

RUNNING SHORTS

What is the best running surface?

By Ken Johnson

When running, each foot hits the ground with a force equal to 5 to 7 times your body weight. Therefore, the surface you run on is important in reducing the impact on your muscles and joints. So, what is the best surface to run on?

Grass and old fashioned dirt are best. However, you must be careful not to step in a hole and sprain an ankle.

Tracks with rubber-based synthetic surfaces (i.e. Huntsville High School) or crushed gravel surfaces (i.e. Pritchett Field on Avenue O) are good. Tracks also offer the advantage of safety from vehicle traffic. The major drawback is potential boredom from repetitive quarter mile loops. The same goes with treadmills. The rubber surface is easy on the muscles and joints, but the monotony is a big disadvantage for most.

There are miles of dirt trails at Huntsville State Park, but in some sections, you must be careful not to trip over a tree root or sprain an ankle.

The next time you are at the beach, run on the sand. Deep sand is difficult to run on, but hard packed sand offers the same advantage as running on smooth dirt.

In reality, most of us run regularly on concrete or asphalt pavement. Asphalt is much softer than concrete and therefore is much better for running. Keep in mind that if you are running on the roads, state law requires you to run on the sidewalk if there is one. If no sidewalk, you can run on the roadway against oncoming traffic.

When running on concrete sidewalks, watch out for those uneven seams between the sections of concrete. Tripping and falling on concrete can ruin your day.

Regardless of what running surface is available to you, keep on running. Minimize the distance you run on concrete and try to do most of your running on softer surfaces.

Recent race results:

Fort Worth Marathon (26.2 miles), Nov. 14

Ken Johnson, 69 5:37:11 (1st in age group)

Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio Half Marathon (13.1 miles), Nov. 14

Jerry Flanagan, 70	2:00:20 (3 rd in age group)
Bronwyn Valentine, 44	2:13:34
Mark Robinson, 63	2:13:57
Demi Turner, 15	2:19:47
Jessica Van Cleave, 27	2:23:32
Ray Sarno, 63	2:55:08
Susan Lowery, 42	3:14:06
Alfredo Cerda, 38	3:14:06
Norma Buxkemper, 59	3:21:06
Evelyn Turner, 43	3:22:48
Deborah O'Barr, 45	3:48:02

Sunday Night 5K (3.1 miles), The Woodlands, Nov. 7

Leah Koester, 44 26:38

Ken Johnson, 69 34:02

Iron Star Triathlon, Conroe, Nov. 7

(1.5-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run)

Jody Slaughter, 47 5:49:05 (3rd in Clydesdales)

Marvin Dittfurth, 67 7:27:02 (1st in age group)

American Heroes 5K, The Colony, Nov. 6

Steve Bickford, 49 24:40 (1st in age group)

Jacob Bickford, 25 24:49 (3rd in age group)

Rocky Raccoon Trail Run, Huntsville State Park, Nov. 6

50K (31 miles)

Ken Johnson, 69 7:59:05

10K (6.2 miles)

Robert Duncan, 50 1:02:11

Staten Island Half Marathon, New York, Oct. 10

Holly Jacobs, 29 2:00:13

Runners: Report race results to 1941runner@sbcglobal.net

Upcoming races in Huntsville.

Nov. 27 - Leftover Turkey Run, 10K, 5K, 1-Mile Run/Walk, 9 a.m., Veterans Memorial Pkwy.

Dec. 11 – Texas Trail Runs, 50K & 12.5-Mile, 7:30 a.m., Huntsville State Park

For more information about these and other races, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.