

# Paths to glory

Stay focused and motivated by setting yourself small, achievable targets

**R**unners tend to measure themselves in race times – but even before your first event, there are plenty of ways to track your progress. “When starting out, concentrate on little things to keep motivated,” says coach Kim Ingleby (energisedperformance.com). “From here you can start to improve in a progressive, well-planned way, keeping the fun and the focus.”

## **L** MORE...TIME ON YOUR FEET

“The key is to go gently, listen to your body and breathe deeply,” Ingleby says. “An ideal first session is running for two minutes, walking for two, then repeating four times.”

You’ll be able to build up gradually, increasing your running and decreasing your rest times. The next session, try a 3:1 run/walk ratio four times; the session after, a 5:1 ratio, four times.

**WHAT TO EXPECT** It’ll take between 10 and 12 weeks to build up to running for 30 minutes continuously – roughly the time it takes to cover up to three miles.

## **L** LESS...WATER CARRIED

Do you barrel along, clutching a litre of water like a life raft? “For many of us, a bottle is a psychological comfort,” says coach Liz Fulford (fitnessstrainingpecialists.co.uk). “But carrying a heavy load can unbalance your form.” That ups your injury risk, but, Fulford says, “perception of thirst decreases



**THE ROAD AHEAD**  
Within 10-12 weeks, beginners can expect to run for three miles

as fitness improves”. In time, you should feel confident taking fewer sips as you run.  
**WHAT TO EXPECT** “By the time you can run solidly for half an hour, you can probably leave the water at home – except on very hot days,” Fulford says. For longer runs, you’ll then need to drink about 200ml every 20 minutes.

## **L** FEWER...POST-RUN NIGGLES

Feeling stiff after your first few runs is normal; it shows your body is adapting. “It takes time for blood vessels to respond, and to add energy-producing mitochondria to your muscles,” says Harvard University biologist and marathoner Daniel Lieberman. Treat minor twinges with ice packs, take a rest day after every run, and stop if you suffer any acute or persistent pain.

**WHAT TO EXPECT** Within two months, you should be able to do easy runs without feeling anything – except energised – the day after.

## **L** MORE...POUNDS SHIFTED

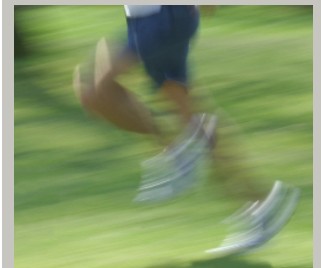
Many runners start out with a vague desire to look and feel better by shifting excess weight. Check the **RUNNER’S WORLD** calorie calculator (runnersworld.co.uk/caloriecalculator) for the specifics: it’ll tell you exactly how many calories you’ll burn on your run. For a 14st runner, that means about 121 calories for every 10 minutes running at 12 minutes per mile.

**WHAT TO EXPECT** “The more excess weight you’re carrying, the quicker it comes off,” says Fulford. “However, a sensible rate of loss is about one to two pounds per week.”



**Q** I’ve been running for a while now. How can I improve my efficiency?

**A** Increasing the number of steps you take per minute helps you become a more efficient runner. During an easy run, count how often your left foot touches the ground over 30 seconds,



then multiply by two. Walk for 30 seconds, then resume normal pace for 30 seconds, increasing your footstrike by one or two steps. Repeat four times, continuing to increase your footstrike each time. Jeff Galloway, running coach (jeffgalloway.com)

Email questions to [rwedit@runnersworld.co.uk](mailto:rwedit@runnersworld.co.uk)

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### VITA COCO COCONUT WATER

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Full of potassium, magnesium and calcium, Vita Coco coconut water – which now has a handy resealable screw cap – is a natural way to top up on electrolytes, which you lose through sweat.



## Say What?

### RUNNING TERMS EXPLAINED

An **easy run** is paced so that you can hold a conversation as you go along. For most runners, this will be a couple of minutes per mile slower than marathon race pace.