



RUNNING TIPS

GUIDE



HEALTH & FITNESS

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ESSENTIAL RUNNING GEAR



Running in Winter is essentially no different from running in summer - a focused mind and goals will keep you going, but cold weather and dangerous conditions can mean you need a change to your routine.

One of the trickiest parts of winter running can be simply finding the motivation to start your run in the freezing cold. As humans we naturally want to avoid such things when we can - so when you have a nice warm house with the kettle on and you look out the window to see frosted ground and minus temperatures, it can take some self- persuasion to actually get outside.

So let's discuss the most obvious part of cold weather running. Temperatures can vary greatly in the UK, but over the last few years we've not really had a 'big freeze' as such, and on average the temperatures over the last couple of years has been around 10degrees.

WHAT TO WEAR FOR WINTER RUNNING

With these temperatures in mind, it's best to try and get some running clothes that will help keep you warm. Your body will generate plenty of heat whilst running, but when it's battling freezing temperatures it can do with a little help.

Having a layer system is a good idea, and athletes who train in all weather conditions say that dressing 'like an onion' is the best method. Start off with a long sleeve base layer that's designed with running in mind and thicker running tights. This will keep sweat away whilst keeping you warm, and then add on to this a running top and/or a jacket.

ESSENTIAL RUNNING GEAR

WHAT TO WEAR IN WET WEATHER

For rainy weather you'll want to invest in a jacket as a top layer that is waterproof. For your lower half it's a similar story - running tights or tracksuit bottoms will keep your legs warm and can be supplemented with shorts over the top.



STAYING VISIBLE

You may also wish to get yourself some reflective or high visibility clothing too. Winter has much less sunlight and you may find that going for a run at 4pm it will be pitch black by half past and you will need to ensure that other people - especially motorists - can see you. You can pick up high-vis vests to light up your torso or even just reflective bands you can wrap around yourself to let people know where you are. Head torches are a great way to stay visible to others and help you see in lower light too.

It's still a good idea to opt for brighter colours and reflective materials in the summer so you are visible too, especially to road traffic.

WHAT TO WEAR IN THE SUMMER

Conversely, in the summer, the extra heat will soon have you feeling hot and sweaty if you wear too many layers. On hot days you could simply undo your running jacket and wrap on your waist or keep it in a small drawstring gym bag on your back. It's probably best in the summer though, to skip over the leg tights and just stick to shorts and lighter layers such as moisture wicking vest tops or t-shirts. You might also want to wear a sweatband on your head to keep sweat and hair off of your face.

Speaking of your head, there was an old myth that "most of your body heat is lost through your head" which was debunked a few years ago when it was found that the head only accounts for about 10% of heat loss. You can wear a hat to keep your head warm, but again, you may wish to leave this part of your body unclothed to allow heat to escape.

ESSENTIAL RUNNING GEAR

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WHAT SHOES TO WEAR IN THE WINTER

Now one part that we've yet to touch on - because it is so important - is your feet. Having a good pair of running shoes and wicking socks will make your winter running experience much better. Having some wicking socks will keep your feet dry by drawing water away from your feet, but equally having shoes that allow your feet to breathe, and are a little bit waterproof will help too.



Something like the Cloudbunner Winter Edition (left) is an all in solution, being waterproof, wind-proof and having a specially made bottom surface that makes it easy to run across rough terrain. They are on the higher end of most people's budgets however, and you will probably find that any trail shoes will do just as good a job as they are designed for challenging terrain and are normally a lot cheaper.

So that's our quick guide to the gear you may need for running in winter - overall you just need to keep warm and stay safe!

CHOOSING RUNNING SHOES



If you plan to do a lot of running and training then picking the correct footwear is vitally important. You might not think it, but wearing the wrong type of trainers for your foot type can not only impact your performance but also have a detrimental effect on your health too – causing pain and damage to your toes, ankles and feet overall. Take a look below at our top running tips when it comes to picking the right shoes

HOW TO CHOOSE RUNNING SHOES

There have been a lot of medical studies in this over the years with many varying results. The bottom line seems to be that the right trainer can improve performance in general.

This is all because of something call gait – this is the way that your legs and feet behave when running. Specifically you'll want to look at your type of pronation which is the way your feet land and take off from the floor whilst in motion. There are three types of pronation and each has certain characteristics. The type of pronator you are is normally linked to the type of arch you have on your foot.

CHOOSING RUNNING SHOES

TYPES OF PRONATION

Neutral pronation – this is the most common and ideal type as during running you will land on your heel and naturally roll onto the ball of your feet to take off again. This rolling motion will be at an angle of around 15 degrees inwards. People who have a normal arch will generally have a neutral pronation.

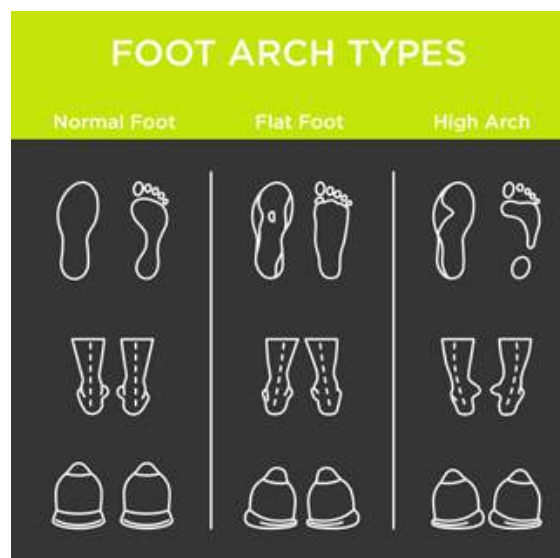
Over-pronation – this type of pronation occurs when you roll too much inwards from the heel to the ball of your feet, going beyond the 15 degrees and end up putting pressure on your big toe and taking off from this stance. People who have a low arch will generally tend to over-pronate.

Under-pronation (supination) – this type of pronation occurs when the foot rolls outwards from the heel to the ball of your feet and ends up putting the impact and take-of pressure on to your two smallest toes. People who have a very high arch are more prone to this type of pronation.

HOW TO FIND OUT YOUR ARCH TYPE

It's very easy to find out your arch type by simply doing the 'wet foot test'. To perform the test you'll need a basin of water and a square of cardboard or paper big enough to fit your foot on. To perform the test simply lay down the card on the floor and dip your foot in the water ensuring the entire bottom of your foot gets wet.

Now lift your foot out of the water and shake off any excess water and then place it lightly on to the card for a few seconds. Now remove your foot and look at the print you have made. The print should show you your heel, the ball of your foot and joining the two your arch. That is the important bit – look at your arch and compare it to the chart (right) to know what arch you have:



CHOOSING RUNNING SHOES

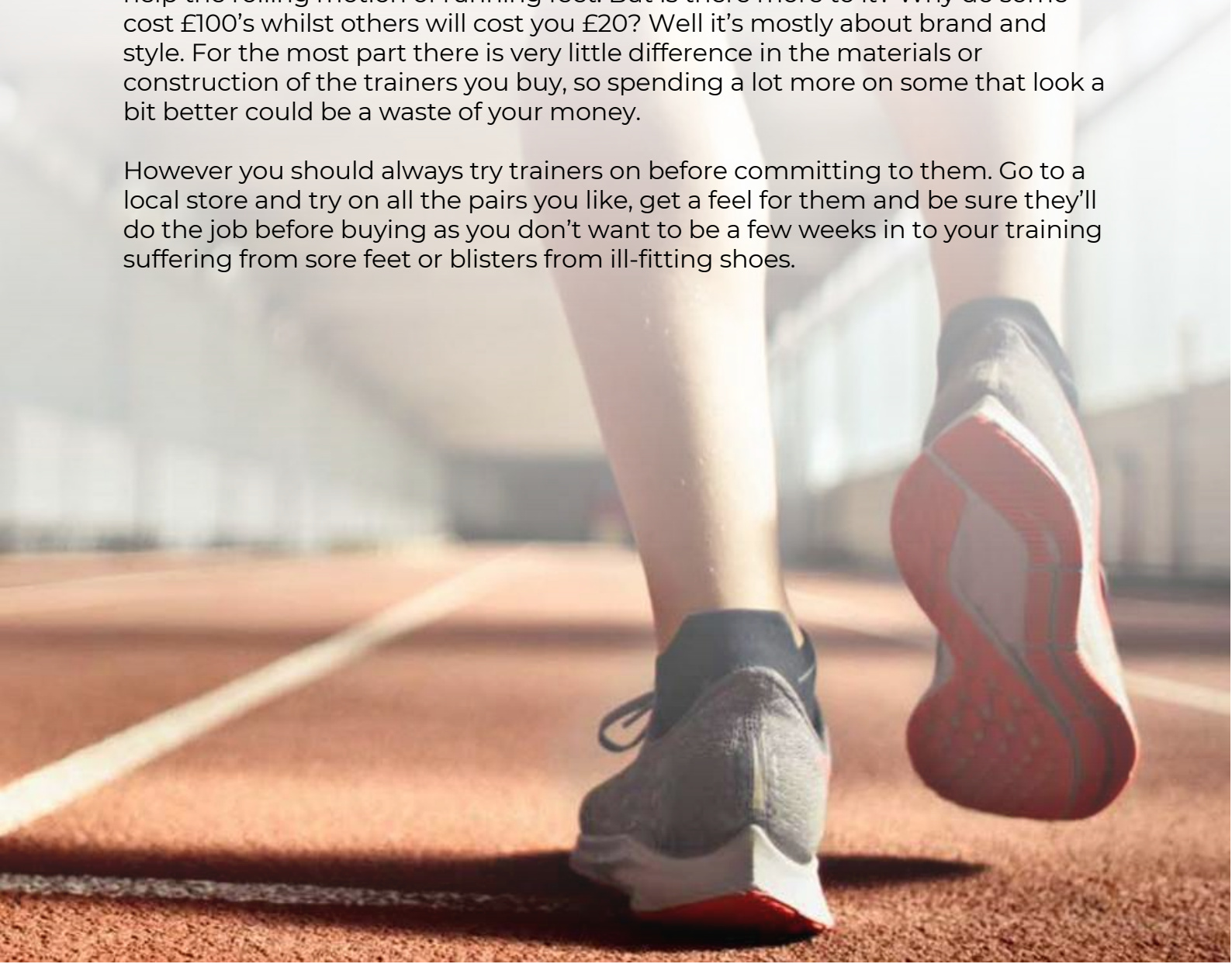


Once you know your arch you can then start to look towards getting trainers or shoes that are made for your type of pronation. A lot of specialist shops will sell trainers designed for certain types of pronation and you should hopefully find that getting the right trainer helps with your overall performance and reduces the chance of pain whilst running

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Most trainers are very similar – they're lightweight whilst at the same time provide cushioning for your feet and generally will curve upwards at the toes to help the rolling motion of running feet. But is there more to it? Why do some cost £100's whilst others will cost you £20? Well it's mostly about brand and style. For the most part there is very little difference in the materials or construction of the trainers you buy, so spending a lot more on some that look a bit better could be a waste of your money.

However you should always try trainers on before committing to them. Go to a local store and try on all the pairs you like, get a feel for them and be sure they'll do the job before buying as you don't want to be a few weeks in to your training suffering from sore feet or blisters from ill-fitting shoes.



RECOVERING FROM A RUN



If you're new to running and are starting to experience some of the common aches and pains associated with it, you may want to take a look at your running recovery. Any kind of run can take a toll on the body, whether it's a sprint or a marathon, so knowing the best running tips to help recover can be vital for reducing injury and improving performance. Here are our top tips for recovering from a run.

START RECOVERING BEFORE YOU BEGIN

That's right, running recovery actually starts before you even head out! It might sound a bit backwards, but a large part of your race recovery will come from what you do before starting your run. First off you want to make sure you're properly hydrated – running out of steam (well, water) during a race and getting dehydrated can drastically reduce your performance and can make you feel downright awful. For longer runs you can also use running recovery drinks which contain minerals and electrolytes to replace those lost through sweat during your run.

You'll also want to make sure you're not running on full stomach either, as this can likewise impact your performance and make you feel sluggish. Normally you'll want to eat up to a few hours before as this gives your body time to digest and extract fuel from the food. Making sure you eat the right food before running is important too.

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STRETCH AND WARM-UP

Stretching before your run only takes a few minutes, but could prevent weeks of time out due to injuries! When you start your run, you'll want to make sure you stretch out all your muscles and get your body warmed up and ready to go. Start off with some simple leg stretches, and then try and incorporate some core, arm and upper body stretches. Once you've given your whole body a stretch, set off at slow pace to ease into your run.



START RUNNING

After a few minutes at a comfortable, slower pace, you can start to build up speed and momentum as your body will be ready to go. If you try to set off too fast your body won't be prepared, and you will find that you may struggle to run to the best of your ability and your recovery will suffer for it. You may also want to invest in some compressive clothes – these are tight to the skin which will encourage blood flow around the parts of the body they are worn. Your body needs this fresh blood to aid in the recovery process so it's worth investing in some compression wear at least for your legs if not the rest of your body too.



BEGIN TO RECOVER

As your run is coming to an end you should slow down to a cool-down pace which allows your body to gently finish rather than suddenly jolting it from run to stop. When stopped, take a few minutes just to stretch out once more and release any tight joints. The stretches on the right are good examples. Once you've finished and cooled your body down from your run, you'll then want to get nice and warm! Like compressive clothes a hot bath, steam room or even just a hot shower will encourage more blood flow to the surface to help get all of your joints and muscles repaired.



RECOVERING FROM A RUN

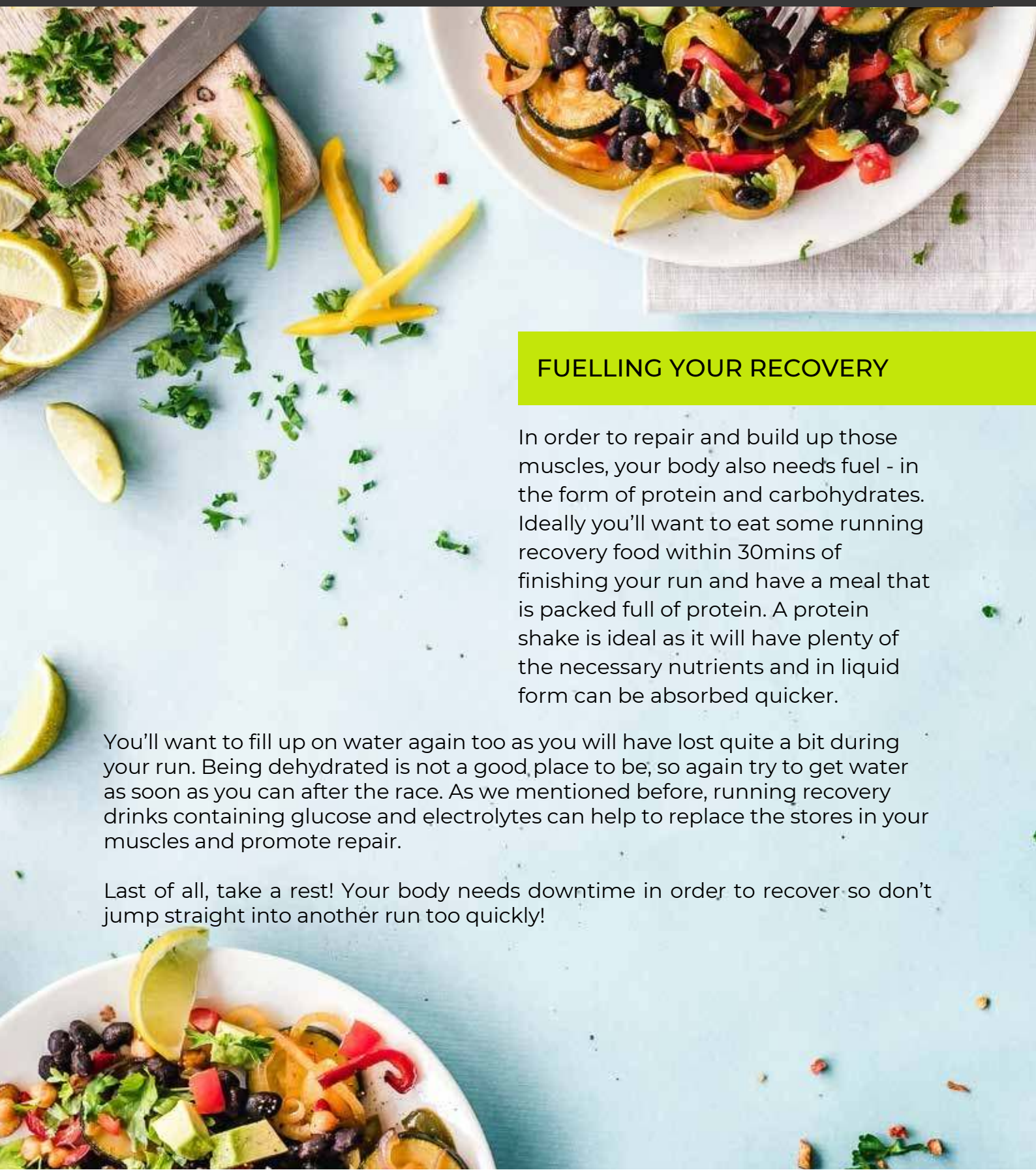
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FUELLING YOUR RECOVERY

In order to repair and build up those muscles, your body also needs fuel - in the form of protein and carbohydrates. Ideally you'll want to eat some running recovery food within 30mins of finishing your run and have a meal that is packed full of protein. A protein shake is ideal as it will have plenty of the necessary nutrients and in liquid form can be absorbed quicker.

You'll want to fill up on water again too as you will have lost quite a bit during your run. Being dehydrated is not a good place to be, so again try to get water as soon as you can after the race. As we mentioned before, running recovery drinks containing glucose and electrolytes can help to replace the stores in your muscles and promote repair.

Last of all, take a rest! Your body needs downtime in order to recover so don't jump straight into another run too quickly!



CAN MUSIC MAKE YOU FASTER?



Does music make you a better runner? Many would argue it can, while just as many argue you should go without. Let's take a look a bit more in depth and find out what impacts it really has.

For many people who are new to the sport or even veterans, music can make running enjoyable and gives you the motivation to continue and fight the fatigue. On the opposite side of that a lot of runners prefer a pure experience, saying that without music they can get a better sense of their environment and their own bodies.

STUDIES AND INFORMATION

So what's the answer? Well it seems there isn't really a yes or no as to whether music improves or impacts performance as there is just so much information for both sides. For example a study from 2004 in *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, found whilst music seemed not to have any measurable effect on the body or performance, the runners said that it help them feel motivated and felt it was beneficial.

A poll from *Runner's World* of over 11,000 of their readers found that a staggering 74% said they think runners should listen to music. Are they correct? Well it seems ultimately down to personal choice. The science backs up the argument for music - it has no harm on runners times, and can provide many psychological benefits that keep you positive that will be reflected in how your run goes.

CAN MUSIC MAKE YOU FASTER?



Upbeat music that has a consistent tempo and rhythm to keep you moving can be a great help - not necessarily to make you faster - but just to keep you going. Clearly the business believes in this too due to the enormous amount of headphones, music players and phone armbands designed simply to allow you to keep your music with you when running or working out. Obviously they are out to make money, but if people weren't buying them they wouldn't keep making them.

One argument often cited by people who do not listen to music is that they are able to listen to their bodies. Without music blasting in their ears, they can take a check of their breathing pattern, hear how their steps sound and even hear (or feel) their heartbeat. If you choose to run in the countryside too then you can also hear the nature around you - birdsong or flowing rivers.

SAFETY

The only real downside to listening to music whilst running is typically said to be a matter of safety. First and foremost listening to excessively loud music can obviously have a very bad effect on your hearing. The simple answer to this is just moderating your volume levels - however a lot use the loudness to drown out environmental noise.



This can also be bad too as you may be less aware of what's going on around you - other runners, cars, trains and commuters can all pose a danger by simply stepping in front of you.

CONCLUSION

So what can we conclude? Well all the evidence suggests that music can in fact help you with running by providing you with a psychological boost to help you keep on going. However it does not appear to improve actual performance, so choosing to go without music shouldn't impact your times, but you may need to find motivation elsewhere. It's important to note that some races don't actually allow the use of headphones, so be sure to check with the event organiser beforehand.