

RUNNING SHORTS

Let's be careful out there

Take precautions while running to ensure safety

By Matthew Wagner

One of the great joys of running is to be out on the open roads, moving along with the ability to put our cares and worries on hold, even for a short time. It is exhilarating to be pounding the pavement or the trails, as many of us use our daily runs as a catharsis, or “mind cleansing” experience.

However, it is important to keep in mind that there are many dangers lurking out there, some hidden but some in plain view. While we would just like to forget everything while we are running, certain precautions are necessary to help keep you safe while running or walking.

First and foremost – when there is no sidewalk available, always run facing traffic – while this seems almost backwards thinking, it is necessary for you to be able to see the traffic and you to see them. Stay off to the shoulder as much as possible. Quite often I view runners and walkers traveling with traffic. While you may defend your right to be on the road, a 150 pound individual versus a 3000 pound vehicle is somewhat of a mismatch.

Yes, I know being outside for long periods of time can get boring. Many of you “NEED” your phone and ear buds so you can listen to my favorite music and relieve the boredom.

While this may appear OK, remember if you are listening to music you are generally not able to hear other sounds around you: approaching vehicles, dogs, or other individuals with questionable motives. I may be in the minority here, but I strongly urge you NOT to bring your IPOD or anything else and to remain aware of your surroundings at all times. Enjoy the scenery and enjoy your day! Trust me: there are a great many individuals now unable to get outside that would gladly trade places with you!

With the weather warming up, two other threats are now returning: the sun and bugs. The sun has accumulative effects on the body, both in the form of dehydration and skin damage. Remember to keep your body from becoming dehydrated. A crucial key to this puzzle is to properly hydrate before your run and not just drink during your run. Also, utilize sunscreen liberally, as repeated exposure to the sun can have damaging effects on your skin. Also, now that it is spring time, those mosquitos and ticks (that we didn't miss at all during winter) are reappearing. While the initial bites or stings may not bother you too much, the long term effects of West Nile virus or Lyme disease can short-circuit a running career. Utilize a good bug spray with at least a 25% solution of DEET in order to potentially keep those bugs at bay. Spray all exposed skin, being careful not to get any in the eyes.

Let's be careful out there!

Recent race results:

Superhero Run, Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation, Livingston, Apr. 25

10K (6.2 miles)

Steve Allen, 42 48:43

Darren Grant, 50 50:10
Jose Moreno, 54 1:04:04
Ken Johnson, 73 1:18:38

5K

Donna Fabian, 40 25:00

1K

Jadyn Justice, 6 5:24

Wildflower 10K, Fredericksburg, Apr. 25

Steve Bickford, 54 48:26

Cathy Bickford, 53 1:19:24

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

May 25 – Memorial Day 5K, 1-Mile, Timberwilde Sub-division

June 20 – June Bug 5K, 1-Mile, Spring Lake Sub-division

June 21 – EXTERRA 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.