



HEALTH BENEFITS OF JOGGING

BY ILIA JBANKOV, FNP-BC

If you are looking for a physical activity that can strengthen your body and mind, jogging is one of the best options and you can start today, no experience required!

Jogging is one of the most ancient and healthiest physical activities available to us. It is simple, natural and provides plenty of health benefits. Jogging does not require a specialized location, expensive gear or a gym membership. It can be done by almost anyone regardless of age or fitness level. Whether alone or with company, all you need is a safe area outdoors, a pair of sneakers and a positive attitude!

Health Benefits

The health benefits of jogging are numerous. Just some of them include:

- Jogging outdoors is an opportunity to spend more time in fresh air and exercise your lungs.
- Jogging stimulates and works out the entire cardiovascular system which can make the heart and blood vessels stronger and help prevent certain diseases, such as coronary heart disease or hypertension (1).
- Running stimulates the body to release endorphins, a group of hormones that make us feel good. This helps reduce stress, calm the

nerves, improve concentration and memory, and promote healthy sleep (1).

- Jogging works out muscles, joints, tendons and ligaments of the legs and body core. Muscles in the arms, chest, back and shoulders also get exercise. This may help improve coordination, balance, and gait as well as prevent falls and injuries.
- Regular jogging stimulates the GI tract and healthy transit of digested food. This can help prevent frequent GI complaints like constipation, bloating, discomfort and nausea. Research also found that regular exercise increases the amount of healthy bacteria in the gut which can overtime



- help prevent inflammatory conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease etc (2).
- Running promotes the release of certain hormones and activates parts of the endocrine system which helps maintain homeostasis (a state of balance) in the body. This helps prevent health problems and disease.
- Jogging workouts stimulate your immunity and make it more effective at looking for and fighting infections. It also reduces mental stress which helps your immunity. Regular running helps slow the aging process of the entire immune system (3).
- Jogging is a great way to burn calories and helps promote weight loss. Losing excessive weight is one of the best strategies for overall health, disease prevention and longevity.

Jogging Workouts

Your jogging workout can be designed and accomplished in multiple ways, depending on your preferences and goals. Your jogging sessions should not feel routine or boring either! Your workout can be regulated by a multitude of factors such as pace, duration, distance, and frequency. For example, running up and downhill can provide additional variation and place more emphasis on specific muscle groups.

Some joggers build their strength and resistance by jogging in different weather conditions such as heat, rain or winter cold. Other runners increase the load on certain muscle groups by using ankle weights, weighted vests or dumbbells. Others jog

with hurdles or add a jump rope to their workout. To make your workout more fun, invite a friend, family members or your dog to jog with you, and bring your headphones and favorite music!

Safety First

Stretching your leg muscles prior to your jog helps prevent cramps, strains, sprains and other injuries as well as makes your workout smoother and more pleasurable. Similarly, warming up your body with an initial brisk walk, slow jog or using a stationary bike creates an ideal foundation for your jogging workout.

What can make a real long-term difference when jogging is using the right footwear and running surface. Sneakers designed specifically for running not only provide comfort to the feet, they also absorb shocks during jogging which reduces wear and tear to all of the joints in the legs as well as the spine. Similarly, a softer running surface minimizes adverse impact on the body as opposed to a hard surface like cement.

If you expect a long or strenuous jogging session, remember the importance of hydration and proper nutrition. Remember head and skin protection in the heat to prevent heatstroke or sunburn.

Finally, ensure that your jogging environment is safe. Pay particular attention to things like the condition of the surface you will be running on, car traffic, presence of wild or stray animals, level of air pollution, presence of extreme weather conditions. Check the overall safety of your area and then get going!

References:

1. [Health benefits of running](#)
2. [Research says exercise also improves your gut bacteria](#)
3. [How running affects your immune system](#)