

Benefits of Running

What are the health benefits of regular running?

For many people, running is a relatively easy form of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic activity. It can also be time-efficient and inexpensive.

Research evaluating the benefits of running found that:

- Regular running may reduce the risk of death from any medical issue by around **29%** and the risk of death from cardiovascular disease by 50%.
- Jogging may increase the overall age-adjusted life span of men by **6.2 years** and women by 5.6 years.
- Running at least **three times weekly** at a slow-to-average pace for up to 2.5 hours per week may be associated with the lowest risk of mortality.
- Regular running might reduce the risk of dying from cancer by **30–50%**.
- Regular running may **reduce the risk** of dying from respiratory infections and neurological conditions.
- Running for 1 hour may translate into **7 hours of extended life** for many adults.
- Running at a moderate intensity for **30 minutes** each morning for 3 weeks may improve sleep patterns and psychological functioning.

According to the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Trusted Source](#), regular physical activity may help adults:

- reach and maintain a healthy weight

- reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure and stroke
- reduce the risk of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes
- reduce the risk of certain cancers
- increase life span and immune function
- improve overall mood and mental health
- improve functionality
- prevent falls and disability
- improve bone density and muscle strength
- reduce anxiety and depression
- improve sleep
- improve cognition and overall brain health
- reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia
- improve the overall quality of life

Safety

Regular running seems to have health benefits for many people. But it is not a safe form of exercise for everyone, particularly people with certain medical conditions.

Also, running that is too vigorous, frequent, or excessive tends to increase the risk of complications, including physical injury and overheating.

By some estimates, [33%](#) of recreational runners experience at least one injury, and about 75% of these injuries involve the lower legs. Runners are also more prone to back and groin injuries.

Heart attacks are rare during physical activity. However, a person with any type of cardiovascular disease should consult a doctor before they take up running.

People with other health conditions should also seek medical advice before starting to run or increasing the intensity of a running routine, especially people with:

- respiratory conditions
- conditions that increase the risk of falling
- conditions that interfere with mobility
- conditions that increase the risk of muscle, joint, or bone injuries

Slow down, take a break, or seek shelter, hydration, or home medical care if any of the following occurs while running:

- cramps or blisters
- sunburn or windburn
- cuts or abrasions from falls
- weakness, tingling, or numbness
- a headache
- extreme exhaustion
- any trouble breathing, including extreme shortness of breath

Seek emergency medical care if any of the severe symptoms below occur during or after a run:

- dizziness or faintness
- balance, mobility, or coordination problems
- extreme, uncontrollable sweating

- shaking or tremors
- vision changes
- ringing in the ears or hearing changes
- the heart rate becoming rapid or uncontrollable

To reduce the risk of injury and other health complications, runners should also:

- warm up with moderate-to-light intensity exercise
- cool down and stretch after running
- stay hydrated before, after, and during workouts
- avoid running in extremely hot, humid, or dry conditions
- refrain from running in the middle of the day
- apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor, or SPF, of at least 30 to all exposed areas
- wear protective clothing when running outdoors during the day
- stop running if it no longer feels good
- set realistic goals based on factors specific to their situation
- avoid running on uneven, unclear, sandy, or hard surfaces
- continually scan the area for any hazards, such as sticks, branches, rocks, holes, and cars
- refrain from running until injuries have healed
- treat soft tissue injuries with rest, ice, compression, and elevation
- use correct running technique and form
- wear suitable running clothing and shoes that absorb or repel moisture and allow for airflow

- avoid running in heavily polluted environments, such as by roadways or in areas with particles of sand or dust in the air
- run in well-lit, safe public areas
- wear reflective material if running at night
- run with a cellphone or a friend, or let others know about the intended route and time frame