

Little Miss Splendid  
couldn't decide which  
shoes to run in



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## GETTING STARTED

Before you begin running, it's advisable to see your doctor for a physical, particularly if you're a current or former smoker, overweight or if there is a history of heart disease in your family.

People take up running for lots of different reasons - some to lose weight, others to relieve stress and others to raise money for CHILDREN with LEUKAEMIA. Whatever your reason, when starting out, it's important to set yourself goals - at the very least, this gives you something to aim for and will help motivation.

Once you've made that important decision to start running, there are some things you ought to consider before you go on that very first run!

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT GEAR

A good pair of running shoes is the most important purchase you should make as a runner. However, with the multitude of brands, designs and special features around, choosing the right of pair for you can prove to be a nightmare!

Although you may only be running a few miles to begin with, a good pair of running shoes is a must. A shoe costing around £40-£50 should offer the protection, durability and features you need as a beginner. When choosing a pair of running shoes, forget technical spec or flash design - fit and comfort are the two most important factors to consider! Training shoes are renowned for being smaller than everyday shoes so you may need to buy a half to a full size larger than your other shoes. In any case, it's worth having your feet measured (even if you think you know your shoe size), and take a pair of running socks with you as their thickness will affect the fit of the shoe.

Take your time when buying your shoes - try out lots of different brands, styles and models of shoe until you find the shoe that's right for you.

In terms of what to wear when running - it's a case of anything goes (well almost!). The important thing is that you feel comfortable. Most runners run in loose fitting shorts made from synthetic fabrics or cycling shorts and cotton T-shirts. For colder weather, nylon tights will enable you to run without restriction and socks made from synthetic fabrics provide warmth but draw moisture away from the skin.

### ACHES AND PAINS

Even if you're relatively fit, you will probably experience aching muscles when you begin to run!

People usually get sore muscles because:

- They're not used to exercising
- They've over exercised
- They're used to a different type of exercise



Soreness starts because of tiny tears in the muscle fibres. The body's defence mechanism kicks in, white cells come to the rescue and fluid moves to spaces it normally doesn't occupy, causing swelling. The swelling nudges the nerve endings, causing soreness, partially immobilising them. This swelling and soreness often peaks 48 hours after exercise, which is one reason why your muscles hurt more the second day after exercise!

Blisters are caused as a result of rubbing against the skin, causing fluid to form beneath the skin. The more friction continues, the more fluid forms causing pressure and pain. Eventually, the blister may burst exposing raw skin and more pain!

New runners usually get blisters because their feet are not 'toughened' or because their running shoes are new and, therefore, haven't been broken in.

Here are some tips for taking care of blisters:

- Ensure feet are dry so they don't move around in the shoe
- Wear insoles in shoes for a smoother fit and use acrylic or polyester socks rather than cotton or wool
- Take time and care when choosing shoes. Shoes, which are too tight, may cramp your feet and ones too loose may cause your feet to slide.

## **WARMING UP, STRETCHING AND COOLING DOWN**

### **Warming up**

Often overlooked by the beginner, warming up can reduce the chance that you will pick up an injury and it should be an integral part of your preparation whenever you go out for a run.

A typical example would be to walk for 60-90 seconds, building up the pace every 10 seconds or so, before breaking into a gentle jog for half a mile (or whenever your body is beginning to warm up) before stopping and going in to your stretching routine.

### **Stretching**

Your stretches should cover all the major muscle groups, particularly the legs and back. Do remember to hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds - without bouncing. There are a number of important stretches and you can find out more by visiting [www.runleukaemia.org](http://www.runleukaemia.org).

### **Cooling down**

Just as important is cooling down. Once your running distance is complete, you should not just come to a complete stop immediately as this encourages the muscles to contract too quickly and could cause an injury. They should be eased down and stretched out gently.

Correct form once the run is finished, is to drop your speed down to a jog for 30-60 seconds before slowing down to a brisk walk, reducing the speed every 10 seconds or so. You should then stretch all the major muscle groups before you get cold - but this time, they should be held for slightly longer (15-20 seconds), again without bouncing.

