



NOVA RUNNER

How to Start Running (Again)

It's like the smoker who says, "I finally quit smoking." And the friend replies, "Again?"

Many of us have started running many times. Some of us ran in high school or college and then stopped because life got too busy and we didn't have a structured forum to keep us running.

Others, like myself, didn't start running until adulthood. Of course, I've had my interruptions too—like the 18 months I stopped running after a big move because I was too lazy to find a new running club and unmotivated to get outside and exercise.

Either way, whether you are starting to run again or for the first time, there are some guidelines that can help you ease into it.

First, The Good News

When you first start running, you will notice the most rapid improvement. It is easier to go from being out of shape to being in shape, than it is to go from being in shape to realizing your maximum fitness potential. So that provides you with rapid positive feedback when you are just starting out.

For example, after only a month of exercising two or three days a week, you will notice significant changes. Most notably, running at the same speed will feel easier.

Here's the Catch

Most people start out trying to do too much, too soon. Myself included. Many people think that in order to be able to run longer or faster, it is important to workout as hard as you can. This is simply not true. In fact, pushing your limits on every walk or run can actually work against you.

Some More Good News

When you are just starting out, you will get the greatest benefits by taking it easy and not pushing yourself too hard. The reason behind this has to do with the physiological changes that occur in your body depending on your workout-intensity level. A moderate ("easy") intensity workout provides

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Coach's Corner

Runners, I'd like to briefly cover two items that I'll follow-up on either via email or on the NOVA Web site. Here goes

First, although it is hard to believe, many key marathon races are less than 15 and 20 weeks away!!

This is the time to take stock of your marathon objectives and set up a training program. Many programs follow a basic four-phase rotation schedule of base/strength building (about 8 weeks), tempo runs (about 4 weeks), sharpening (about 4 weeks) and then—ta-dah—racing!

For now, I'll focus on two important items. First, determine which marathon you plan to make your "A" race and start your base building approximately 18 weeks before that race. For seasoned runners (those with 10K experience and better), I suggest basing your long runs on time rather than distance for the next several weeks. Start with runs lasting 75 minutes and eventually build to runs lasting 2.5 hours — all of these should be at an aerobic pace (i.e., very easy pace).

To make these long runs mentally and physically easier, I suggest you take a one-minute "walking" break at each mile (yes, this counts as part of your mile).

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you with the following benefits, many of which have to do with getting oxygen to the muscles:

1) Increased stroke volume: an increase in the amount of blood that your heart can pump with each beat. This makes your oxygen transport system more efficient. You can assess your stroke volume by measuring your resting heart rate.

A lower resting heart rate means a higher stroke volume. This makes sense, because if your heart can pump more blood with each beat, it doesn't need to beat as often.

2) Micro cellular changes in your muscle cells that improve aerobic metabolism—improves your ability to use oxygen.

3) More capillaries (tiny blood vessels) surround your muscles to make it easier for them to get oxygen and get rid of waste.

4) Improved ability to store glycogen: your muscles get better at storing energy, which makes it easier to run longer without your legs getting tired.

5) A higher proportion of fat is burned at low intensity exercise than at high intensity exercise. This is because when you are working hard, it is easier for your body to get energy from the sugar stored in

your muscles than from your fat. But when your intensity level is more moderate, your body has more time to extract energy from fat, which takes longer.

All of these benefits come from **EASY** workouts. So the moral of this story is, when you're starting up again, it is more important to workout for a long time than to workout at a high intensity level.

—By Pietro Michelucci

Some of the information for this article was obtained from Daniels, J., Ph.D. (1998), Daniels' Running Formula.

Meet the Members ... Ann Andrews

I think only those people who were actually born in the Midwest, love it. I'm one of them. I grew up in Iowa—although not in a cornfield— even though they are everywhere.

After graduating from Iowa State with a B.S. in nutrition, I joined the Army to be all I could be. It has been the most amazing 10 1/2 years of my life—so far.

I received my master's degree in information systems while stationed in Hawaii. Next, the Army sent me to get my PhD in nutrition and exercise. With this degree, I get to work with athletes on improving their eating habits. It's exciting!

In between all of my schooling, I learned to love long distance running. While in junior high and

high school, I participated on the track team as a hurdler and a 400m slug. I was TERRIBLE!

When I played soccer, I learned a whole lot about endurance. That is the time I started to realize that maybe I was more suited for endurance activities than short distance track events.

My favorite running distances now are the 10-miler and the half-marathon. My favorite races, though, have been a triathlon, which I did last spring and a Hi-Tec adventure race that I just completed. I'll try any sport at least once—the dirtier and bloodier—the better.

My goals for the next year are to continue adventure racing, do a couple 10-milers and half-marathons and not get injured



LEFT TO RIGHT IN THE ORANGE T-SHIRTS: ANN ANDREWS, ALEX NOEL AND ERICA MEEKS, AKA "THE PUMPKIN PATCH."

President's Corner *by Doug Kelly*



Members, I just want to say that I've enjoyed being your president for the first half of the year. After spending several months indoctrinating myself to the position and its responsibilities, I look forward to a great second half. Now that's said, I want to tell new members all the opportunities available to them through NOVA.

Tuesday Track

This is one of my personal favorite weekly activities of the club, because of the large group of people that show up. It's my goal to provide each of you with challenging workouts, and at the same time, recognize the diverse competitive and fitness objectives of track participants.

Start Time and Location:
T.C. Williams' Track at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday Night Runs

Many thanks to "NOVA mite" **Pietro Michelucci** for heading up 40-minute social runs on the Mt. Vernon trail. This, I believe fills a void for a social run in the Alex-

andria area. Now, if only the weather would cooperate!

Start Time and Location:
Warkwick House I, 1221 South Eads Street, at 6:15 p.m.

Thursday Night at Bluemont Park

Club officers' recognized that we needed to stoke the ol' coals here to get more runners out on Thursday. To that end, we asked our "At-Large" board member, **Greg Langer**, to add a social and/or competitive bent to the run every month. We had our first event in late June, and offered gift certificates to Pacers. It was a success!

Start Time and Location:
Parking lot off Wilson Blvd. at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday Long Runs

Yes, there are numerous "Long run" options with other clubs/groups during the weekend, but then you'll miss out on the Mt. Vernon nature trail and the NOVA "news" roundtable discussion that ensues at Panara's afterwards—replete with coffee, bagels, sandwiches, and tales of running woe! Can't beat it!

Start Time and Location:
DesignCraft (Fedi's shop), 801 N. Royal Street in Old Town, Alexandria, at 8 a.m.

Cookie Runs

One of the small gems of the club where you can run a short 4 to 6 miles on trails around the area and then socialize afterwards with tasty cookies and other foods brought to the venue by all the runners.

A great departure from running on the hard roads and the same ol' same ol' training routes. These are usually held every month and many thanks to **Maria Bertacchi** for organizing these runs.

Start Time and Location: Usually a local park on weekday evenings or on weekends. Members of the listserv receive notices via email a week prior to a run.

Club Socials

Admittedly, we are little behind here, but the endless rain and other obligations of the board members through spring, made it difficult.

Visit the club's Web site at www.novarun.com and click on the email addresses of those cited above for further information.

NOVA Officers

- Doug Kelly, President
- Steve Teslik, Vice President
- Jay Duffy, Treasurer
- Alex Noel, Membership
- Greg Langer, At-Large

Nuts vs. Bars By Pietro Michelucci, PhD

Should I eat nuts or should I eat nutrition bars for energy during the day and after a workout? That is the question.

There are bars and nuts to suit a variety of nutritional preferences, so it really just depends on what you like. In fact, there is so much variety that in the absence of your favorite nut, you can find a suitable sports bar replacement and vice-versa. This article will give you the information necessary to make appropriate bar/nut substitutions.

It has been fairly well established that consuming a combination of protein and carbohydrates after a workout is optimal for rebuilding damaged cells. Nutritional bar manufacturers each have their own idea of the perfect proportions of carbohydrates and protein. And, of course, each one would like you to believe that their bar has the perfect formula.

So who really has the perfect formula?

The answer, as you might expect, depends upon the individual and his or her goals. Fortunately, nature has provided us with a varied selection, so if you are looking for a specific ratio of protein to carbohydrates, you can find what you are looking for in both nuts as well as bars.

The following chart depicts the proportion of protein to carbohydrates in the listed foods. Negative values (blue bars that go to the left) have more carbohydrates than protein. Positive values (blue

bars that go to the right) have more protein than carbohydrates. So if you have a favorite bar, and you want to find out what nuts to eat instead, find your sports bar on the graph, and then look for nuts that are nearby. For example, if your favorite sports bar is the *Promax*, then pine nuts, pecans, and macadamias would all give you similar proportions of protein and carbohydrates. But if you like Power bars, then definitely go for pumpkin seeds.

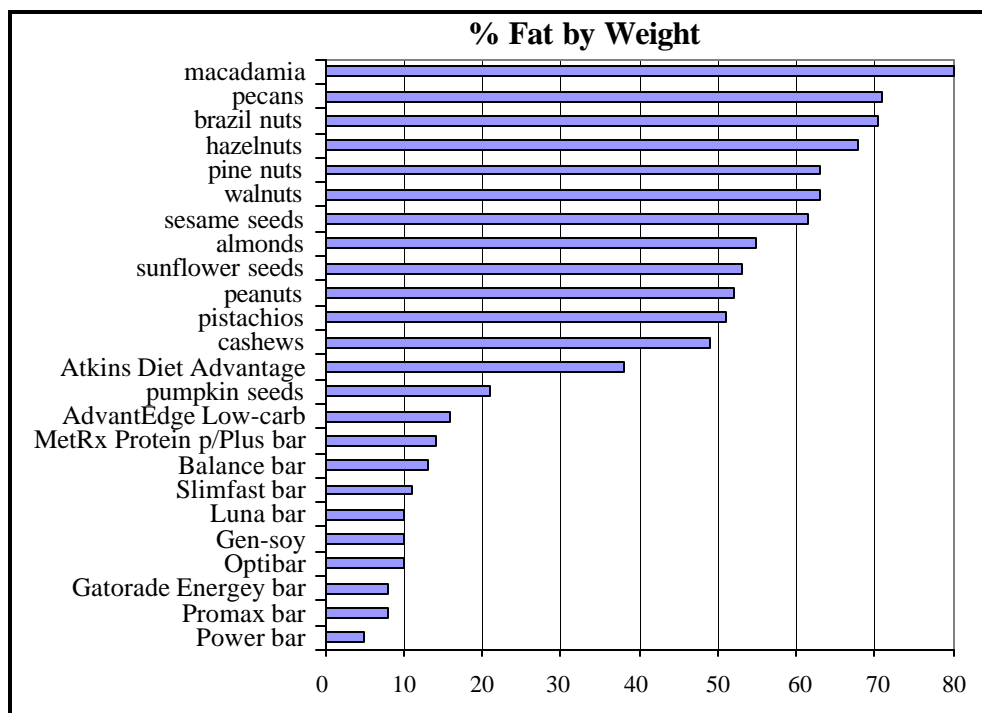
But what about FAT???

Good question. First of all, nutrition bar manufacturers put very little fat in their bars because their market research tells them that nobody will buy bars with lots of fat. In fact, they include the least amount of fat that will make the bars taste good. But fat, in

moderation, is not a bad thing. There is research to support the idea that fat intake from nuts does not contribute to weight gain, due in part to the fact that eating nuts tends to curb one's appetite. Nonetheless, everyone seems to worry about fat, so I've included a fat chart.

Okay, so clearly, macadamia nuts would not be the first choice for carbo/protein loading. However, you should be more concerned with the TYPE of fat rather than the quantity. There are three basic categories of fat: *monounsaturated*, *polyunsaturated*, and *saturated*. Saturated fats come from animals, so we will not cover them here. In general, monounsaturated fat is better than polyunsaturated fat. The following lists show which nuts are predom-inantly monounsaturated or

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polyunsaturated:

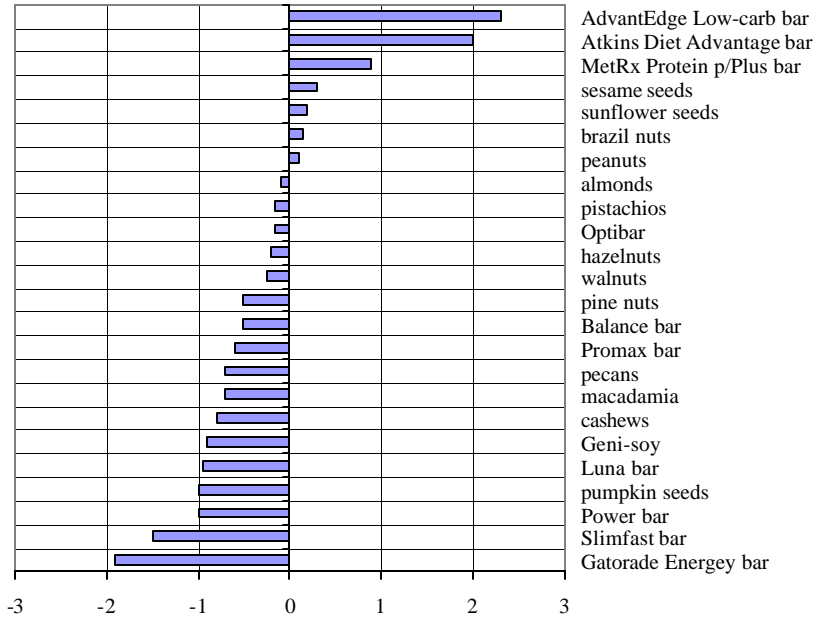
Monounsaturated: Hazelnuts, Almonds, Peanuts, Pistachios, Cashews, and Pecans.

Polyunsaturated: Macadamias, Brazil Nuts (does anyone really eat these?), Pine Nuts, Sesame Seeds, Sunflower Seeds, Pumpkin Seeds, and Walnuts. Also, both **Pecans** and **Walnuts** contain *Omega-3* fatty acids, which are supposed to be particularly good for you. This is the same kind of fat found in fish.

Should you eat nuts or bars?

Doesn't matter. Just know what you are eating before you eat it.

Protein: Carbohydrates Ratio



Benefits of NOVA Membership



ALEX NOEL
NOVA MEMBERSHIP
COORDINATOR

I have gotten a lot of emails from potential members who want to know: “What does your \$20 membership fee get you?”

Immediately the obvious items come to mind — 10 percent off at Pacers, access to the listserv, and multiple opportunities each week to train with others. Beyond that— membership in NOVA—is what YOU make of it.

People will get out of NOVA what they put into it. Just like any sport, if you don't show up to practice, you won't improve. If you come to track one time, get discouraged and never return, you won't get any faster. Just the same, you can learn a lot from the membership of NOVA if

you come to the activities and meet the people. I have met so many amazing people in the short time that I have been a member. Because of NOVA, I met four great marathon-training partners that helped me accomplish a huge personal goal, and I know that without their help, I would have not been as successful in my running.

However, my benefits also go far beyond running. Thanks to Steve Teslik and Linda Kennedy, I got back into swimming after neglecting it for six years, and recently I competed in my first open water 1-mile swim. That is something I never would have done without a little bit of encouragement.

A triathlon is next on the list of things to try, and luckily, I have a lot of seasoned athletes to get advice from right within the club. I even got suckered into going hashing and loved it! Again, something that I wouldn't have tried by myself.

So, in my humble opinion, the greatest benefit of being a NOVA member is the people you get to know. Yes, your performance would probably improve if you got a personal trainer, subscribed to *Runner's World*, and did track work and long runs alone, but you would be missing out on a great group of athletes.

You could register for Cherry Blossom or the Annapolis 10-miler, and just go run them, OR you could be a part of a big group going to the race and celebrating afterwards!

It is no secret that runs are more fun when you have companions and NOVA provides you with a mix of speeds and abilities to choose from. So whether it is Tuesday track, cookie runs (in the mud), volunteering for races, Generous George's, parties, trail clean-up, or doing a race, come out and join us! I think that the more you do, the more you reap the benefits of NOVA.



Running Through the Years

The research tells us that the longer you run, the more likely you will outpace your less active counterparts. You are more likely to live longer and delay disability if you run. Yes, the benefits are great!

But, hey, we're runners. The scoop we really want to know is how does age affect competitiveness? Is my body going to break down eventually or can running be a life-long pleasure.

To answer this question, NOVA asked club members Fred Carson and Dick Williams, two very competitive runners, who have not only outpaced Father Time, but continue to set PRs and win their age groups.

Fred, 63, and Dick, 67, have a varied history, but both have been running for about 25 years. Fred started running in high school for the track team, then he took a long hiatus and didn't run again until 1978. That must have been when the running craze in this country kicked in because Dick began running, for the first time in his life, in 1977, at age 41.

Since these men can say it best in their own words, below are their answers to an interview with NOVA.

Q. What inspired you to start running?

FRED: I was overweight and feeling the effects, mostly lethargy. So, I started walking about 1.5 miles to work and back.

On June 1, 1978, I got to work and the building was "dead;" no air conditioning. I had been fighting

with the physical plant people about the a/c for some months—as we needed a frigid room for our new nuclear magnetic resonance

spectrometer. I said **FRED CARSON** to myself, "That's it!

I'm not going to suffer through another DC summer with balky air conditioning."

So, I walked straight to a sports shop and bought a tennis shirt and pants. The clerk looked at me with blue top, white pants and patent-leather shoes, and suggested that I might want more appropriate footwear, and directed me to a leggy blonde in the shoe department.

Of course, she asked me if I wanted tennis shoes, and I said "No, just walking shoes."

She suggested Nike Waffle Trainer running shoes, and I asked if they were any good for walking. "Oh, yes!" she replied. So, I tried them on and thought I was in heaven, walking on clouds. That very evening I ran a mile from work down the hill toward home.

DICK: A friend encouraged me to start running, but it took me a long time to actually get serious about it. In 1977, I weighed 210 lbs. (6 ft. tall) and was unhappy with my health and appearance. I knew that I had to lose weight as I had 38" waist pants (now 34"). I started out by walking first, then running and walking. I have run nearly 2,000 miles a year since 1978 including



seven marathons (my two most recent marathon times were 3:39 (2000) and 3:44 (2001)). I run around 25 to 30 races per year.

Q. How has your running changed over the years?

FRED: At first I ran full bore, the way my coach trained me in high school. But after a month, I couldn't get past two miles. A friend, who was a kinesiology professor, suggested I check my heart rate, and reduce it to 120-130 beats per minute. It was 155! As soon as I reduced my heart rate, my mileage doubled, and I was doing 3 miles to 5 miles each day.

My first race was "Mayor Washington's First Annual Physical Fitness Day Three-mile Race," in DC, August 1978, when I weighed 19 pounds more than I do now. I aimed for an 8 min./mile pace despite the temperature of 92 deg. and AQI 113 (ugh!), and I was devastated when I finished in 24:40 at the pool at Volta Place. Despair turned to elation when I found out that it was really a 5K race, so my pace was 7:56 min./mile. It turned out the Mayor figured no one would know what 5 km. meant, so they called it a 3-miler! I placed 42nd of 105 starters and 96 finishers.

Thereafter, racing provided a focus for my training, and I started doing races weekly. Of course, I quickly learned that improvement is not continuous, and I began alternating hard weeks with easy weeks. Thereafter, my training consisted of doing whatever I felt

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like for many years. But in 1995, I heard about the 100th Boston Marathon, and I really wanted to do it, so I started speed work with NOVA on Tuesday nights.

Although I got injured that year, I still was at the 100th through the lottery, and was even more determined to qualify. So, in 1996, I ran the Philadelphia Marathon in 3:35, an 8:13 pace, qualifying with only seconds to spare. By 1997, I set a PR at the Philadelphia Distance half marathon at a 7:34 pace; in 1999, I inadvertently challenged Janice Stoodley and had to run the Cherry Blossom 10-Miler at a 7:18 pace (she beat me); and two weeks later I set a PR at the Pike's Peek 10K at a 7:03 pace (and she still beat me). That series, from 1995 to 1999, was the culmination of my goal of setting personal bests. Since then, I have aimed at age-group awards, with partial success.

DICK: My pace has slowed with age, but I try to keep the mileage consistent. I used to be able to run 10Ks in 42 to 43 minutes, now it usually takes 46 to 48 minutes. I run for weight control so I can enjoy my beer and pizza. Also, running provides me with a sense of mental well being, and it keeps me active and my body feeling strong.

Q. Have you changed your training over the years?

FRED: My training got a lot better when I started to focus on specific races and had the help of a coach

and the benefit of speed work with NOVA. Aside from interval and anaerobic threshold work, the main change I have made is the incorporation of weight work and stretching into my routine.

DICK: Yes, I have to work harder now, train harder too. I didn't do track work prior to age 60, but now I must do it to maintain a good pace in races. Running seems as if it is harder now than it used to. But I still enjoy getting out for a run on a nice day.

Q. Have you had to use more stretching or weights to stay limber in more recent years?

FRED: Yes. I've needed them all along, but got away with very slow warm-ups in the past.

DICK: I found that stretching after running has become more essential over the years. Every time I incur a running injury, I find it was most likely due to some stretching deficiency, and I learn the stretches to help me avoid a repetition of that injury. Now I perform lots of different stretches after every run.

Q. Any advice to runners over age 50 ?

FRED: The field for your age group will get smaller, so you will have a better chance at awards. However, you will also find that many of the survivors are really good runners!

DICK: Stretch, stretch, stretch after every run. Your body is less supple, and muscles require a warm up run prior to starting a race. You will naturally slow down with age, how much depends a lot on how you train and maybe heredity. Weight seems harder to keep off than it used to and recovery times are somewhat longer as you age.



DICK WILLIAMS

Q. How do you feel about your running today versus when you first started?

FRED: At first, long distance running was a personal affair. I found the loss of 33 pounds to be a powerful motivator. I felt great and was much more productive at work. But when I started marathon training in 1990, it evolved into a much more social influence. I came to enjoy the camaraderie of a vast range of individualists sharing a common interest. The examples of others working hard to excel encouraged me to do my best.

DICK: When I first started, I ran for weight control, now running is for mental well-being as well. I am totally addicted to running. My hope is to run well into my 70's without too much of a sacrifice on pace.

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Coach's Corner

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This works like a charm for a faster recovery. And secondly, consider a "backup" race in case the weather becomes a factor on race day, work obligations get in the way (!), a budding romance or... etc.

My other topic deals with the track workouts and how it applies to you. Note, I need to create a one-size-fits-all-in-the-club type of workout, but it is really up to you to adapt it to your level of ability and fitness goals.

Seasoned runners at the track should make these workouts a quality effort and pay strict attention to pace and recovery.

Most of you are already at your physical limits and are trying to ring out those last few seconds of speed by stretching your anaerobic threshold limits and maintaining a pace at that fine line.

For others who are experienced and are at track for general fitness, I suggest that you back off on the effort level by about 10 percent and try to determine where your anaerobic threshold limit is and/or complete the workout with only moderate stress.

Then, there are the novices, and those who haven't stepped on the track in a while. To you, I recommend putting down a base of at least five times the length of the usual track workout (e.g., if the total track workout adds up to four miles, including intervals and recovery jogs,

then you should be running at least 20 miles per week).

Also, consider doing only half the workout, or every other interval, twice the rest interval, etc., until you feel comfortable.

To all, remember that running fast intervals does not automatically equate to faster times. You also need to have an efficient stride and proper body balance.

To that end, I recommend on those days you don't want to run intervals, come to the track anyway and practice your form and/or watch some of the other runners with good form and take note!

Look forward to seeing you at track!!

—by Doug Kelly
and Steve Teslik