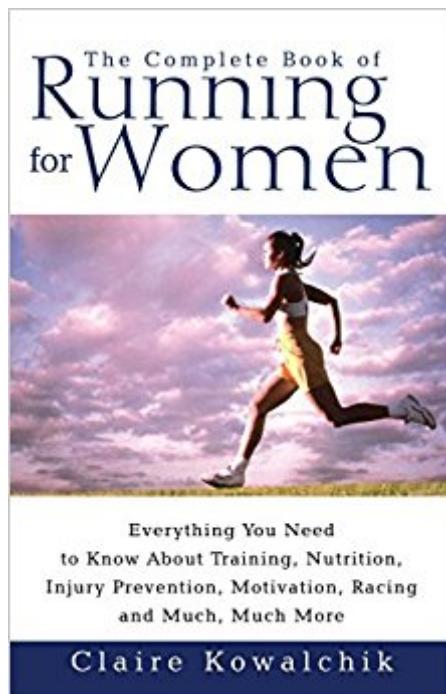


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# The Complete Book Of Running For Women



## Synopsis

A comprehensive guide exclusively for women who experience the pure joy of running— or want to. More women than ever are discovering the unique benefits of running -- for stress relief, weight management, endurance, and self-esteem. Women's bodies are not the same as men's, and though we can train just as hard and with the same passion for excellence, we have certain special concerns. It's the simplest, fastest, most accessible way to fitness and good health known to woman. You don't need a partner, equipment, or even much time. Now, Claire Kowalchik, former managing editor of Runner's World magazine, answers every question about the overwhelmingly popular activity that builds endurance, melts fat, and even prevents illness. In this total running book for women, you'll learn:

- How to get started and stay motivated
- What to eat for optimal nutrition
- How to run during pregnancy and after menopause
- Why running is the most effective form of exercise
- How to prevent and treat injury
- What to wear -- from sports bras to running shoes
- How to prepare for everything from a 5K to a marathon

Authoritative and friendly, *The Complete Book of Running for Women* is a sourcebook for both beginners and long-time runners. Along with wisdom drawn from the author's personal experience, you'll find advice from the experts: coaches, exercise physiologists, nutritionists, doctors, and other women runners. Including question-and-answer sections and a complete list of resources, *The Complete Book of Running for Women* tells you everything you need to know to be off and running toward better health and richer living.

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## Customer Reviews

Claire Kowalchik is the author of *The Complete Book of Running for Women*, Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs, *Runner's World* Running on Air, and *Running Strong*.

Chapter One: Running for the Body

Better to hunt in fields, for health unbought, Than fee the doctor  
for a nauseous draught. The wise, for cure, on exercise depend; God never made his work for man to  
mend. -- John Dryden, Epistle to John Driden of Chesterton (1700)

Why take up running? Because it is the simplest, fastest, most accessible way to fitness and good health known to woman. You don't need a partner; you don't need equipment, a court, or a gym; and you don't need much time. A mere 20 minutes three or four times a week is enough to make you fit, although most of us find that 20 minutes isn't enough to satisfy our desire to run. Those who say they haven't time for running are simply making excuses. The morning, before the family wakes or work begins, is free time for most of us. If not, how about during your lunch hour or after you come home from the office? Just 20 minutes. It might seem difficult at first -- even the slightest changes in routine can take some getting used to -- but before you know it, you'll be figuring out ways to find 30 minutes, 40 minutes...an hour for running. Then there are others who say running is just too hard, too painful. They wrinkle up their noses at the mere thought of it. Running is hard, but that's one of the reasons we love it. We feel special as runners because we can endure. Besides, running gets easier. The reason many people say it's painful is because they go out for their first run and virtually sprint for as long as they can -- which isn't very long -- with their chest heaving, their tongues lolling, their muscles straining until finally they can go no farther. They stop and pant, hands on their hips, wobbly kneed. "I -- gasp -- hate -- gasp -- running," they say. So would I if I ran like that every day. Running is not an act of will over body -- the brain whipping the legs to go as fast as they can as long they can (except when you really are sprinting). When you're running, your mind and body work in tandem toward an enjoyable continuum of movement over the ground. In the beginning, when your body is not yet capable of blazing speeds, your mind should say, Okay, slow down. Let's go at a pace that's comfortable for you. Now that you don't have any excuses not to start, here are several reasons to begin running if you haven't already and to continue running if you have.

**Running Is the Quickest and Most Efficient Means of Weight Loss**

Let's compare running to another popular and convenient fitness activity -- walking. In 20 minutes of running at a relaxed 10-minute-per-mile pace, a 130-pound woman burns 200 calories. In 20 minutes of walking at 15 minutes per mile (a brisk pace), a 130-pound woman burns only 72 calories. Of the 200 calories burned running, roughly 100 come from fat and 100 from carbohydrates. The 20 minute walk burns 54 fat calories and 18 carbohydrate calories. Furthermore, studies show that running increases your resting metabolic rate

(meaning you burn more calories even when you're not active) and improves your body composition by reducing body fat. The clear result of all of this is a leaner, trimmer figure. Vanity aside, managing your weight is one of the most important things you can do for your health, well-being, and longevity. Obesity is a heavy contributor to heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, breast cancer, and diabetes.

**Running Reduces Your Risk of Cardiovascular Disease, the Number-One Killer of Women**

In the Nurses Health Study of 73,029 women aged 40 to 65, conducted by JoAnn E. Manson, M.D., of the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston, the rate of heart attack was found to be 44 percent lower among the most active women compared with those who were sedentary. Running has several effects that lower your risk of cardiovascular disease:

- Running strengthens your heart.
- Running reduces the risks of blood clot formation.
- Running lowers blood triglycerides (fat).
- Running lowers total cholesterol levels.
- Running raises levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, also known as "good" cholesterol.

Running prevents the stiffening of arteries that comes with age. High mileage seems to have the best effect on raising HDL cholesterol levels, whereas running faster is better for lowering triglycerides, according to a study by Paul T. Williams, M.D., of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California. Williams's research looked at 1,837 female runners who were grouped according to weekly mileage: 0 to 9, 10 to 19, 20 to 29, 30 to 39, and 40 or more miles. HDL cholesterol levels rose with mileage -- those in the 40-plus mileage group showing the highest levels. Also, as mileage increased, heart rate and body mass index (BMI; a calculation of weight based on height) decreased. Williams concluded that women who run 40 miles or more a week decrease their risk of dying from cardiovascular disease by 45 percent. He pointed out, however, that significant benefits are accrued at lower levels of weekly mileage as well.

**Running Lowers Your Heart Rate and Blood Pressure**

Williams also noted in his study that running lowered blood pressure and heart rate. Though the women who put in more weekly mileage showed the lowest figures for blood pressure and pulse, Williams found that fast running seemed to have an even greater effect -- a good reason to do speed training and take up racing.

**Running Reduces Your Risk of Stroke, the Second Leading Killer of Women**

Given that running helps lower blood pressure and keeps the cardiovascular system healthy, it's not surprising that it can also help prevent stroke. A study conducted by researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and reported in the British Medical Journal (July 24, 1993) compared 125 men and women who had just had their first stroke with 198 men and women who had never had a stroke. In looking at the activity levels of these groups, the researchers concluded that vigorous exercise -- defined as running, swimming, cycling, and other strenuous activities -- "confers substantial protection against stroke. These effects were seen in both sexes and all age groups." The Nurses

Health Study also shows that exercise prevents stroke, finding that active women have a 42 percent lower rate of stroke than do sedentary women. Running Lowers Your Risk of Breast Cancer For several years, health experts have suspected that physical activity may lower the risk of breast cancer, and recently a significant study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine supports this theory. Over a 13-year period, researchers in Norway studied 25,624 women aged 20 to 54. They grouped these women according to level of activity: sedentary, moderate exercisers ("those who spent at least four hours a week walking, bicycling or engaging in other types of physical activity"), and regular exercisers ("those who spent at least four hours a week exercising to keep fit and participating in recreational athletics" plus "those who engaged in regular, vigorous training or participated in competitive sports several times a week"). They found that the regular exercisers -- the most active group -- had a 37 percent lower risk of breast cancer compared with the sedentary group. The moderate exercisers showed a 7 percent lower risk. When looking only at premenopausal women, the risks of breast cancer were even lower with physical exercise. "Our results support the idea that physical activity protects against breast cancer, particularly among premenopausal and younger postmenopausal women," the researchers concluded. The theory behind the protective effects of activity is that vigorous exercise, such as running, may suppress the secretion of estrogen and progesterone, which have been linked to breast cancer. Also, the lower levels of triglycerides seen in physically active women reduce the amount of estrogen in the bloodstream. Running Enhances Your Immune System Most runners rarely get sick, and the reason is that running boosts the immune system. Researchers have determined this by measuring blood levels of lymphocytes (white blood cells that attack disease-causing antigens) and finding higher concentrations during and after exercise. It seems your body reacts to running as if a foreign invasion were occurring, and it recruits an army of lymphocytes to allay the onslaught. (During extremely long runs, however, especially those of high intensity -- such as the marathon -- so many lymphocytes are called into action that the reserves become depleted. Your immune system then becomes depressed, and you become more susceptible to illness. This is why runners often come down with a cold after a marathon. You can also wear down your immunity by running too many miles at too high an intensity in your regular training.) Running also prevents that natural decline of immunity that occurs as we age. In 1993, David Nieman, Ph.D., and colleagues at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, compared the immune systems of active elderly women (who had been exercising aerobically for more than an hour a day for several years), sedentary elderly women, and sedentary young women aged 19 to 25. They found that the activity of T-cells and natural killer (NK) cells -- two types of lymphocytes essential to immune function -- was

significantly higher among the active elderly women than in the sedentary elderly group and comparable to that seen in the young women. "The T-cells of the elderly active women were functioning like those in women half their age," says Nieman. Other good news: a 1997 study of women, activity levels, and causes of death showed that those who were most active had a considerably lower risk of death from respiratory diseases than did sedentary women.

**Running May Prevent Diabetes and Help Those with This Disease to Manage It More Efficiently**

Running burns glucose (blood sugar) for energy, which helps prevent glucose levels from rising too high. This doesn't mean that diabetics don't still need insulin, but they may be able to use lower amounts. Running also improves circulation, which commonly deteriorates with diabetes.

**Running Helps Keep Your Intestinal Tract in Good Working Order**

Regular running can keep you regular. This, in combination with a diet rich in fiber, lowers your risk of colon cancer.

**Running Enhances Your Respiratory System**

When you run, your muscles require a quick delivery of oxygen. The more you run, the more efficient your respiratory system becomes and the easier breathing is. Though running can stimulate an asthma attack in runners who suffer from exercise-induced asthma, the fitter you become through running the less frequently you should experience such episodes. Some women have reported that running has enabled them to cut back on their use of asthma medications.

**Running May Reduce the Symptoms of Premenstrual Syndrome**

Scientists have no proof that exercise relieves the pains of premenstrual syndrome (PMS), but many women report that even though they may not feel like running when their period hits and they're bloated and suffering cramps, once they go for a run, they feel much better. If physical symptoms don't subside, the moodiness -- irritability or depression -- that some women experience may dissipate after a good run.

**Running Improves Your Health and Well-Being During Pregnancy**

We now know that most women can continue running safely during pregnancy. Those who do gain less unnecessary weight, sleep better, have better appetites, and generally enjoy better moods than do women who are sedentary. Running may also help prevent gestational diabetes and may contribute to shorter or easier deliveries, although not all runners can attest to this.

**Running May Reduce the Symptoms of Menopause**

When you've stepped beyond your childbearing years, you may find that running eases the discomforts of menopause by improving sleep patterns and stabilizing erratic moods that often accompany this period of changing hormones. It also helps control weight gain associated with this time of life.

**Running Prevents Muscle and Bone Loss That Occur with Age**

Running keeps the muscles of your legs in good shape as you age, but you'll need to do some regular weight training to maintain strength in your upper body. As for your bones, the forces that running exerts on your skeletal system stimulate bone formation and increase density. The effects are greatest in the legs,

hips, and spine, the latter two areas being the most common sites of osteoporosis and fracture later in life. You can use resistance training (weight lifting) to build the bones of your upper body. **Running Is Good for Your Joints** Contrary to what most people believe, regular running does not ruin your joints; rather, it improves their flexibility and range of motion. "Running doesn't cause arthritis; injury does," says Warren Scott, M.D., chief of sports medicine at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Santa Clara, California. "Exercise is good for osteoarthritis. It speeds the rate at which cartilage is replaced by your body, making it stronger." **Running Helps Prevent a Decline in Reaction Time** Regular exercise has been shown to keep your mind sharp and reaction time quick. As you get older, quick reactions, good muscle tone, and overall flexibility help prevent accidents, such as falls. **Running Leads to a Long and Happy Life** That running can help you live longer and feel happier comes as no surprise, since running helps prevent heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis and strengthens your immune system. In a study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (April 23/30, 1997), Lawrence Kushi, Sc.D., and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health looked at a group of 40,417 postmenopausal women between the ages of 55 and 69. They found that the most active women showed a 30 percent lower risk of death from all causes compared with those who were least active. Add to that the physical strength and emotional well-being that running gives us, and we can look forward to a vibrant and happy, long life. Copyright © 1999 by Claire Kowalchik

I read this when I first got interested in running. I knew it was a little outdated, but the quality of the information was still good and useful, especially for a complete newb. It made me excited to get into running and I could see the author's love for it and it felt like she was passing on her interest and passion for running to me. Now that I'm running regularly and am getting more into it, I use this as a resource and can visit all the sections I skipped over or paid little attention to the first time, like for races or nutrition.

This book is amazing! I am a beginning runner and read this book from cover to cover. It is EXTREMELY helpful! There are chapters that cover everything from selecting running shoes, evaluating running surfaces, running while pregnant, running during menopause, etc. My favorite item is a 10 week beginner's running schedule that lays out a very easy run/walk plan that culminates in the ability to run for 30 min (about a 5K). For you advanced runners, there are also schedules with much higher mileage, i.e. marathons or half-marathons. Kowalchik covers issues for all runners as well as issues specific to women. She also addresses topics such as nutrition,

cross-training, and injury prevention. This book is ideal for the beginning to advanced runner. This book definitely helped and motivated me. Give it a try.

I am a runner! And the book told me so. I was looking for something to maybe improve my form, maybe help me go a little faster. I am a runner, but starting later than some and run on my own. And while a 7 mile run may sound far for some, I have greater goals. No Marathons yet but soon. I thought it a good idea to buy a few books and see if I could learn anything. Out of 4 books I bought, this one I really enjoyed and even made me feel more like getting out to run more than ever. I usually would get up early, but then work got in the way. This book got me out to run after work, and I felt great for doing it. I think this book is a great addition to any runners library, beginner or a little more advanced. Great gift for a woman who likes the idea of running but is maybe unsure how to go about it.

Most of the information in this book can be found for free on websites online, such as active.com. I didn't receive much further insight, but it might be good for someone sedentary who is new to exercise and needs additional help & motivation to continue working out.

Even in an advanced stage of running, I purchased this book to enhance my daily routine. I'm glad I did. Kowalchik's comprehensive book covers everything--proper form, techniques, breathing, nutrition, marathon training for those so inclined, proper stretching exercises, etc--it's a goldmine of invaluable information and guidelines for anyone motivated enough to start a running fitness regimen. The personal essays/stories of women runners interspersed throughout the book enhance the overall quality and uniqueness of it and are quite inspiring. My running has improved I've noticed, particularly my form and breathing, and because of this, I run much better and am getting much more out of it, i.e how to do away with those pesky stitches I'm prone to getting during my runs. Could not recommend this book enough to women thinking about getting into, or improving on their running. You can't ask for a better coach than Claire Kowalchik.

I used to run cross country in high school; however, in college, I chose cheerleading over running and began focusing on easier workouts, like the elliptical. Then, I got married and had a baby. During the pregnancy, I gained well over 60 pounds. I started exercising again at the health club, taking classes, etc., but I was not losing the weight! It was very frustrating. Then I got a new job as a teacher and jr. high track coach! The idea of being a track coach who hadn't run since high school

was frightening....so, I decided that I needed to get back in the swing of running. I figured that since I had tried to stay active, I could just go out and do it. I was wrong!! I got injured, and was frustrated. I decided to go on-line and see if I could find a book to give me the basics of how to get back into running after taking time off. I didn't want to run competitively, I simply wanted to be able to keep up with my track kids on an easy road run day for supervision purposes. :) This book was the answer!! It gave me the routine I needed to break back into running (no injuries from this routine!) It was also motivational!! I started waking up before my husband and daughter woke up and went for my run/walk work-out and then I would do the strength routine also provided by this book. I ended up losing all of my baby weight, and I was able to wear out my track kids. This year, I have started entering into races, and I have fallen in love with the sport of running all over again!! I highly recommend this book to anyone who is new to running or returning to running. It is very informative on how to do it safely, stay motivated, and the benefits of running for your health!

I have read some different running books in the past but I have to say that this is one of the best. After reading it cover to cover I am still able to refer to when I necessary! It addresses needs for all levels of runners from how to buy shoes to training for a race! I found the content easy to understand and extremely useful. Strongly recommended!

Great motivation and training tips/regimens. Only drawback is that many of the studies quoted were from 1990s, although I smiled a bit every time she mentioned I shouldn't run with a cassette player. Parts seemed repetitive and there seemed to be periods with little to no new information. All and all I still felt the book offered motivation and solid information.

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