UNITED RUN DEPT.

A TEAM SUPPORTER OF

Missing Bean
Coffee roasters

WELCOME TO THE UNITED RUN DEPT. BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RUNNING!

We're so excited to have you join the United Run Dept. community! Whether you're lacing up your running shoes for the first time or coming back after a break, this guide is here to help you start strong, stay motivated, and be ready to comfortably run a 5km with United Run Dept! Let's make your running journey a fun and rewarding experience!

We'd like to thank Ian Scarrott, an Oxford United fan and qualified running coach, for his invaluable contribution to this Beginner's Guide for Running. For expert coaching and tips, you can connect with Ian on:

Instagram: @ianyourruncoach **or visit his website:** www.yourruncoach.com.

We'd like to thank Missing Bean Coffee Roasters, Oxford's leading specialist coffee roaster, for their continued support of United Run Dept.

For more information on Missing Bean, Click Here

TWO 2

GETTING STARTED: *YOUR FIRST FEW STEPS*

Gear Up for Success

Getting the right gear doesn't have to break the bank! All you need is:

- **Comfortable, well-fitting running shoes:** A good pair of shoes is key to injury prevention. Head to a local running store for advice on what's best for your foot type. They may even analyse your run form - try Up & Running in Oxford if you're local.
- **Light, breathable clothes:** You don't need to go all out with high-tech gear, but make sure you're wearing something that's sweat-resistant to keep you comfy. In colder weather layering is important, too much is better than too little, you can always take a layer off.
- **A positive attitude:** Seriously, that's the most important piece of gear you can have!

Set a Goal (Keep It Flexible)

Setting goals is motivating but remember to keep them achievable. If you're new to running, it might be as simple as "I want to run for ten minutes without stopping." Once you hit that goal, you can start thinking about distance, pace, and longer-term goals. Remember, you've got the United Run Dept. team to help you along the way!

FOUR 4

FUEL & HYDRATION: *KEEP YOURSELF RUNNING*

Running is hard work, so you need to fuel your body properly. Here are a few tips:

- **Eat well before a run:** A light snack, like a banana or a piece of toast, can help keep your energy up. Think about when you have this, everyone has a different way they respond to food and running. A general rule of thumb is, leave two-three hours before running to allow for proper digestion and avoid stomach issues.
- **Stay hydrated:** Stay hydrated by drinking water throughout the day and before and after your run. For shorter runs, you don't need to carry water, but maintaining hydration is important. Electrolytes can help prevent cramping, and for runs over an hour, isotonic drinks may be useful.
- **Post-run snacks:** Post-run snacks should combine protein and carbs, like peanut butter on whole wheat toast or a smoothie with fruit and protein powder. A quick, less healthy option is chocolate milk, which provides carbs and protein to aid muscle recovery.

SIX 6

THE UNITED RUN DEPT. COMMUNITY: *YOU'RE NOT ALONE*

One of the best things about being part of United Run Dept. is the community. Running with a group can keep you motivated and make the experience so much more fun.

Join club runs, share your achievements, and cheer on fellow runners. You'll find that running becomes even more rewarding when you have others to celebrate with.

If you want to find a local running club or group in Oxford or beyond to run alongside URD runs and events visit these websites:

https://runtogether.co.uk/group-running/find-a-runtogether-group-run/

https://www.englandathletics.org/find-a-club/

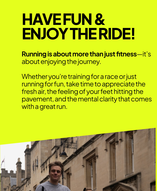
There's a special camaraderie that comes with running together, and you'll be sure to meet some amazing people along the way.

EIGHT 8

HAVE FUN & ENJOY THE RIDE!

Running is about more than just fitness—it's about enjoying the journey.

Whether you're training for a race or just running for fun, take time to appreciate the fresh air, the feeling of your feet hitting the pavement, and the mental clarity that comes with a great run.



ONE 1

THE JOY OF RUNNING: *WHY IT'S AWESOME*

Running is one of the most accessible forms of exercise. It's a great way to improve your fitness, boost your mood, and get some fresh air.

And the best part?

You don't need a fancy gym membership or expensive equipment—just a good pair of running shoes and the open road (or trail). Plus, being part of United Run Dept. means you'll have a supportive community cheering you on every step of the way!

THREE 3

YOUR FIRST RUN: *NO PRESSURE*

Starting out, the key is to focus on consistency, not speed.

Try the run/walk method:

Run for 30 seconds to 60 seconds, then walk for one-two minutes, and repeat. This keeps you from feeling overwhelmed and helps your body adjust.

A Sample First Week:

- **Session One:** Run 30 seconds, walk 60 seconds. Repeat eight-ten times. Celebrate after your workout!
- **Session Two:** Rest or cross-train (bike, swim, or do some yoga).
- **Session Three:** Run 60 seconds, walk 60 seconds. Repeat eight-ten times. Celebrate again!

Remember: It's okay to take breaks. It's not about perfection, it's about getting started and having fun. Plus, being part of a team means you can always share your progress and get support from others.

If you're still unsure, why not try the couch to 5k running plan here. You get a training plan, an app and experts like Steve Cram, Olympian and expert running coach, to guide you on your way:

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/

FIVE 5

TUNING INTO YOUR BODY : *LISTEN TO THE SIGNALS*

Running is about progress, not perfection. If you're feeling pain (not to be confused with the natural burn of a workout!), slow down, take a break, or seek support on adjusting your form. Common beginner mistakes include:

- Going too much too soon: Start slow and build up gradually. Avoid running too many days in a row at first. Consider every other day as a starting point or three times per week so you get plenty of recovery.
- Running with bad form: Look forwards at the horizon, keep your shoulders relaxed, your core engaged, and your posture upright. Avoid slouching! If you want free speed, lean forwards from the ankle with your upright posture.
- Ignoring aches: A rule of thumb for pain is: if sharp and 'stabby' – STOP and see a physio or medically trained professional.
- Avoiding Stretching: Flexibility is crucial in fitness, especially as we age. Dynamic stretching before a run warms up muscles, while static stretching afterward helps lengthen and relax them. A quick five-minute warm-up can prevent injury, and a good post-run stretch reduces stiffness.

Running is great for your fitness, but to make sure you're staying injury-free, it's important to approach it with some care. Here's a list of tips to help you stay injury-free while you pound the pavement!

Quick Injury Prevention Checklist:

- Wear properly fitted shoes and replace them regularly.
- Gradually increase your mileage.
- Always warm-up and cool down.
- Cross-train to balance muscle strength.
- Listen to your body and rest when needed.
- Stretch, foam roll, and stay flexible.
- Stay hydrated and fuel your body properly.

SEVEN 7

TRACKING PROGRESS: *STAYING MOTIVATED*

- **Celebrate milestones:** Did you run your first 5k? Celebrate! Did you make it through a tough training session? Celebrate! Big or small, every achievement is worth recognising.
- **Mix things up:** Don't be afraid to change up your route or switch from road running to trail running to keep things exciting.
- **Consider a coach:** If you struggle to stay motivated why not consider using a coach, a running app or a training plan. Accountability can be key to help you track progress and hit your goals.

REMEMBER

There's no such thing as "perfect" running. Each step forward, no matter how small, is progress. Enjoy the process and know that you're a part of something special with the United Run Dept. team behind you!

Ready to run? We can't wait to hear about your running progress, and once you're feeling confident and comfortable running a 5km, we'll look forward to seeing you at a United Run Dept. event soon!