

RUNNING SHORTS

Where are the best places to run in Huntsville?

By Ken Johnson

In determining the best places to run, you have to consider a number of factors. These include the running surface, hills, scenery and most importantly, safety.

The ideal running surface is dirt. You can find that at Pritchett Field track on Avenue O or the trails at Huntsville State Park. Asphalt is a good alternative and it is much softer than concrete.

No matter where you run in Huntsville (except the track), you will run up and down hills. But, running hills is good for you.

What is the best scenery is up to each runner and is probably the least important factor.

Safety must always be considered when finding a place to run. State law requires you to run on the sidewalk, if there is one. Otherwise, you must run facing oncoming traffic. Beware of areas where dogs may be running loose and always be aware of your surroundings. If running on the roads, do not wear headphones.

While there is no ideal place to run in Huntsville, the Pritchett Field track or one of the other school tracks is a good place (4 loops equals 1 mile).

An alternative is to run on the concrete sidewalk along Veterans Memorial Parkway. If you start at the corner of Veterans and Col. Etheredge Blvd. and go south, it is 4.67 miles to the end of the sidewalk at the I-45 service road. The distance is marked in yellow paint every half mile. You might even see some deer along the way.

Huntsville State Park is a great place to run. You can run on the trails or on the paved park roads. Either way, it is scenic year around. During the week, there is very little vehicle traffic, so the roads are a good choice. There are about six miles of paved roads at the park and many more miles of trails.

If you want to stay in town and run the streets, run during the day and always be careful of traffic. The streets in the Forest Hills Sub-division are relatively flat. If you prefer hills, run the avenues. When school is not in session, the Sam Houston State University campus is a good alternative.

The important thing is to stay healthy and run. Wherever you run, be careful.

Recent race results:

Seabrook Half Marathon (13.1 miles), Seabrook, Mar. 15

Clair Domonoske, 63 3:08:31

Donna Desforgues, 56 3:34:28

Colorful Life 5K (3.1 miles), Jasper, Mar. 15

Steve Allen, 41 23:21

Eco Lonestar XTERRA Trail Run, New Waverly, Mar. 9 16K (9.9 miles)

Steve Allen, 41 1:24:17 (3rd in age group)

Leah Koester, 48 1:38:19 (1st in age group)

Ken Johnson, 72 2:30:37 (1st in age group)

5K

James Bruce, 49 47:56 (1st in age group)

Run the Woodlands 5K, The Woodlands, Mar. 8

Steve Bickford, 53 22:30

Donna Fabian, 39 25:28

Ken Johnson, 72 37:09

Marilynn Johnson, 68 60:36

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

Mar. 23 – Run the Trails, 3.5 miles, non-competitive, Huntsville State Park

Apr. 13 – Texas 10 Series, 10 miles and 5 miles. SHSU campus

Apr. 23 – Spring Fling, 5K and 1-Mile. Elkins Lake.

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.