

RUNNING SHORTS

Benefits of running outweigh hazards

By Matt Wagner

Not too long ago when I was the guest writer for this column, my writing focused on many of the hazards of running. These include cars with distracted drivers (big one), dogs (can be bad), dehydration (yes, this is Texas), snakes (Yikes!) and several other hazards. Therefore I have probably convinced many of you never to run because it is so dangerous. That was not my intention, therefore in order to even this out, this article will focus on the benefits of running.

Physically, running is one of the best activities for improving your cardiovascular conditioning. The heart is truthfully the most important muscle in the body, therefore, it is important we train it on a regular basis. The side benefit of cardiovascular conditioning is that when the heart is pumping and the muscles are working you are burning calories. Many successful weight reduction programs have a walking or running base to them. Therefore, if you want to look good on the beach and impress your cardiologist, running is definitely a good place to start!

Psychologically, running has been shown to reduce stress — the cathartic (“cleansing”) effect of getting out, exercising and getting away for a while cannot be quantified, but we know it helps the mind. The endorphins produced by a strenuous exercise session make you feel better as well. The feeling of accomplishment upon completing a workout goes a long way to improving self-esteem. To sum this up, even though many people think runners are out of their mind, we are actually the opposite!

Running clubs are a great way to meet people with a similar interest and make new friends. The Seven Hills Running Club here in Huntsville has been growing for many years. Organized (and informal) races, training runs, and group get-togethers are always a good time!

Yes, I have encountered cars, dogs, heat and snakes in my years of running. But the benefits far outweigh these issues. Lace 'em up and I will see you on the trails!

Recent race results

Free to Breathe 5K, Plano, May 15

Ken Johnson, 74 37:35

Pear Run, 5K, Pearland, May 7

Morgan Ashworth, 33 37:05

Hatchie50 Marathon (26.2 miles), Waxahachie, May 7

Joshua Yates, 28 5:26:32

Mt. Charleston Half Marathon, Las Vegas, May 7

Maria Wicker, 51 2:15:08

Wildflower Trail Half Marathon, Bastrop State Park, May 7

Monica Lopez, 33 2:32:54

Julie Simmons, 41 2:44:18

Cindy Pate, 55 4:25:19

10K

Jessica Twardeski, 35 2:52:39

Fredonia 10K, Nacogdoches, May 7

Ken Johnson, 74 1:16:11

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

May 21 – Five-0 and 1-Mile Color Run, Hospital area

May 30 – Memorial Day 5K & 1-Mile, Timberwilde Sub-division

June 18 – June Bug 5K & 1-Mile, Spring Lake Sub-division

June 19 – Gator Bait Trail Run, 15K & 5K, Huntsville State 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.