additional recommendations.

- Buy a shoe specific to running. Not a sneaker, tennis shoe, cross-trainer, aerobic, basketball or walking shoe. Buy a running shoe made for running and only running.
- Know your foot biomechanics. Are you a normal pronator? An overpronator? An underpronator? Your foot biomechanics are important because they determine the type of shoe you should buy: a stability shoe, a motion-control shoe or a cushioned shoe. Go to www.therunnershigh.com/shoes/wizard or the "Shoes 101" section at www.runnersworld.com to determine your shoe type.
- Select the right shoes. A proper fit means your heel should fit snug and not slide up and down. A good "rule of thumb" is to leave an extra thumb's width, about 1/2 inch, between the end of your longest toe and the end of the toe box.
- Consider support, comfort, durability and foot-motion control. Periodically, check shoe soles for signs of wear.
- Alternate different brands and styles of shoes. Doing this helps alleviate foot problems that develop because of a particular shoe's construction.

— 2nd Lt. Chuck Widener

Want more info?

For more information on jogging and training programs, go to www.runnersworld.com, www.coolrunning.com or do a search using the key word "running."