



Health, fitness, lifestyle

TAYLAKFITNESS RUNNING GUIDE

Strong, confident, capable

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE TAYLAKFITNESS RUNNING GUIDE!

This guide is here to show you how to ease into running with structure, confidence, and support. I want to help you discover the version of running that feels good for you - whether that's slow jogs, interval runs, or chasing your next 5K.

Running can seem intimidating - especially if you think it means getting up and sprinting until you're gasping for air. It's no wonder so many people try it once, burn out in 30 seconds, and think it's just not for them. But here's the truth: running isn't about going all out — it's about pacing yourself, building gradually, and learning to actually enjoy the journey ♥

Yes, running does take effort. But it's also about the little things that make a big difference - the right shoes, structured build-up, learning to breathe, taking walk breaks without guilt, and listening to your body.

You don't have to be "a runner" to start running. You just need to start.

I'm so excited and glad you're here 😊

WHY RUNNING FEELS SO HARD AT FIRST



Let's be honest—running is hard when you're starting out. And that's totally normal. A lot of people think they just need to lace up and go all out, but that's often why they burn out quickly and feel like running "isn't for them."

The truth is ✨ you're not bad at running ✨ - you're probably just running too fast for your current fitness level. If you're breathless in 30 seconds, it doesn't mean you're unfit, it just means your pace doesn't match your current endurance (*yet!*).

You don't need to sprint, and you don't need to run non-stop. In fact, run-walk intervals are a great place to start and are how most people build up their stamina. Walking is part of running—it's smart, not weak!

Every single runner started somewhere, including me. And trust me, with structure, the right shoes, a bit of guidance, and a mindset shift... you might end up loving it (I'm certain you will)

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS



COMMON RUNNING MYTHS DEBUNKED

There's a lot of noise out there about running — here's what you **don't** need to believe:

✗ "I'm not a runner."

✓ Everyone starts somewhere. You become a runner by running — not by speed, distance, or body type.

✗ "Running is bad for your knees."

✓ Not necessarily! When done with proper form, good footwear, and adequate recovery, running can actually strengthen your joints. Most knee pain comes from overuse or imbalance — not the act of running itself.

✗ "You have to run fast to see progress."

✓ Nope. Slow, steady, consistent runs build endurance and are amazing for cardiovascular health and fat loss – especially in that magic Zone 2 (see page 10 for more info on zones)

✗ "If I walk, it doesn't count."

✓ Walking breaks are not a sign of failure — they're smart. They help you build up your stamina and stay consistent.

✗ "I need to lose weight before I start running."

✓ You can start exactly where you are. Running is for all bodies. There's no "perfect" starting point except **now**.

HOW TO START (AND ENJOY) RUNNING



START SLOW AND BUILD UP GRADUALLY:

Don't push yourself to run a marathon on day one! Begin with short intervals of running and walking. For example, try 1 minute of running followed by 2 minutes of walking. As you get stronger, you can increase the time spent running and decrease walking.

FOCUS ON TIME, NOT DISTANCE:

Instead of worrying about how far you've gone, focus on how long you've been running. It's all about building endurance — not about pushing your limits every time.

SET REALISTIC GOALS:

Start with small goals 🎯. "I will run for 5 minutes straight" or "I will run 3 times this week." Celebrate those wins and keep moving forward 🏆.

INVEST IN COMFORTABLE GEAR:

The right shoes can make all the difference! A good pair of running shoes that match your gait will keep you comfy and help prevent injury.

FIND YOUR ESCAPE:

Running can be your time to disconnect from life. Pop on a feel-good playlist or a podcast you love - it turns your run into something to look forward to. Let it be your time to zone out and clear your mind 🧠.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY:

It's okay to slow down if you feel pain or fatigue. Rest and recover as needed. It's about being kind to your body and preventing injury in the long run. 🧘

STAY CONSISTENT, NOT PERFECT:

It's about showing up. Some days will be harder than others, and that's okay! The more you stick to your routine, the easier it gets 😊.

🌸 Girly Tip:

Set a running date with yourself, just like you would with a friend. Put it in your calendar, dress cute, and show up for you

BUILDING A RUNNING ROUTINE THAT WORKS FOR YOU



PICK YOUR DAYS:

Aim for 2 - 3 runs per week when starting out. This gives your body time to recover while still building the habit. Choose days that feel realistic for your schedule 🧳

MIX IT UP:

Not every run needs to be intense. Include a mix of short runs, slower-paced runs, and maybe one slightly longer run if you're building endurance. Keep it flexible 🌟

TRACK PROGRESS (GENTLY):

You can jot down how you felt after each run or keep a simple note of your time/distance. But don't obsess — tracking should feel supportive, not stressful.

Apps like “strava” are super helpful for tracking and logging your runs as well as sharing progress with friends 📱

PAIR WITH STRENGTH OR WALKING:

Running doesn't have to be the only thing. Combining it with strength training or walking can support your goals and help with injury prevention 🤝

🌸 Girly Tip:

Build your routine around things that bring joy — your favorite podcast, cute workout outfits, a new running route, or even a post-run iced coffee date with yourself



**BEGGINER
FRIENDLY
WEEKLY
PLAN
EXAMPLE**

MONDAY Lower Body Strength 🏋️‍♀️	TUESDAY Upper body + walk 👟	WEDNESDAY Run (Walk-Run Intervals) 🏃‍♀️
THURSDAY Active Recovery or Core + Mobility 🧘‍♀️	FRIDAY Run (Steady, Comfortable Pace) 👟	SATURDAY Full Body Strength (Bodyweight or Dumbbells) 🏋️‍♀️
		SUNDAY Optional Run or Rest Day 🍷

PACING, BREATHING & WALKING BREAKS



One of the most common reasons people don't enjoy running is because they start too fast, get out of breath, and think, "I'm just not a runner." But running isn't meant to feel like a sprint - it's about finding your rhythm, enjoying the movement, and taking it at your own pace ❤️

PACING TIPS:

- 🐢 Start slower than you think - this is key for building endurance.
- You should be able to hold a conversation while running. If you can't, slow it down.
- Don't chase speed or calories - focus on how you feel, not how fast you go.
- 🕒 Wearing a fitness watch can help you keep track of your pace and remind you not to go out too hard.

BREATHING TIPS:

- Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth (but don't stress it too much!).
- Sync your breath with your steps - for example, breathe in for 3 steps, out for 2.
- If you feel breathless, it's totally fine to take a walk break - you're still making progress! ❤️

WALKING BREAKS ARE YOUR BESTIE:

- Taking breaks doesn't mean you're failing - it means you're training smart.
- Run-walk intervals help build confidence and stamina, especially for beginners 🌱
- You'll naturally start walking less over time without even noticing.

RUNNING GEAR: SHOES, CLOTHING, EXTRAS



You don't need to spend a fortune to start running – but having the right gear can make a huge difference in how you feel and how much you enjoy it ❤️

👟 SHOES MATTER MOST:

- Investing in a good pair of running shoes is key to avoiding injury and keeping your joints happy.
- Visit a sports store for a gait analysis or try different brands until you find your perfect match.
- The wrong shoes = sore knees, shin splints, or discomfort... and we don't want that!

CLOTHING THAT SUPPORTS YOU:

- Choose moisture-wicking fabrics to stay dry and comfy.
- A supportive sports bra is a must for comfort and confidence 🍋
- Cute activewear can genuinely make you feel more motivated – **if you look good, you feel good** 📺

🎧 LITTLE EXTRAS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE:

- A good playlist or podcast = game changer for your mindset 🎵
- Running belt or armband to carry keys, phone, or snacks.
- Sunglasses, cap, or headband to stay sun-safe and focused 🧢
- Optional: a smartwatch or fitness tracker to monitor pace, distance, and heart rate 📱 (highly recommend)

WARM UP AND COOL DOWN FOR RUNNERS



Warming up and cooling down aren't just nice extras—they're essential for every run.

A proper warm-up preps your muscles, joints, and heart for the work ahead, increases circulation, and improves your range of motion. This helps reduce the risk of injury and makes your run feel smoother. Skipping it can leave your body stiff and unprepared, making you more prone to strains and soreness.

Cooling down helps gradually lower your heart rate, prevent dizziness, and flush out lactic acid, which can ease muscle tightness and speed up recovery 🧘♀️

🌀 **WARM-UP (5-10 MINUTES)**

Start with a brisk walk or light jog (2–3 minutes), then move into:

- Leg swings – 10 reps per leg
- Hip circles – 10 each direction
- High knees – 30 seconds
- Walking lunges – 6 per side
- Arm circles – 10 forward, 10 backward

These dynamic movements gently increase your range of motion and wake your body up 🏃

↓ **COOL-DOWN (5-10 MINUTES)**

Slow down to a walk for 2–3 minutes, then finish with static stretches like:

- Standing quad stretch – 30 seconds per leg
- Seated hamstring stretch – 30 seconds per leg
- Figure-four glute stretch – 30 seconds per side
- Standing calf stretch – 30 seconds per leg
- Hip flexor stretch – 30 seconds per side

Breathe deeply, move gently, and let your body wind down 🧘♀️

HOW TO PROGRESS WITHOUT BURNOUT



One of the biggest mistakes new runners make is trying to do too much, too soon. Progress doesn't mean pushing yourself to exhaustion – it means building consistency, avoiding injury, and still enjoying the process 💕

HERE'S HOW TO KEEP IMPROVING WITHOUT BURNING OUT:

- **Follow the 10% Rule:** Only increase your weekly running distance or time by about 10% each week.
- **Alternate hard and easy days:** Avoid back-to-back tough runs. Your body needs time to adapt.
- **Don't skip rest days:** Recovery is just as important as training. Progress happens when you rest 💕
- **Mix it up:** Combine easy runs, interval runs, strength training, and walks for variety and balance.
- **Listen to your body:** Sore? Tired? Irritable? These are signs your body needs rest, not a push.
- **Sleep & fuel properly:** Your recovery depends on more than just time off your feet. Sleep and nutrition matter 🍷🍓

HEART RATE ZONES EXPLAINED)



You've probably heard people say "no pain, no gain" when it comes to cardio... but that's not always true! One of the best ways to improve your fitness without burning yourself out is Zone 2 training.

💡 WHAT IS ZONE 2 CARDIO?

- Moderate intensity where you're working, but still able to chat comfortably
- Think: brisk walk, slow jog, or gentle run
- Heart rate-wise, it's roughly 60–70% of your maximum heart rate (but don't stress about numbers... if you can hold a conversation, you're likely in it!)
- Builds your aerobic base and keeps your body sustainable for longer-term results

❤️ WHY IT'S GREAT:

- Improves endurance and stamina
- Supports recovery so you can train more consistently
- Helps regulate stress and hormones (goodbye cortisol spikes!)
- Supports better sleep and energy

✦ TIPS:

- Power walking counts—don't underestimate it!
- You don't need to finish drenched in sweat for it to be effective
- Use it as your me-time: pop on a podcast or music and just enjoy it! 🧘♀️

❤️ HEART RATE ZONES EXPLAINED

ZONE	% MAX HR (ROUGHLY)	INTENSITY	FEELS LIKE	WHAT IT'S GOOD FOR
ZONE 1	50-60%	VERY LIGHT	EASY STROLL YOU CAN TALK WITH ZERO EFFORT	WARM UPS, RECOVERY, STAYING ACTIVE ON REST DAYS
ZONE 2	60-70%	LIGHT	BRISK WALK OR EASY JOG YOU CAN CHAT BUT FEEL SLIGHTLY WARM	BUILDING ENDURANCE, FAT BURNING, STRESS REDUCTION
ZONE 3	70-80%	MODERATE	BREATHING HEAVIER, TALKING LOUDER	IMPROVING CARDIO FITNESS, AEROBIC PERFORMANCE
ZONE 4	80-90%	HARD	DIFFICULT TO SPEAK, LEGS ARE WORKING	SPEED, STAMINA, AND PERFORMANCE
ZONE 5	90-100%	MAXIMUM EFFORT	ALL OUT SPRINT, SHORT BURSTS OF ENERGY	POWER AND PEAK PERFORMANCE

COMBINING RUNNING WITH STRENGTH TRAINING



If you love both running and lifting, you're not alone – and yes, you absolutely can do both!



The key is balancing the two in a way that supports your body and goals.

TIPS FOR COMBINING THE TWO:

- Alternate running and strength days to avoid overtraining.
- Focus strength sessions on different muscle groups than those taxed by your runs (e.g., avoid heavy leg training before sprint days).
- Keep high-intensity strength work and intense cardio on separate days if possible.
- Listen to your body. If you're sore or drained, it's okay to swap days or take an extra rest.

EXAMPLE WEEKLY STRUCTURE:

- Monday: Strength (Upper Body)
- Tuesday: Short Run (Zone 2)
- Wednesday: Strength (Lower Body)
- Thursday: Rest or Light Walk
- Friday: Strength (Full Body or Glutes/Core)
- Saturday: Longer Run
- Sunday: Rest

TRACKING YOUR RUNS WITHOUT OBSESSING



Tracking can be a great tool for progress - but it's not the only measure of success. You don't need to analyse every step to be a "real runner."

📊 WHAT YOU CAN TRACK (IF IT HELPS YOU):

- Distance & duration
- Average pace
- Heart rate or zone
- How you felt after (energy, mood, motivation)

❤️ THE DON'T OBSESS PART:

- Some days will feel harder even if your stats look the same — that's normal!
- Your watch doesn't know how well you slept, how stressed you are, or where you're at in your cycle.
- Focus on trends over time, not one-off results.
- Celebrate the fact you showed up, not just the numbers ❤️

🔄 YOUR CYCLE PLAYS A ROLE TOO:

- Your energy, motivation, and recovery can shift throughout your menstrual cycle.
- You might feel strong and energetic during the follicular phase (after your period), and a bit slower or less motivated in the luteal phase (before your next one).
- This is normal, and nothing is "wrong" if you're not matching your usual pace - give yourself kindness and flexibility 🌸

RUNNING & YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE



Your cycle isn't something to "push through" – it's a powerful rhythm you can work with, not against. Understanding how each phase affects your energy and performance helps you run smarter, not harder 🌟

🌱 FOLLICULAR PHASE (DAY 1-14, STARTS WITH YOUR PERIOD):

- Energy rises after your period ends
- Great time to build mileage, try new routes, or go for a PB
- You might feel stronger and more motivated 🥰

🌸 OVULATION (AROUND DAY 14):

- Peak energy + strength
- Perfect for speed workouts or confident runs
- Be mindful of slight injury risk – warm up well and don't skip recovery

🌙 LUTEAL PHASE (DAY 15-28):

- You might feel bloated, sluggish, or just not in the mood
- It's okay to slow down, shorten runs, or take walking breaks
- Focus on consistency over intensity – showing up is enough ❤️

👩🏻 MENSTRUAL PHASE (DAY 1-5):

- You can still run, but listen to your body
- Light movement like walks or slow jogs might feel good
- Or... skip the run and rest! No guilt needed.

🌸 GIRLY TIP:

You're not lazy – you're cyclical. Adjust your training with compassion, not shame. Run like a woman: powerful, adaptable, and in tune with her body 🌱



MENTAL HEALTH AND RUNNERS HIGH

RUNNING ISN'T JUST FOR YOUR BODY – IT'S A TOTAL MIND REFRESH 🧠🌟

- That feeling after a run? That's your runner's high — a rush of feel-good endorphins that boost your mood and melt away stress 🧡
- It can help ease symptoms of anxiety, low mood, overwhelm, and emotional fatigue — even just 10 minutes of movement can help 🌟
- Regular running builds mental resilience: every time you keep going when it's tough, you prove to yourself how capable you are

🌟 TIP:

Use your runs as a mental reset — pop in your headphones, hit play on a mood-boosting playlist or podcast, and take that time for you. Some of the best thinking, crying, or confidence-building happens mid-run 🧡

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT TYPES OF RUNS



Not every run needs to feel hard to be effective. In fact, a balanced running routine includes a mix of run types, each designed to target different aspects of your fitness. Whether you're running for fun, fat loss, or performance, knowing why you're doing a certain run helps you stay motivated, injury-free, and progressing.

◆ EASY RUNS

What it is: A relaxed, conversational pace run (Zone 2 heart rate).

Why it matters: Builds your aerobic base, supports recovery, and allows you to run more frequently without burning out.

How it feels: You can talk comfortably; it should feel almost too easy.

When to do it: Most of your runs each week (especially after strength days or before intervals).

◆ LONG RUNS

What it is: A longer-duration run, typically 45–75+ minutes at an easy pace.

Why it matters: Boosts endurance, mental toughness, and teaches your body to burn fuel efficiently over time.

How it feels: Slow and steady — pace doesn't matter, just time on feet.

When to do it: Once a week (e.g. Saturday morning).

◆ INTERVAL RUNS

What it is: Short bursts of fast running followed by rest or light jog/walk.

Example: 1 minute fast / 1 minute walk x 8–10

Why it matters: Improves speed, stamina, and your body's ability to recover under fatigue.

How it feels: Challenging, but doable — effort should be around 8–9/10 during the 'on' portions.

When to do it: 1x per week (mid-week works great).

◆ TEMPO RUNS

What it is: Running at a comfortably hard pace for a sustained time (e.g. 15–25 minutes).

Why it matters: Builds lactate threshold — meaning you can run faster for longer without fatiguing.

How it feels: You can speak in short phrases but not full sentences; steady discomfort, not sprinting.

When to do it: 1x per week, alternating with intervals.

◆ RECOVERY RUNS

What it is: Super slow and short run (15–25 minutes) to loosen up after a harder session.

Why it matters: Promotes blood flow and recovery without adding stress.

How it feels: Even slower than an easy run — no pressure.

When to do it: A day or two after a tough workout or long run, only if you feel up for it.

★ QUICK TIP FROM TAYLAKFITNESS:

You don't need to do every type of run every week. Start with a mix of easy + long + one quality run (tempo or interval) and build from there. Your body and your schedule will thank you!

FINAL THOUGHTS



Whether you're training toward a marathon or simply a 5K, remember that everyone's goals are completely unique – and none are better than the other. **It's about what feels right and fulfilling for you.** ✨

Try to compare yourself only to **your own** progress, not anyone else's. Growth isn't always linear, and that's okay. You're building confidence, discipline, and strength with every step. ❤️

There will be runs that feel hard, and days when motivation is low – that's completely normal. What matters most is that you keep finding your way back, in a way that feels good for your body, your goals, and your lifestyle 🌸
Your journey is your own, and it's meant to be enjoyed.

📧 And remember:

I'm always just a message away if you ever want help, support, or a little pep talk 🗣️

You're doing amazing, friends.

– **TaylaKfitness** 🧘‍♀️💪❤️