

## **Running: A Great Cardiovascular Exercise**

“Oh, I could never be a runner!”, “Running is horrible for your knees and it does way more harm than good.” Do these statements sound familiar? There are many misconceptions and beliefs about running. What defines a runner/jogger? Many may think a person would have to be able to run at least a 6 minute mile or be able to run 10 miles at a time, but that is not the case. A runner/jogger is a person who goes at a pace that is comfortable for them. If that means taking walking breaks, that is fine. Ok, so now you may be asking, “Why would a person want to start a running program? What kind of benefits are there?”

The heart is one of the most important muscles in the body; each and every day it beats 100,000 times. When your heart beats, it pushes blood throughout your whole body, supplying oxygen to all of your tissues and organs. With regular physical activity, you increase the ability for the heart muscle to pump blood. This makes the heart muscle stronger, enabling it to push more oxygen rich blood through the body.

There are many benefits of regular cardio physical activity. You reduce your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and many more health related complications. It can also slow or reverse the effects of aging. In addition, if you already have any of these health related complications, cardiovascular exercise will help to manage them and prevent them from getting any worse. A wonderful cardio exercise is running. Running gets your heart beating faster and blood pumping more efficiently throughout the body. “Wait! Running is bad for your knees.” Actually, there is no compelling research to indicate that running is harmful to the knees. It is an old wives’ tale. If you would like to see more information on a recent study conducted on this topic, please visit: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18483739>.

Well, where should you start? There are many beginners running programs to fit your schedule. Many of them start out as a run/ walk: walk for 5 minutes then run for 30 seconds; repeat 5 times. The Nimkee Fitness Center has a great beginners running program that has been tested and proven to be successful. The program spans over 9 weeks. Stop in and pick up a program and reap the cardiovascular benefits! When you finish your program, test out your cardiovascular fitness in our fun Run on the Rez 5 k (3.2mile) and 1.5 mile races. The Race is on Saturday, October 17; food, shirts and door prizes will be available. Whether you are running for a race or just for fun, you are improving your health and overall wellness.

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