

# TO RUN

## What Do I Wear?

Publication 831 • July 1979 • Extension Division  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

346-831



5655  
A762  
no. 831  
VPI  
Spec

# TO RUN

## What Do I Wear?

Prepared by Beatrice Kalka, Extension Specialist, Clothing and Textiles.

For those with the willpower to change their habits to improve their health, various exercise programs are being tried to improve physical fitness levels.

Running, for a number of us, has become an important activity and a form of exercise prescribed by experts. The fact is that running is one of the very best ways to get in tip-top fitness shape.

When we run, some remarkable things happen. Some of the immediate or long term benefits are that we:

- feel better
- look better

- have more energy
- think more clearly
- lose weight
- increase our resistance to heart attack
- alter our blood chemistry for the better
- delay certain of the body's aging processes

People who keep fit greatly enlarge their fullness of living.

"I'd start today," you say, "but I don't know what to wear."

The information that follows will guide you in the selection of apparel that is appropriate for running.

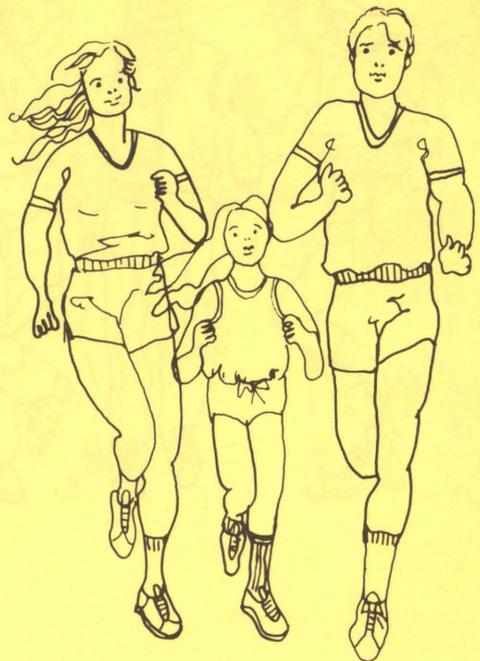
## DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WEATHER

When the weather is chilly, to guard against the cold, wear just enough clothing to keep warm — wear too many clothes and you'll perspire excessively. Several light layers are more effective than a bulky coat and heavy bottoms. Layers also let you add or subtract as you go. For the legs, thermal underwear or flannel pajama bottoms under jeans or sweatpants. For the top, a T-shirt, sweatshirt or wool sweater, topped off by a closely woven nylon windbreaker. Because dark colors absorb heat, darker tops and bottoms are fine in cold weather. A loose knit wool scarf over your mouth will warm up the air reaching your lungs. Some runners wear knitted ski masks. Woolen or thermal mittens are a must.

Forty percent of your body heat escapes through your head so always wear a head covering. A knit cap that you can pull over your ears is a good idea.

Insulate against the cold by dressing in layers to trap warm air, and because heat is lost through the head and hands - keep them covered.

When the weather is warm, dress to keep cool and to protect the body from too much sun and stinging insects. Wear white or light colors to reflect as much heat as possible. As for fibers, cotton is the most absorbent and is good to wear next to the skin to act as a wick for sweat.



In order to keep fit, you must resign yourself to occasional running in the rain. Fiber type is important for body comfort during bad weather. Nylon minimizes chafing and is best in the rain. Wool socks and leather shoes help avoid blisters from wet feet. A light weight nylon shell with a water repellent finish worn over a cotton T-shirt will help to keep you dry. Avoid cotton sweat suits in the rain since they'll absorb water, feel heavy,

and slow you down. Change into dry clothes as soon as you complete your run.

The most important thing about your running outfit is that it must be comfortable. An expensive jogging suit may be exactly what you need, but for others a T-shirt and a pair of shorts or loose fitting jeans will be fine. Experimentation will lead you to what's appropriate for your personal needs.

## SAFETY AND COMFORT PRECAUTIONS

Wear bright colored shirts (yellow or orange) for runs in the early morning, on foggy days or at dusk, so that you can be easily seen by motorists.

Never wear a dark color for night runs or you'll be invisible.

Fashion and safety can be added to running attire by the addition of multi-colored reflective tapes. Tapes are available in the sewing notions department of fabric shops.

To prevent chafing, smear petroleum jelly or other lubricants on the body where clothing or shoes might rub. In bad cases of chafing, the solution may have to be something you wear, rather than something smeared on. Light, sheer, comfortable, durable, protective and slippery panty hose are wonders for all. Pull them on to a snug fit and cut the legs off just below the tender area, leaving some extra to allow for curling at the edge.

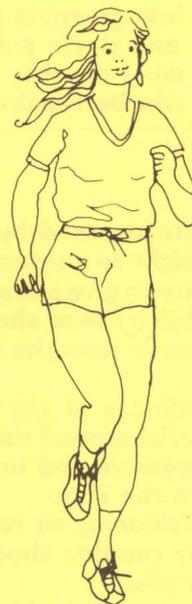
Skeptical men will wonder what the visual effect will be. If anything - like a couple of Ace bandages.

Another possible use of panty hose can be cutting the panty part off the hose and wearing it as a bandeau. The runner who wears a shirt will find wearing the bandeau the cure for jogger's nipple. Also, the hairy chested male may find this the preferred option to defoliating himself with repeated applications of adhesive bandages.

If you are large-bosomed, support from a bra is needed to feel comfortable. Active or "running" bras are designed to cushion and reduce the

breasts' up-and-down movement when in motion. When shopping, look for cotton cups, adjustable straps with no "hardware" to dig into the flesh, an "anchor band" inside the outer stretch band to keep the back of the bra from riding up, and a minimum number of seams.

Men may be more comfortable wearing an athletic supporter or jocky type shorts.



## RUNNING SHOES AND SOCKS

Good foot health begins at ground or floor level. Because you are on your feet for most physical fitness exercise programs, it is important to select well-fitting, supportive shoes to protect the feet against problems that could arise and result in visits to a podiatrist (foot specialist).

Because of the many models of running shoes on the market, selecting running shoes is no easy task.

Your choice of properly fitting running shoes is an individual matter and is modified by various factors - age, sex, and type of running.

When trying on shoes, be sure to wear the kind of socks that you plan to wear when running. If you require any type of corrective device or shoe modification, select your shoes with allowance for this.

Dr. Elizabeth Roberts, a well known podiatrist, offers the following cautions and requirements for shoes.

**Soles must be:**

- \*\*sufficiently  *durable* to cushion the effect of sharp objects
- \*\*sufficiently  *soft* to absorb shock caused by body weight coming down on hard surfaces such as paved road or sidewalks.
- \*\*sufficiently  *flexible* for easy movement

#### Podiatrist's tips for consumers

1. Look for two to three layers of rubber material in the sole of a training shoe - firm in the area contacting the running surface, spongy in the middle layer, firmer in the third layer.
2. Sole types vary in style and wearing qualities.
  - Waffle soles - must be somewhat soft
    - wear out quickly
    - good for running hills and dirt courses
    - comfortable on cement as long as the nubs on the waffle hold up
  - Ripple soles - absorb contact stresses
    - pick up small rocks and mud
  - Crepe soles - less grasping power than waffle and ripple soles
    - most durable
    - can be repaired

**Heel requirements stressed by podiatrists are:**

- \*\*adequate  *height* to protect the heel
- \*\*adequate  *flare* to give a broad base of support for lateral stability - flare should be equal to or just a little greater than the width of the top of the shoe
- \*\*adequate  *stiffness* of the heel counter (the stiffening material around the back of the shoe) to prevent excessive and unwanted motion of the heel within the shoe
- \*\*adequate  *cushioning* to reduce shock

**The upper of the running shoe must:**

- \*\*hold foot in place
- \*\*be soft and smooth inside
- \*\*be firm enough to be stable
- \*\*have a soft cuff around the ankle bones and Achilles tendon
- \*\*have a toe-box high enough to avoid downward pressure on the toes

#### Consumer tips:

Leather, woven nylon, and nylon mesh are currently used for uppers. The nylon fabrics are light in weight and can be laundered.



Most runners in physical fitness programs wear socks to protect the feet as well as the shoes. It's easier to wash socks than shoes. A clean pair of socks helps prevent blisters by reducing chafing between the foot and the shoe. Socks made of cotton, wool, and synthetic fibers are available. Wool socks are best if the weather is cold and damp. They'll keep your feet warm even when soaked.

## CARE

Clothing that comes in contact with your body will need to be laundered following each period of running. This simple hygiene can save your skin from irritation and rashes and make you nicer to be near other runners.

## ADVICE

Before beginning a running program it is wise for you to seek the advice of a doctor or other professionals as to the practices and guidelines one should follow in order to receive maximum benefits from running.

Dressing right when "out to run" involves selecting clothing that:

- \*\*provides protection against weather conditions and surfaces
- \*\*is suited to the exertion level
- \*\*provides freedom for the body to move
- \*\*is light weight
- \*\*is easy to put on and launder

## REFERENCES

Ullyot, Joan, *Women's Running*. Mountain View, CA: World Publications, 1976, 68-71.  
"On the Run". *Co-Ed*. 20, November 1978.  
Fixx, James. "What Running Can't Do for You".

*Newsweek*. 21, December 18, 1978  
Roberts, Elizabeth H. "Running Shoes", *Consumers' Research Magazine*. 29-31, August 1978.

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Service by law and purpose is dedicated to serve all people on an equal and nondiscriminatory basis.

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. M. C. Harding, Sr., Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State College, Petersburg, Virginia 23803; W. R. Van Dresser, Dean, Extension Division, Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.





