

## HEALTH SUNSCREENS: MYTHS AND TRUTHS

By Dr Maureen Allem

Buying sunscreen is as mindboggling as standing in the vitamin aisle. So let's start with the sun's rays and the two categories of UV light which are UVA and UVB.

UVA is about 95% of the UV radiation from the sun. The rays are deep penetrating and can cause long-term damage to the skin and skin cancers. UVB is a shorter wave light which causes sunburn as well as skin cancers. The skin needs protection from both so find a sunscreen that shields you from UVA and UVB rays. Apply it 15 to 30 minutes before exposing your skin to the sun.

There are two types of sunscreens: chemical and physical. Chemical sunscreens absorb UV rays and "neutralise them". Physical sunscreens form a layer on top of the skin and reflect the UV rays like light bouncing off a mirror. Both are classified as broad spectrum and they are designed to protect you from both the UV 'devils'.

The greatest sunscreen myth of all is the SPF factors. We tend to think that the higher the SPF factor, the better the protection. The increase in protection is very small from SPF 15 to SPF 30. Whereas SPF 15 absorbs 93.3% of UVB rays, a SPF30 will absorb 96.7%. However, a SPF 30 remains "active" for a longer period of time on the skin than the SPF 15. So if you are not going to be diligent in reapplying your sunblock regularly, then rather use a higher SPF.

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## FOR BEGINNERS RUNNING PROGRAM - TIPS AND TRICKS

Well begun is half done! When you are embarking upon a beginners running program, you may need some running tips to help set you off onto the right path. As a beginning runner you are, hopefully, enthusiastic about starting a beginners running program. The tips in this article aim to help you overcome the first hurdles.

### 1. DISTANCE, NOT SPEED

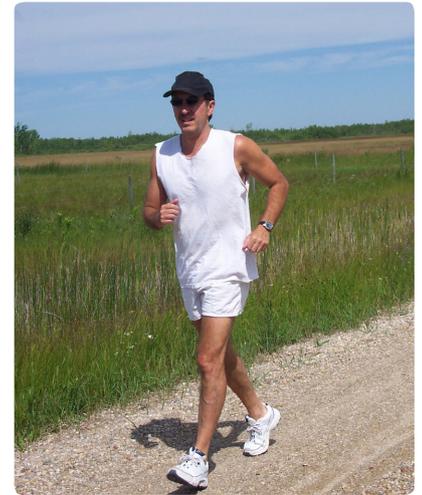
Running is a serious sport that involves certain well-trained core techniques like any other sport. Just because there aren't balls or bats or special gloves or all that much equipment involved doesn't make running any less of a particular sport that requires certain built-up ability before you take it to a higher level. If you are a starter, you have to understand that and you should not attempt to run at a great speed. A good running speed for beginners is easy pace or "conversational pace" as it is also called. This is the speed at which, if you were to run with someone else, would be able to maintain a conversation.

### 2. BUILD UP GRADUALLY

Next to starting off slowly, you need to build up the time and distance you run gradually, with running, you are just begging for injury if you do not keep this in mind. It will also make sure you "ease into" your training rather than make it too hard for yourself and come to hate running. And that would be a real shame as you would lose out on all of the incredible health and wellness benefits that running gives you.

### 3. WALKING AND RUNNING

Mixing walking with running is nothing to be ashamed of at all. It is an old technique for conditioning and training that even serious, experienced competitive runners have used. You are not proving anything to anyone, except perhaps what a fool you are, if you push yourself hard through sore tendons, strained muscles, burning lungs, light-headedness, or gasping for breath when you are a beginner runner. In fact, without wanting to scare you too much, there is the slim, outside chance that you can give yourself a heart attack by doing those things! By a combination of running



and walking you can actually maximise the time spent running because you take the little walking breaks that help you rest a little bit.

### 4. FOLLOW A PROGRAM

You will be able to push yourself hard and maybe get involved in racing later on, after you have been conditioned through smart, proper training. When you start off your running career make sure you use or at least study pre-existing running programs on the web. These are often programs that have proven themselves over the years and will help you make those first all important steps of your running career.

### 5. BELIEVE YOU WILL SUCCEED

A journey of a 1,000 miles starts with the first step. As a beginning runner you face some obstacles. Your confidence may be low, you are not sure you will be able to get good at this "running thing", etc. The important thing is to believe in yourself. Choose a great beginner running program that involves running and walking and that builds up your running gradually and within two, three months you will already be a changed person. No doubt there will be difficult times. But believe in yourself, persist with the program and you will get the outcomes you are after.

Although some of the above advice seems really straightforward, it is amazing how often people start a beginners running program completely incorrectly. Make sure you are not one of those people and start running with a proven beginners running program that works.

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## MAINTAINING A POSITIVE APPROACH TO DAILY LIFE

It's sometimes all too easy to feel like life isn't going as well as it should be. Minor niggles can develop into more significant issues, causing you to spend more time thinking about what's going wrong. The truth is, however, that you might feel better if you take a more positive

attitude. This could, of course, be said to be easy in theory. But the reality may be substantially different, causing you to question whether you can achieve the happiness that you seek. It's not a simple process to escape from a cycle of negativity and this is something that may concern you. How can you make the changes that are necessary in order to allow you to think in a different way? It's sometimes necessary to take steps that may seem to be rather strange. You might start, as an example, by making a list of all the great things that you have in your life.