



BREAK THROUGH
Start to see yourself as the runner that you are

Moving on up

Leave your beginner status behind and become a fully fledged runner

Been running for a year but still can't shake that new-kid feeling? Here's how to start thinking like a runner and move your fitness on a stage in the new year.

Take aim

A race is the most obvious target if you run regularly. "For most people, until they've completed their first race, they don't believe they can do it," says Liz Fulford, who started running five years ago and is now a personal trainer (fitnesstrainingspecialists.co.uk). "Once you reach that goal, you feel you can achieve anything." Your goal doesn't need a physical finish line though: you could set a fitness target (such as running for an hour without stopping), a weight-loss target, or aim to use your fitness for another sport.

Get technical

Add a new element to your training; speedwork is the most

obvious and time-efficient. "If you don't have a huge amount of time, you can add some fast intervals or tempo runs, which will break up the monotony, burn more calories and help you run faster," says Fulford. Don't have a watch? Run fartlek intervals, where you use the landscape and markers around you to start and finish fast spurts. You could also lengthen one of your runs each week, or just try to run your regular route slightly faster every time.

Be less bad

If you've stuck with running this long, chances are you enjoy it. But other areas of your lifestyle might be harder to change. Identify a bad habit that's hampering your hobby and aim to cut it down a little at a time. It could be smoking, a post-run chocolate bar or an extra glass of wine on Fridays that stops you getting up to run the next day. You should feel

Admire yourself

Experienced racers use the memories of good performances to spur them on, and you can try the same trick. Think of one way you've improved in the last year. This could be as simple as realising that you were running in the wrong shoes to doing your 15-minute loop without walking. Use this to motivate yourself when you feel your running is going nowhere: if you've come this far in a year, imagine where else you can go.

motivated to keep going when you reap the rewards.

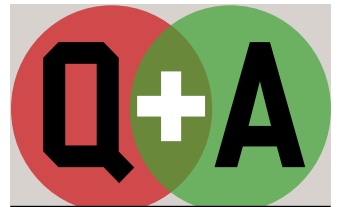
Spread the love

Once a week, run with someone else. You don't have to join a club (though that's a great option – see p74 to find out why), just find a partner. Being able to keep up with someone slightly faster, or help out someone slightly slower, will make you feel less like a beginner. "For me, training other people was exciting because I know how it feels when you reach your goal," says Fulford.

Say What?

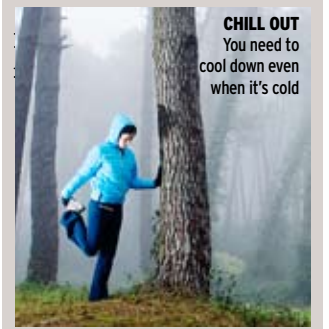
RUNNING TERMS EXPLAINED

You might have bitter memories of **cross-country** from school, but the adult version is much more fun. Races are odd distances, often without mile markers, are entirely off-road and usually muddy fun. Throughout the winter they're a great way to build strength and tactical know-how.



Q Do I need to do a cool-down when it's cold outside?

A Yes. A five- to 10-minute cool-down gradually brings your body back to a resting state, which helps protect your heart and reduce muscle soreness. While you're running, blood is being pumped quickly between the leg muscles and the cardiovascular system. If you abruptly stop, the blood pools in the legs, which can put extra stress on the heart. For a cool-down, slow your running pace for five minutes, add walk breaks, then walk for five minutes. Jeff Galloway, Olympian and running coach



CHILL OUT
You need to cool down even when it's cold

Try this...

SHOCK ABSORBER 5-IN-1 MULTIWAY BRA, £28

Tired of people staring at your 'specialist' underwear peeping out from under your kit? Invest in this supportive multiway bra, which can be altered to hide under whatever shape top you're wearing. If you'd rather show it off, a red version will be available in February. shockabsorber.co.uk

