

RUNNING SHORTS

There's nothing wrong with running slow

By Ken Johnson

I talk to a lot of people about running. While the benefits of running are obvious, many people are intimidated by the speed and endurance of more experienced runners. You don't have to feel intimidated and you don't even have to compete against other runners if you don't want to; that's the beauty of running. Just get started. Gradually build up your endurance by increasing your distance. Speed will follow. If you can reach and maintain your fitness goals by running alone, that's great. If you lack self-discipline and motivation, recruit a running partner who is also just getting started and train together. Make a commitment to each other – and to yourself.

Some of us don't like to run and we endure it just to stay fit. That calls for more motivation. Belonging to a running club and learning more about all aspects of the sport helps. On the other hand, some really enjoy running and finding a source of motivation is not a problem. Some even experience a "runners high" at a certain distance while running. This is the release of natural endorphins in the brain, which puts the runner in a state of euphoria.

Whether you are fast and competitive or slow and non-competitive, participation in races can be a great source of motivation. They give you a goal to shoot for. Many are 5K (3.1 miles) and anyone who can run or walk the distance is welcome. Don't feel like you have to win the race or even win your age group. Just finishing makes you a winner. You set a goal and you achieved it. Now, you can set goals for longer races.

The Polish Pickle 5K in Bremond, Texas (north of Hearne) on June 28 is a good start. This event is part of the Polish Pickle Festival. About 500 runners and walkers will be participating. The entry fee is \$12 and you get a race T-shirt and all the food and drink you want after the race. Visit the booths lined up and down the main street and watch the parade after the race.

If Bremond is too far away for you, there are other races closer by. The Run the Woodlands 5K will be held in The Woodlands on June 14 and 28 and the June Bug 5K will be held in Huntsville on June 21. Details on these races and others can be found on the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us>. Click on Race Schedule.

It's important to remember that you don't have to be a fast and competitive runner to benefit from running and enjoy the experience of race participation.

Recent race results:

Run The Woodlands, 5K, May 24

Robert Duncan	19:37
John Dunphy	26:28
Sam Dunphy	26:40
Katy Lampson	26:52
John Cook	27:57
Ken Johnson	34:28

Memorial Day 5K, Huntsville, May 26

Darren Grant	23:26
Norman Langwell	23:26
James Spencer	24:50

Curtis Barton	26:32
Jerry Flanagan	29:52
Keanu Cousins	30:27
Katy Lampson	32:28
Chantel Langwell	32:28
True Cousins	38:14
Colton Langwell	40:55
Colleen Spencer	42:58
Don Ortloff	42:58
David's Dream Run, 5K, The Woodlands, May 31	
Katy Lampson	27:07
Ken Johnson	34:41