

RUNNING SHORTS

Running with headphones is risky

By Ken Johnson

Some runners just cannot run without headphones and their favorite play list. Listening to music while running can be motivational and if the beat is fast enough, music can even help increase your speed. It can also take your mind off the monotony of running.

Back in the 70's you would have to carry a boombox on your shoulder to enjoy your favorite tunes while you ran. For those of you not around in the 70's, boomboxes were portable radios. Nowadays, MP3 players, iPods and smart phones make it easy. They clip on your clothing and with ear plugs, the noise around you is blocked out; all you hear is your music.

That's a problem. Even if you do not want to converse with your running partner or other runners in a race, you need to listen to your surroundings. It is a safety issue. Turn the volume down and listen for vehicles, bikes, sirens, dogs or persons intending to do you harm.

Okay, it is probably safe to run with headphones if you are running on a treadmill or during daylight hours at the track. However, running alone late at night with headphones at the track is downright dangerous.

If you are running a race on the streets and the course is completely closed to traffic, headphones are relatively safe. Otherwise, do not wear headphones. Keep in mind that many drivers are distracted because they are wearing headphones, talking on the cell phone or texting. You double the risk by running with headphones.

For many years, the Road Runners Club of America and USA Track & Field, organizations that sanction races and provide insurance, completely banned the use of headphones in races. Due to the concern of race directors that participation in races would suffer, those organizations dropped their ban on headphones, but do require race directors to strongly discourage the use of headphones.

If you are one of those runners who are addicted to music while you run, keep the volume down so you can be aware of your surroundings. Except during races on a closed course, do not run with headphones when running on the roads.

Keep running, but run safe.

Recent race results:

Polish Pickle 5K, Bremond, June 22

J. C. Guzman, 41	19:39 (1st in age group)
Jose Torres, 20	19:41 (2nd in age group)
Steve Bickford, 52	23:31
Jacqui Wukich, 39	25:37
Clayton Wukich, 34	25:37
Glenn Green, 51	26:00
Darren Grant, 48	29:43
Gerald Johnson, 57	29:51
Jan Parks, 56	30:00
Laura Green, 47	30:21
Dee Dee Dretke, 53	30:28
Heidi Morse, 53	35:10

Kelly Bielowicz, 38	31:25
Skipper Nethery, 64	32:14
Cathy Bickford, 51	34:55
Ken Johnson, 72	36:47 (3rd in age group)
John Lewandowski, 42	39:29
Ben Johnson, 29	46:01
Jerry Flanagan, 73	49:47

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

July 27 – Dog Days 5K & 1-Mile Run/Walk, Forest Hills Sub-division

Aug. 10 – Carnage Classic, 4-Mile Mud Run, General Sam’s Offroad Park

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