





Kids Run Club is a program of:



Kids Run Club has received:

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*The Healthy Tomorrow Foundation sits and operates in Mi'kma'ki and Unama'ki,
the traditional and unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty People.*





WELCOME TO KIDS RUN CLUB

Ready, set, go!

Welcome to Kids Run Club (KRC) and thank you for supporting this long-running program. Coaches like you help to build healthy habits that last a lifetime.

The best part about KRC is it can be adapted for kids of all ages and abilities. This program teaches kids about proper technique and pacing, and how to balance the challenge of running with taking breaks so that all experience success and, of course, have fun!

We started Kids Run Club in 2004 with 3,500 participants at 58 schools. Since that time, we've grown to a peak of more than 17,500 kids at 270 schools across the province. We're excited to have your support, without it, we wouldn't be able to reach so many youth.

Although we're thrilled to see KRC continue to grow, we know there is still work to be done. Only one-third of Canadian kids achieve the recommended 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Even less kids are getting in enough movement as they age and it's even worse for girls who are, on average, less active than boys at all ages.

That's why Kids Run Club exists and why we offer a girls* run club for junior and senior high schools. You can read more about our program for girls* on page 16.

Ready to get started? This handbook has all the information you need to start a Kids Run Club at your school, including:

- Coach's checklist
- Healthy Living Challenge
- Girls* Run Club
- Stretching ideas for runners
- Tip of the week
- Ideas on making Kids Run Club fun

The Healthy Tomorrow Foundation would like to thank Doctors Nova Scotia, the Government of Nova Scotia, and MD Financial Management for supporting KRC and enabling us to offer the program free of cost.

**Includes all kids who identify as girls.*

www.kidsrunclub.ca
info@kidsrunclub.ca



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COACH'S CHECKLIST

- ☐ Register for Kids Run Club at www.kidsrunclub.ca
- ☐ Review Coach's Handbook for tips on getting started
- ☐ Recruit other teachers or parents if necessary
- ☐ Make copies of Coach's Handbook for other coaches
- ☐ Decide If you will offer Kids Run Club as an extracurricular or during class-time
- ☐ Decide which grades to include
- ☐ Choose run day(s) and time
- ☐ Select and measure a running route
- ☐ Download, tailor and distribute the permission letter provided by Kids Run Club if necessary
- ☐ Promote Kids Run Club, preferably during an assembly where you can emphasize the fun, non-competitive aspect
- ☐ Find a fun run your participants can take part in. Visit the Fun Run section at www.kidsrunclub.ca to find events near you
- ☐ Check out www.fitnessfinders.net for a cool and inexpensive participation prize (optional)
- ☐ Contact Kids Run Club to book a school visit
- ☐ Create and post participant tracking sheets on bristol board (optional)
- ☐ Share important info with participants during first session:
 - Details such as run day(s), time and what's needed to participate (proper attire, footwear, etc.)
 - Safety guidelines for running
 - The running route
 - Tips on pacing and pushing themselves
 - Importance of fun
 - Runner's Handbook – online at www.kidsrunclub.ca
 - Running log for tracking progress
 - Information about a fun run your group may use as a final event
- ☐ Contact Kids Run Club toward the end of your program with the number of participants who have completed the club and are entitled to receive a finisher's prize
- ☐ View our training videos online – visit www.kidsrunclub.ca/training-videos



KIDS RUN CLUB RESOURCES

Kids Run Club Resources

What makes this program awesome is that Kids Run Club includes program supports and incentives for coaches and participants, free of charge.

School visits

Kids Run Club has regional representatives who travel the province visiting schools to promote the program, provide running clinics, support coaches and motivate participants.

Running log and training programs

A Kids Run Club running log is available online and helps participants to track their progress during Kids Run Club. The handout also includes three training programs (2.1, 4.2 and 5 km) and tips for proper running technique.

Runner's handbook

A runner's handbook containing training guides, tips for running, stretching exercises and information on healthy living is available online for participants to view or download. (English and French versions are available).



Finisher's prizes

Kids Run Club finisher's prizes are provided free of charge for registered schools and groups in Nova Scotia and are available in the spring.

Certificate of achievement

Rewarding participants for their hard work and training is key to ensuring they get the most of the program and return the following year. Kids Run Club has designed a certificate of achievement for coaches to present to their Kids Run Club members at the end of the season.

The Healthy Living Challenge

The Healthy Living Challenge (HLC) is a five-day challenge that encourages participants to be active, eat well and reduce screen time.

Although the HLC can be used with learners of all ages, it may be most suitable for middle to senior elementary students (Grades 2–6).

KRC Let's Move/Sois Actif

We offer 12, 5-minute movement break videos to get your students moving. Available in English and French, these videos are suitable for grades primary to six and include easy moves that can be done within the confines of the classroom.

Form letter

Kids Run Club has created a form letter that coaches can personalize to help make implementation easy and ensure parents are kept informed.

Visit www.kidsrunclub.ca to view/download these resources.





GETTING READY

When to start Kids Run Club

- The main training programs (2.1 and 4.2 km) consist of **14 runs**, including a final fun run. If you plan on having one group run per week, you'll need to start 14 weeks before the date of the fun run.

Running twice per week is ideal.

- If winter conditions limit outside running, start early with indoor circuit training and games. (See page 35.)
- The **duration** of the club is flexible and depends on availability of coaches and facilities. It can range from four weeks to many months.

Which grades to include

Although most Kids Run Club participants are in Grades 3–6, the program can be adapted for Grades Primary to 12. See page 13 for more info on adapting KRC to younger runners.

Which training program to do (2.1, 4.2 or 5 km)

The training programs are offered as options for participating schools. Most schools choose their program based on the distance of the final run their group will do. As all running events allow walking, kids of all ages can do all three distances.

Where to run

- Choose a route that is close to school and short (500–1,000 m). This will prevent runners from being too spread out and allows for varying the distance for runners of varying abilities.

- Minimize crossing streets if running off school grounds
- If possible, avoid hills
- If running small loops on school grounds, see tips for making it fun on page 29

When to run

- **Morning** runs work for some schools but may limit the number of participants and time available to run
- **Recess** runs limit running time, but work well for schools whose students are bused and have a short lunch hour
- **Lunch-hour** runs are most popular. Make sure participants eat **after** running
- **After-school** runs are popular too, as you're not limited for time. Some students miss out due to other activities or transportation issues
- **Avoid Mondays and Fridays** as you'll miss several due to holidays/in-services
- **Having two runs per week** allows you to offer one at lunch time and one after school
- **During class time.** Kids Run Club can be adapted to the classroom by offering shorter runs at school and assigning longer runs as homework. Learn more about our modified program in the Coach's Corner at www.kidsrunclub.ca



Recruiting participants

In order to attract less active participants, it's important to promote Kids Run Club in person, either class-by-class or during an assembly. This way, you can emphasize the fun, non-competitive aspect of the club and let the kids know that walking breaks are OK. By telling the kids about Kids Run Club finisher's prize and final fun run, you may entice kids who normally don't participate in physical activity programs.

Form letter for parents

Kids Run Club has created a form letter for parents that can be tailored to suit your circumstances and includes a generic school permission slip. Providing this letter to parents is an easy way to share information about Kids Run Club and receive information regarding participants who may have health issues relevant to running. The letter can be found in the Program Resources section at www.kidsrunclub.ca.

Collect any relevant **medical information** on participants and keep it handy during run club. Of particular importance is information related to medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes or allergies, which may be an issue while being active or outdoors.

Meeting spot

The gym is the ideal meeting spot as it allows for indoor workouts, but a large classroom will do as well. Find a space on the wall to post things like notices, a "Tip of the Week," a running chart that tracks the group's progress and a map of a virtual tour your runners are doing.

First meeting

- Discuss rules for participating, especially those related to safety
- Describe the running route (have a map if possible)
- Give information about what to wear, bringing a water bottle and your bad weather plan
- Distribute runner's logs and encourage participants to track all their runs
- Encourage participants to do "homework runs" to help improve their running

Dealing with bad weather

A little cold, snow or rain doesn't have to keep you indoors. Educate participants about proper clothing and use your judgment about when to move indoors. Below are some tips for indoor workouts:

- Don't do too much **indoor running** – it can be boring and hard on the body. Limit indoor running to 20 minutes and alternate the run direction every 3–5 minutes. Play **music** if possible
- **Run the halls** if possible. It's much more fun than running laps in the gym
- If you have the space, **running games**, **obstacle courses** and **circuit-training** are fun ways to keep participants moving (see page 32)
- **Winter alternatives** include snowshoeing, skating, cross country skiing, sledding and fort building.



SAFETY

Keeping participants safe is your most important task. Here are some tips to help you do so:

- Use a short running route (1 km or less) to prevent participants from being too spread out or too far from the school
- Count your participants or do a sign-in/sign-out before and after every run
- Run on sidewalks, fields or trails when possible
- Limit crossing streets
- Carry two-way radios or cellular phones to use in an emergency.

- If running on the road is unavoidable, run facing oncoming traffic and in single file
- The more coaches you have the safer your club will be, allowing you to have coaches with slower and faster runners and those who walk a lot
- Educate participants about sun safety and remind them to wear sunscreen, hats and sunglasses

Safety for participants when running from home
Encourage participants to read the safety section in the Runner's Handbook (online). Review the tips during one of the first group meetings.

RUNNING CLOTHES

Kids Run Club participants don't need special running clothes to participate. Here's all they need to know about what to wear:

- Wear something comfortable that isn't too tight or too loose
- Dress to stay cool in the heat and warm in the cold
- Dress in layers
- Don't overdress; underdress a little and you'll be just right
- Bring shorts and a t-shirt for days when the workout is indoors
- Have a change of clothes and footwear at school for wet weather days

Shoes

Although proper running shoes are best for running, any kind of sneaker will do for Kids Run Club. For participants who plan on continuing to run once the club finishes, suggest they speak to their parent about buying proper running shoes. Otherwise, here's all they need to know about shoes:

- Use **sneakers**, not dress shoes, boots, slippers, sandals or shoes with raised heels
- Make sure they **fit properly** (a thumbnail's space between big toe and end of shoe)
- **Tie** shoes properly – not too tight, not too loose
- Wear **socks** that won't fall down, wrinkle and cause blisters
- To dry **wet shoes**, remove insoles if possible, stuff with newspaper



IMPLEMENTING KIDS RUN CLUB

STARTING THE WORKOUT

- For extra-curricular programs, **take attendance** in one of the following ways: have runners sign in and out on grade-level sheets; assign spots in the gym for each grade to gather and have runners do attendance; have grade-based containers (such as empty ice cream tubs) and have all participants write their name on a clothes-peg that they attach to the outside of the container when they go out, then pop it in the tub when they return
- Share the **tip of the week** and answer any questions
- Go over your **route** for the day and reinforce **proper pacing**
- **Warm-up:** Start with an active warm-up such as running games, skipping, brisk walking or slow jogging. On cold or wet days, do the warm-up indoors
- Static stretching before running is not recommended
- Assign a **pace-setter**, especially during the warm-up, to prevent participants from running too fast
- Remind participants to end their run at an easy pace
- Encourage participants to celebrate everyone's efforts, regardless of how quickly they complete the distance
- Finish off with some **stretching**
- Encourage participants to do **"homework" runs**
- Remind participants to use the **running log** to track each run

THE RUNNING SCHEDULES

2.1 KM PROGRAM

Run #	Distance (km)
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	1.5
6	1.5
7	1.5
8	1.5
9	2
10	2
11	2
12	2
13	1
14	2.1 Fun Run!

4.2 KM PROGRAM

Run #	Distance (km)
1	2
2	2
3	2.5
4	2.5
5	2.5
6	3
7	3
8	3
9	3.5
10	3.5
11	3.5
12	4
13	3
14	4.2 Fun Run!

5 KM PROGRAM

Run #	Distance (km)
1	2
2	2
3	2
4	2.5
5	2.5
6	2.5
7	3
8	3
9	3
10	3.5
11	3.5
12	3.5
13	4
14	4
15	4
16	4.5
17	4.5
18	4.5
19	5
20	3.5
21	5 Fun Run!

Kids Run Club has designed three training programs based on final run distances of 2.1, 4.2 and 5 kilometres. Choosing a program depends on the distance of the final fun run your group will do, but also on how much time you have and what type of running route you use. If you're only able to do short runs at school, encourage your participants to do their long runs from home.

The runs done in the 2.1 km program are fairly short, so the participants who are fit may only be active for 5–10 minutes. In order to give participants a chance to be a bit more active, add some games, running drills or exercises.



ADAPTING KRC FOR YOUNGER RUNNERS

Many Kids Run Club groups across Nova Scotia include runners below Grade 3. This is an enthusiastic and energetic age group, and while many young runners possess the physical ability to run longer distances, they may lack the attention span to do so. Encouraging younger runners to run longer distances might actually take the fun out of running.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when starting a program with runners below Grade 3:

- Keep the endurance (continuous running) portion of your session to **15 minutes maximum**
- Choose a route that's safe and preferably **shorter than 500 metres**
- Assign older students or coaches to control the pace – little kids find it almost impossible to do anything but sprint!
- Little kids love to sprint, so give them an opportunity to do so during **running drills or relay races** after the endurance part of the run. A good way to encourage them to pace themselves during the distance portion is to tell them to save some energy for the sprints
- **Use something fun** to help the participants keep track of their laps, like collecting Popsicle sticks or elastic bands, or using bingo dabbers to stamp their hands as they complete a lap
- Have the group **alternate between walking and running together**, such as 30 seconds walking and one minute running. Gradually increase time spent running

- Use the **pacing triangle** and **running games** (like the Animal Game on page 32) to teach younger runners about the different paces of walking and running
- **Use relay races** to practice various fundamental movement skills like dodging, hopping, skipping, going sideways and backwards
- **Play music** if possible

Of course there are exceptions to the rule, so be willing to let a younger runner join older runners if they demonstrate both the fitness, interest and safety sense (depending on running route) required to participate in longer runs.

Participating in a fun run is a great way to celebrate taking part in Kids Run Club and often motivates family members to be active. Fun Run distances range from 1 to 5 km and normally have no minimum age. Parents should determine if their young runner requires supervision while taking part in the run. Young runners may be capable of completing the longer distance fun runs, but if they are not able to focus on running for more than 15 minutes, running that far may not be “fun.” Consider shorter distances for very young runners.

For more information on run training for young kids, check out the videos at www.nyrr.org/youth-and-schools/running-start/coaching-videos.

PHYSICAL LITERACY AND FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS

Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.

–International Physical Literacy Association

Research shows that poor physical literacy can contribute to inactivity in children and youth. Achieving and maintaining physical literacy is a lifelong journey. It is important that children have the opportunity to learn a wide range of physical skills, including running, jumping, kicking, throwing, swimming and catching, in order to be better positioned to lead an active life well into adulthood.

Kids Run Club provides an opportunity to introduce the fundamental movement skill of running. By learning proper running technique (page 20), participants will not only improve

their running, but be more proficient at other activities, such as soccer, basketball and tennis. Kids Run Club also follows the Canadian Sport for Life Long-Term Athlete Development Model, and provides participants with an opportunity to set individual SMART goals through the running program.

For information on fundamental movement skills, physical literacy, assessment tools and training programs, visit these websites:

www.athleticsnovascotia.ca

www.physicalliteracy.ca

www.PHECanada.ca

www.sportforlife.ca

www.activeforlife.com

www.befitforlife.ca

www.canadiansportforlife.ca





HELPING PARTICIPANTS GET THE MOST OUT OF KIDS RUN CLUB

The fact that the students have joined Kids Run Club is worth celebrating. Even if they walk the entire workout each week, they are doing more than if they had stayed home to watch TV or play video games. That said, there are ways to help each student challenge themselves so they can improve. Once they start to see this improvement, they're more likely to continue running on their own and sustain their increased level of physical activity.

In order to help all participants improve, it's important to **have as many adult volunteers or coaches as possible**. If your group is small (up to 10 kids) you may be able to address individual abilities or challenges yourself. When your group goes beyond this number, additional coaches will be helpful to work with the different groups and to address safety issues. You may want to let your students run together as a large group for a few sessions to assess the different fitness levels before breaking them into smaller groups.

Break participants into groups based on the amount of walking they do. For example, one group may do mainly walking, gradually adding more running. One group may do equal portions of running and walking and another group may be running non-stop.

Offer different workouts for different groups. At one school with a very large group, the coach split his elementary/junior high runners into seven groups and assigned each group a colour rather than a number or speed. He designed a different workout for each group, ranging from playing running games and doing short intervals to running four kilometres without walking. You may need to alter the scheduled workout for some of your participants. Be creative and remember to keep it fun!

Keeping your Kids Run Club fun will help to motivate your runners. Check out page 28 for tips on keeping your club fun.



GIRLS RUN CLUB*

*AND THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS GIRLS

In Canada, only one-third of children and youth achieve the recommended 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Unfortunately girls experience even lower rates of activity than boys.

Participating in physical activity and sport can result in a wide range of physical, psychological and social benefits for girls. However, there are many barriers, which result in declining activity.

Offering girls-only physical activity programs, particularly for those in junior and senior high school, can contribute to increased participation and provide an experience that results in sustained increases in physical activity rates. Some of the benefits of a girls-only program are:

- Girls who are less active or lack confidence in their abilities feeling more comfortable taking part in the program
- Easier to focus on the fun aspect of the program and minimize the competitive nature of activity which intimidates many children and youth, including girls
- Provides the opportunity to address issues such as self-esteem and positive body image that are specific to girls

Offering a girls-only Kids Run Club doesn't have to be complicated or very different from the co-ed version described in this handbook. Simply providing the opportunity for girls to

be active without boys present may be enough to enhance the experience, especially for those girls with lower fitness levels and/or lower confidence/competence in being active.

This kind of opportunity is particularly important for girls as they enter adolescence when activity rates start to decline.

WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN A GIRLS RUN CLUB?

Girls-only activities may be suitable for girls and those who identify as girls of all ages but are especially important for those in junior and senior high, who experience the biggest drop in physical activity. For this reason, the girls-only Kids Run Club is targeted primarily to this age group.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A GIRLS RUN CLUB

Recruiting participants for a running program can be challenging, especially those who are inactive and, in particular, pre-teen and teenage girls. How the program is promoted and implemented can make a difference in how successful you are at recruiting and retaining participants. Here are some tips for achieving success:

Including girls in the planning, promotion and implementation gives them an opportunity to grow as leaders and creates a sense of ownership over the program. It will also help with recruiting and retaining participants.



Promote the program in person rather than by simply posting a sign. Doing small presentations to classes or at an assembly is an ideal way to provide information about the program and entice the girls to give it a try. Consider having only girls present during this presentation to avoid having the focus be on the boys, who may object to being excluded.

Female coaches are good role models for the girls who take part. It's important for pre-teens and teens to see that women can work hard, overcome challenges, be supportive of one another and sweat without being "gross." It may also provide a more comfortable environment for discussions around self-esteem and positive body image. Whenever possible, try to have female coaches involved in your program.

Zero talk about weight or dieting. Set a ground rule that no comments related to your own body or those of others will be permitted, whether meant as compliment or criticism. Comments such as "You look great. Have you lost weight?" or "I feel so fat in these clothes" can inspire or reinforce negative and un-healthy weight control behaviours and negative body image. Conversations around food should be focused on healthy eating and good sources of fuel for running rather than restricting consumption.

Menstruation can sometimes deter girls from being active. Be aware that some girls may have legitimate reasons for avoiding physical activity while on their period, such as not using tampons or having a heavy flow. For those who are reluctant to run due to cramps, share with them the fact that being active can alleviate cramps and help them feel better.

Focus on function, not form. When girls view their bodies through a functional lens, they're more likely to be satisfied with and appreciate their body. They also report feeling more empowered and physically capable when focusing on what their bodies can do rather than how they look. Help participants appreciate their physical accomplishments such as increasing their run distances, improving

running technique, pushing through rather than taking a break and running more comfortably. Celebrate these accomplishments on an individual and group level.

Reinforce the benefits of physical activity other than weight loss such as increased energy, stress reduction, increased confidence, better concentration and improved mood.

Including girls' input in the program will give them a sense of ownership and may result in a more successful program. Some aspects they can be involved in are picking a group name, brainstorming ideas to recruit more participants, picking the time the group will run, picking a running route, leading warm-up and cool-down, being pace-setter or time-keeper, picking topics they'd like a guest speaker to address and picking a fun run to do.

Provide opportunities for other activities such as yoga, Zumba, boot camp or Taekwondo by inviting guests or visiting facilities.

Find a **local fun run** for the girls to participate in at the conclusion of the program. This goal will motivate them to continue running and will bring the program to an end with a real celebration of accomplishment.

Encourage participants to **wear sports bras**, which don't have to cost a lot. Running without proper support can be uncomfortable and embarrassing.

Run as a group, progressing gradually from an easy challenge of running 2–3 minutes and walking 1 minute. Training side-by-side, despite differing fitness levels, reinforces the group support system and can make it more fun. It also provides a chance to encourage one another, especially those who find running more challenging.

Avoid a running route that involves running near other students (on school grounds or by a bus stop).



Use a **running log** to reinforce participation. Logs can be maintained by individual participants, like the one provided by Kids Run Club, or displayed on bristol board, where each runner tracks their progress, or by tracking the group's progress (accumulated group distance toward a specific destination) on a poster.

Pick a **group name** and try to obtain something to indicate membership, such as a shirt, hat, bandanna, sweatband or water bottle.

Play music whenever possible. Ask the girls for songs to add to the playlist, assuming they are appropriate.

Start and end each run with a **group chat** about how everyone is feeling in general and how they feel about their run. An easy way to do this is ask each girl to provide one or two words about how they feel before and after running.

Use social media. Create a blog or **Facebook** page the coach manages where members can find out what's going on, follow its progress and chat to one another. The Facebook page would only be appropriate if your participants are 13 years of age or older. Coaches may also use Twitter to share information about their club. Be sure to follow @kidsrunclub_DNS.

Arrange for **special guests** to join the girls for their run(s) or present on a topic such as nutrition, sports injuries, other types of physical activity, self-esteem, positive body image or healthy cooking. Try to provide as many positive female role models as possible in these situations.

Snacks make everything more fun. Having healthy snacks and water after each run adds to the overall experience and is an opportunity to expose participants to healthy options. Avoid sports drinks, fruit juice and chocolate milk as they are not necessary for this level of activity and reinforce consuming sugars we don't need.

Prizes can play a big role in encouraging participation. Try to obtain small prizes for weekly random draws and possibly a couple bigger prizes for the end of the program. You can use these prizes to encourage ongoing participation by providing participants with ballots for the final prizes when they come to each training run. The more times they run, the more chances they have at winning.

Get feedback from participants during the program and at its conclusion to assist with creating a successful program. Please share this feedback with Kids Run Club to help us improve the program.

EXPANDING TO A GENDER-INCLUSIVE CLUB

It's not just girls who struggle to remain active during adolescence. Many teens experience barriers that result in their avoiding physical activity, including those in the LGBTQ community. Creating a welcoming club for all genders that follows the principles of the Girls Run Club is fully supported by Kids Run Club.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT BOYS BEING EXCLUDED

A very normal reaction when one hears about any kind of program that deliberately excludes one group or another is that "it's not fair." This is a common and understandable reaction to girls-only programs. It's important to remember that research shows very clearly that boys are more physically active than girls, particularly as they age. Girls-only programs may help to increase physical activity rates of those who tend to be less active.

One option to address this concern is to offer girls-only runs one or two days per week and a co-ed run on another day. This provides the coach with an excellent opportunity to compare the experiences and determine if the girls-only option is beneficial for their female students.



TOPICS FOR TIP OF THE WEEK

An important role coaches play is to provide participants with information about running and healthy living. Coaches will have the opportunity to share information on various topics at the beginning of every group run. Please use the information provided in this handbook to discuss the following topics with participants:

- The benefits of physical activity & movement
- Safety when doing individual runs
- Proper running technique (this can be ongoing)
- Pacing and pushing yourself
- Stretching – why it's important, plus a few new stretches
- Running in cool temperatures
- Running in hot temperatures
- Injury prevention and treatment
- The Healthy Living Challenge
- Nutrition – this topic can easily be spread over a few sessions
- Hydration (water's best, limit sugary drinks like chocolate milk, fruit juice and sports drinks and avoid energy drinks)
- Cross-training alternatives
- Reducing screen time
- Tips for participating in a fun run
- Sun protection



RUNNING TECHNIQUE

Running with proper technique is important as it can improve performance, conserve energy and reduce the risk of running injuries. Most people, including kids, will have a style that is unique and natural to them. Trying to make significant changes too quickly can lead to injury, but there are still some basic aspects of running technique that can and should be covered. Encourage your runners to go through this head-to-toe checklist several times while running, especially as they get tired, as that's when running form tends to deteriorate.

HEAD-TO-TOE RUNNING FORM CHECKLIST

- Run tall, with good posture
- Keep head level; look about 20 feet ahead, not down at the ground
- Head, shoulders and hips should be lined up over the feet
- Breathe deeply through your mouth
- Core should be relaxed but not sloppy
- Hold arms at a 90-degree angle and swing them front to back, not side to side
- Hands should be relaxed, not in a fist
- Don't bend at the hip
- Minimize knee and heel lift
- Run with "quiet feet"; avoid pounding or slapping feet on the ground

- Don't bounce: it wastes energy and increases risk of injury. Focus on going forward, not upward
- Add a slight forward lean from the ankles (not waist)
- **Cadence:** The key to running well is a faster turnover or taking quicker steps. Aim for a stride rate of approximately **180 steps per minute**. Using a watch, count how many times each foot touches the ground in 30 seconds and multiply by two. Do this 30-second count every now and then so participants can work on running with a quick cadence
- **Foot strike:** Good running form includes having your foot land below your body, not in front. Taking quicker steps (180 per minute) helps to correct over-striding.
- **Sprinting** requires higher arm and leg lift, more forward lean and longer strides. Lengthen strides by pushing off with more force, rather than reaching farther in front.

Note: Changes to running strides should be done gradually to avoid injury. Incorporate some running drills with each practice to remind participants about proper form.



RUNNING UPHILL

- Maintain good posture, lean forward slightly, avoid hunching over
- Take shorter strides
- Land on the balls of feet
- Pump arms more vigorously
- Look part way up the hill, not at the top or down at feet
- Maintain the same cadence on a hill as on the flats, but not the same speed. (Cadence means how often the feet hit the ground versus speed, which is how quickly the runner travels)
- Remember: Every hill run is a chance to get stronger!

RUNNING DOWNHILL

- Lean forward slightly
- Lower arms slightly
- Run quietly, keeping knees bent and landing heel-toe to help absorb the impact
- Maintain normal cadence, allowing stride to lengthen slightly without bounding down the hill

BREATHING

- Runners should expect to breathe heavily when running
- The body needs lots of oxygen while running so breathe in and out through the mouth

- If a runner is breathing so hard they can't talk in short sentences, they're running too fast
- Breathing will be heavier going uphill or against the wind

SIDE STITCHES

A side stitch or cramp is very common, especially with new runners, and can be very painful. They're unpleasant enough to make some people stop running altogether. This kind of cramp is different than the type from eating or drinking before running, and is associated with the diaphragm. If runners run too fast and are taking quick, shallow breathes, they're more likely to get a stitch. To **prevent** side stitches, encourage runners to warm up with slow jogging, breathe deeply and avoid running too fast. To **get rid of a side stitch**, inhale deeply through the nose and exhale hard through the mouth for 30-60 seconds.

RUNNING WITH ASTHMA

Those who suffer from asthma can still participate fully in Kids Run Club. There are many endurance athletes with asthma who participate at all levels of sport. Warming up and taking breaks when necessary are very important for runners with asthma to properly control their symptoms. Encourage youth with asthma to join Kids Run Club. Many may already participate in sports involving vigorous activity and know how to manage their asthma. If not, encourage them to talk to their doctor about how to best control their asthma when running.

If any participants have asthma, make sure you are aware of any medication requirements (such as puffers) and preferably speak with their parent about what to do in the event of an asthma attack.

For more information about asthma, visit:
www.ns.lung.ca or www.asthmakids.ca

PACING AND PUSHING YOURSELF

The biggest mistakes most new runners make are **running too fast** and **giving up too soon**. Participants of Kids Run Club prepare to complete a final run of 2.1, 4.2 or 5 km. If they run too fast, they'll probably need frequent walking breaks. If they don't learn to push themselves a bit, it will be hard for them to improve.

Most kids have two speeds, slow walking and fast running, so you'll need to **teach them about the different paces** of running and walking. Using a follow-the-leader style, do an **easy** then brisk walk, followed by an easy jog, a moderate jog or run, and then a sprint so they can feel the different paces.

Tips regarding pacing

- Have participants **warm up** by walking or jogging. Have a coach or participant lead the warm-up pace to ensure it's not too fast
- Once warmed up, remind participants to keep the pace **slow**
- Encourage participants to try a slower jog rather than walk as they get tired
- Encourage participants to run with those who run the same pace

Tips regarding walking breaks

- Challenge participants to push themselves a little by running an extra 30 seconds or steps before taking a walking break
- Keep walking breaks **short** (30–90 seconds)
- When walking, keep the pace **fast**
- Find a **pattern** to alternate running and walking like: running for three minutes, walking for one; running between four telephone poles, walking between two; or running two blocks, walking one

RUNNING DRILLS

ABC Running Drills

Running drills help to isolate and reinforce the phases of the gait cycle: knee lift, upper leg motion and push-off. Drills can be done one to three times per week and should take no more than 15 minutes.

A Drill (high knees): Alternate driving knees up with foot parallel to the ground, foot strike below the hips. Can be done while walking, skipping or jogging

B Drill (pawing drill): Using the same high-knee motion as in the A drill but bring the leg back to the ground using a pawing motion

C Drill (glute kicks): Take short, quick strides while kicking the glutes

See catch up and pacing triangle drills on pages 32–33.



STRETCHING

Stretching is an important part of running and can help prevent injuries and stiffness, leave muscles long and relaxed, and improve performance. Static stretching, the type shown in this handbook, should be done after exercise, not before when muscles are cold. A warm-up including dynamic movement can include some range-of-motion exercises, but avoid stretching that involves holding stretches for more than 10 seconds.

Teach participants proper technique for all the stretches. As they may finish their run at different times, they will need to complete the basic running stretches on their own. If you do the stretching in a group, have participants take turns leading the stretches.

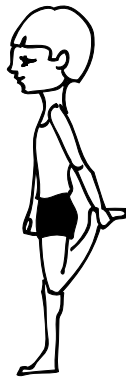
Adding a few minutes of walking at the end of a run is a good way to lengthen and loosen muscles.

SHARE THESE TIPS WITH PARTICIPANTS WHEN TEACHING THE STRETCHES DISPLAYED IN THIS HANDBOOK:

- **Cool down** by walking for a few minutes after running before stretching
- **Don't bounce** while stretching
- **Breathe** and stay relaxed
- Hold all stretches for **15–30 seconds**
- Shake legs out between stretches
- **Repeat each stretch** two or three times
- A feeling of tension or pulling should be felt in the muscle being stretched
- If there is pain when stretching, tell the runners to ease off the stretch
- **Stretch both sides** of the body evenly
- Don't stretch an injured muscle unless recommended to do so by a health professional

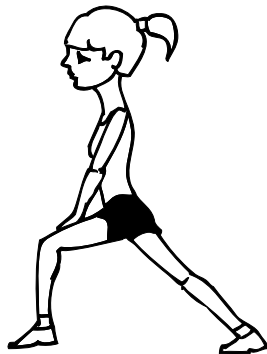


STRETCHES



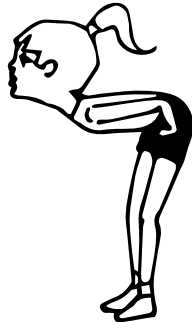
Quadriceps (the front of the thigh):

- Hold something for balance (a wall or partner's shoulder)
- Bend left leg and hold with left hand
- Keep right leg slightly bent
- Keep knees together
- Stand up straight
- Gently press left hip forward
- You should feel the stretch in your left thigh and hip
- Switch legs and repeat



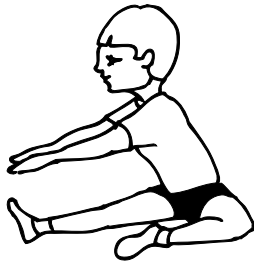
Gastroc and soleus muscles (calves) and **Achilles tendon**:

- Take a big step forward
- Keep both feet pointed forward
- Bend front leg forward without letting knee go past toes
- Keep the heel of your back foot on the ground
- Keep upper body straight, don't lean forward
- You should feel the stretch in the calf of your back leg
- This position will stretch the **gastroc** calf muscle and should be held for 15 to 30 seconds
- To stretch the **soleus** calf muscle, hold the same position but bend the back leg slightly, keeping the back heel on the ground. (This part of the stretch is not in the runner's handbook.)



Hamstring (the back of the thigh): Standing stretch*

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart and hands on hips
- Bend forward with a straight back until you feel the stretch
- Look forward and keep your chin up
- Don't lock your knees
- To get more of a stretch, lean forward slightly until the heels are about to come off the ground



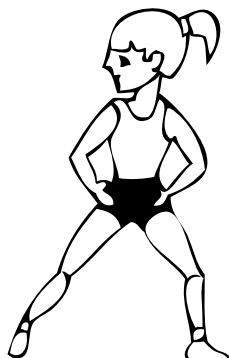
Hamstring (the back of the thigh): Seated stretch

- Sit on the ground with one leg extended in front and the other one tucked in towards the body
- Lean toward the foot of the extended leg, keeping your back straight and head up
- Switch sides and repeat



Adductor (inner thigh): Seated stretch

- Sit with feet pulled toward body, soles of shoes against each other
- Place hands on ankles, elbows on knees
- Bend forward with back straight and head up, gently pressing elbows on knees



Adductor (inner thigh): Standing stretch

- Stand with feet spread fairly wide, hands on hips
- Keep feet pointed forward
- Bend left knee, bringing weight over to that side
- Keep right leg straight with knee facing forward
- Switch sides and repeat



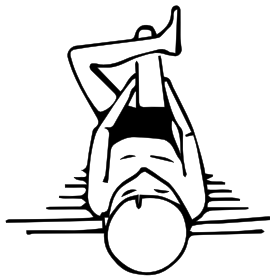
Lower back stretch*:

- Lie on the floor
- Bring knees up to chest and hold, tuck chin to knees
- Stretch body out straight between repeats



Iliotibial band (hip) and side stretch*:

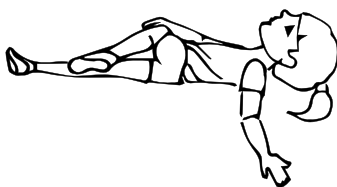
- Stand on the ground, place left foot over right
- Raise left arm toward ceiling and bend over to the right
- Let right arm hang loosely toward the ground
- Don't bend forward; keep body upright
- Switch sides and repeat



Iliotibial band, gluteus muscles and piriformis (hip and glute) stretch #1*:

- Lie on the floor and bend both legs up towards body
- Cross left leg over right knee (see diagram)
- Hold right thigh just below the knee. (Slip left hand between legs)
- Keep left knee out to the side
- This stretch should be felt in the left glute and hip
- By leaning legs slightly left or right, the location of the stretch within the glute can be changed
- Switch sides and repeat

Hip and glute stretch #2*:



- Lie on the floor and bring left knee toward chest
- Using right hand, pull the left knee over body, keeping left shoulder on the floor
- Switch sides and repeat

Ankle rotations*:

- Stand with hands on hips
- Lift left foot off the ground slightly and rotate several times in both directions
- Switch sides and repeat

**These are additional stretches not included in the runner's handbook.*



INJURY PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

PREVENTING INJURIES

Preventing injuries is something that should always be kept in mind by coaches and participants. It's very discouraging to have to stop running due to an injury. To keep participants running injury-free, follow these tips and remind your participants of them often:

- Each workout should start with a warm-up of brisk walking or slow jogging
- Go through the head-to-toe running form checklist often (page 20)
- Never try to run through pain that makes you limp or change your stride
- Follow every run with stretching
- Avoid the terrible “toos” – doing too much, too soon, too fast
- Increase running distances and speeds gradually

TREATING INJURIES

Most new runners will experience aches and pains as their bodies adapt to being used in new and more challenging ways. Some stiffness is to be expected when beginning running and stretching, especially if the individual hasn't been physically active on a regular basis. This kind of soreness will be spread evenly on both sides of the body and will be experienced one and two days after running. For example, a new runner may have sore thighs or calves after their first few runs.

This kind of soreness may be worse two days after running, will gradually reduce with consistent running and should not stop one from running. Other aches and pains, especially ones that don't go away, may need more attention, possibly from a doctor.

The running distances in Kids Run Club increase gradually, allowing participants to adjust to the new activity and prevent injuries resulting from doing too much too soon. Most common running injuries – like muscle strains and sprained ankles – can be treated by the participant under the supervision of an adult. These kinds of injuries should be treated using the **R.I.C.E** method:

Rest: Take a few days off running or any activity that creates pain in the injured area.

Ice: For the first 48 hours after the injury, apply ice to the area for 15 to 20 minutes, three or four times a day. An ice pack, bag of frozen vegetables or crushed ice can be used. Cover the skin with a thin cloth before applying ice.

Compression: Apply a wrap to the area to prevent swelling. It should be snug but not so tight the area becomes cold or numb.

Elevate: Keep the injured area up on a pillow, above the heart as much as possible. This will reduce the blood flow to the area and prevent further swelling.

If a participant experiences a sharp pain anywhere while running, they should slow down or walk for a while to see if the pain goes away. If the pain doesn't go away, they should tell an adult. If a participant has an injury that isn't improving, especially after using the R.I.C.E. method, advise them to stop running until they have a health professional assess it.

Contact the parent(s) and give them any information you have about the injury. Advise them to consult a health professional before returning to running. Unless you are professionally qualified to do so, don't evaluate or diagnose a participant's injury yourself.

MAKING KIDS RUN CLUB FUN

MOTIVATING PARTICIPANTS

Keeping your participants coming back each week will not only benefit them individually, but also keep group morale high. Here are some examples of ways to encourage participation:

- **Play games** that incorporate running. A list of games is provided in this handbook.
- Have a **final fun run** planned (see the list of events in this handbook).
- **Track progress** by logging individual and/or group distance. The total distance, including homework runs, can be mapped over a certain area – around Nova Scotia, across Canada or a route that stops at all Mi'kmaw communities in the province. The goal distance you choose will depend on the size of your group. Plan a celebration for when you reach your chosen destination.
- Provide **awards for participant milestones** (such as distance or number of run club days) – stickers, certificates of achievement or Toe Tokens (www.fitnessfinders.net) are good options.
- Spend time running/walking beside as many of the participants as possible, helping them with pacing and offering encouragement and tips on how they can improve.
- **Individual runs** are important for helping participants improve, especially if your group only meets once a week. One way to encourage participants to do their runs at home is to assign “**homework runs**” at the end of each group workout.
- **Name** your running club, incorporating the school name, such as Ridgecliff Runners.
- Purchase **T-shirts** with club name through fundraising or support from the PTA.
- Have **healthy treats** like bottles of water and fresh fruit after each workout or every other week.

- **Challenges:** Challenge classes, staff and parents to participate. Challenge another school with a similar population size to see who can get the most participants or most kilometres logged. Challenge or invite parents to come out and join their children at least once.
- Have **weekly draws** for things such as vouchers (healthy restaurants, sports facilities, bowling or movies) or items encouraging activity, such as balls, Frisbees or skipping ropes.
- **Final draw:** Have a few bigger items, preferably donated. Participants receive a ballot for every run they attend which goes in the hat for a draw for a final grand prize. The more often they attend, the more chances they have to win.
- Invite **guest** speakers to talk about running, nutrition and other forms of physical activity.
- Give your participants information about **other events** they may want to train for and participate in. It helps to have specific goals in mind when training.
- Provide a weekly **newsletter** which contains a tip of the week and helps keep parents informed about Kids Run Club.
- **Play music** when the group is together and the coach doesn't need to be heard.

MAKING SHORT LOOPS FUN

Some school groups have no choice but to use a short, concrete loop on their school grounds. Although it's not ideal it can still be fun. Using fun, creative ways to count laps will help motivate participants to keep running. One example is having an adult, maybe even the principal, stand in one spot and give participants a "token" each time they pass. This can be a Popsicle stick,* elastic, counting cube, stamp or bingo blotter "blot" on a piece of paper. You can then track individual and group distances, which works well if your group is trying to run a virtual route, such as around Nova Scotia.

*Use plain Popsicle sticks to represent 1 lap and coloured sticks to represent 5 laps. This way the kids run harder to get the coveted coloured sticks!

The schools that have the most success tend to have many parent volunteers each week.

Use email or social media to share information with participants, parents and other schools.

Be creative and be sure to share your ideas with a Kids Run Club representative so they can be passed on to other schools.

SPICING UP THE TRAINING

Most running programs include tempo, speed and hill workouts as a way to improve speed and power and add variety to training. These kinds of workouts are normally added after the participant has been running for a while. Advise your new runners to take it easy during these workouts. Only one of these workouts should be added each week (i.e., hill workout one week, tempo or interval the next), ideally followed by a rest or easy day. You may not have time to include these workouts in your group sessions, but you can give participants some instruction on how to do them as “homework.”

Pick-ups, or “Fartleks”

Adding some of these to a regular run is a great way to not only improve running in general, but can turn a bad run into a good one. Fartleks are short spurts of faster running added to normal runs after warming up; they can last from 20–90 seconds. They are not meant to be all-out sprints and should not be so numerous the participant is exhausted after the workout. Their purpose is to add a little challenge and perk up the run.

Tempo Run

A tempo run helps the runner prepare their body to maintain their “race pace.” Start with a 10-minute easy jog warm-up followed by the tempo run. The pace will be only slightly faster than the runner normally does in their group runs. The length of the tempo run will depend on the distance the runner is preparing to race.

For a 4.2 km race, a tempo run of 5–10 minutes is sufficient. For a 5 km distance, a 10–15 minute tempo run will do. It’s best to have an adult supervise this kind of training to ensure runners do not overdo it.

Hill workout

Find a hill that is 50–100 metres long, not too steep but steep enough that the participant notices the incline when running up. The hill should be in a safe location, ideally away from traffic, with footing that is fairly smooth. Participants should avoid running on the road.

Have participants do a 10-minute warm-up of slow jogging followed by dynamic stretching.

Participants should do five to eight repeats of running up the hill and walking or jogging back down. Tell them not to sprint but instead run at about a 75% effort. It may not necessarily be faster than the speed they do when jogging. They should finish this workout feeling like they could do a couple more repeats. If not, they’ve probably run too fast or done too many repeats.

The workout should finish off with a five-minute cool-down jog or walk followed by stretching.

Remind participants to listen to their bodies with any form of exercise that is new to them. Running hills can be very difficult so they should go easy at first, building their effort and the level of difficulty gradually.

INTERVAL WORKOUT

This workout will help improve power and speed for running. An ideal location for an interval or speed workout is a track or flat field. Measure distances of 100, 200 and 400 metres. Use a watch if possible. Do the same warm-up, cool-down and stretching done for the hill workout.

The workout is made up of repeats of different distances depending on the fitness levels of the participants. The repeats are not meant to be sprints. Participants should run at about 75% of their full effort. They should finish feeling like they could do a couple more repeats. Below are some examples of interval workouts. The first two are for new runners and the second two are for more experienced/fitter runners. Choose only one workout per training session.

Younger runners should practice different paces of running during relay races and running games.

Interval workout #1

- 200 m x 3 (1-minute walking break between each 200 m)
- 2-minute break
- 100 m x 4 (1-minute walking break between each 100 m)

Interval workout #2

- 200 m x 2 (1-minute walking break between each 200 m)
- 2-minute break
- 100 m x 6 (1-minute walking break between each 100 m)

Interval workout #3

- 400 m x 2 (1-2 minute walking break between each 400 m)
- 2 minute break
- 200 m x 2 (1-minute walking break between each 200 m)
- 2-minute walking break
- 100 m x 4 (1-minute walking break between each 100 m)

Interval workout #4

- 200 m x 5 (1-minute walking break between each 200)
- 2-minute break
- 100 m x 6 (1-minute walking break between each 100)

Running drills, like those on page 22, can also be added to a training program and are good way to work on running technique. Drill workouts should be done after a warm-up or run and should take approximately 15 minutes.



RUNNING GAMES

One way to add some fun and keep participants active is by including running games after the run portion of each workout or as a warm-up. Below are some ideas for games that can be played on a field or in a gymnasium.

Animal pacing game: (Younger elementary participants) This game is a fun way to teach participants about pacing. Pick an animal to symbolize different walking and running paces, such as a turtle for walking, donkey for slow jogging, horse for running and cheetah for sprinting. Call out the different animal names and have participants do the appropriate pace. There is no “winner” in this game.

British bulldog: One person is “it” and stands in the middle of the field or gym. The other participants stand on a line at one end of the field or gym. When the person who is “it” yells “British bulldog” everyone tries to run to the other side without being tagged. Those who are caught join in the middle to try tagging remaining participants. The last person to be caught becomes “it” in the next game.

Catch-up or centipede: This is more of a running drill and easy way to add some distance to a workout. Have participants line up behind one another in groups of 8 to 10. These groups will jog laps around a specific area or to a destination and back. The goal is for the last person in line to sprint to the front of the line. The pace needs to be fairly slow for this drill to work. Have the groups keep running until everyone has been to the front a few times.

The centipede version involves using a baton, which is passed from the front to the back. When it reaches the last person, they run to the front of the line and pass it back.

Crab-walk soccer: Soccer played in the crab position.

Islands: This game is played like statues (see next page) except when the whistle is blown, participants must run to one of the islands (hula hoops or small mats placed on the floor). The islands can be shared but participants are not allowed to touch each other. The last one to land on an island is out. Reduce the number of islands as your group becomes smaller.

Ladders: Break the group into two teams. Two lines are formed, facing each other. Have participants sit down, legs straight out, feet just touching. Give each pair a number. When a number is called, the two opponents jump up, run over the legs of the other pairs in one direction, then run outside the ladder to the other end and then continue over the legs of the other pairs until they get back to their original spot. The first person back to their spot wins a point for their team. Be sure to space the seated pairs with enough room for players to run between their legs without stepping on anyone.

Loose caboose: One person is the loose caboose while the remaining participants break into groups of three, forming small trains by holding on to the hips of the person in front of them. The loose caboose chases the trains and tries to attach to one of the ends. When the caboose successfully attaches to one of the trains, the lead person of that train becomes the new loose caboose.

Obstacle course: This can be done inside or out, depending on the size of your group and space available. Include as many actions as possible, such as going over, under, or around items; crawling; hanging; hopping; skipping; etc. Participants can do this individually, one after another, or in a relay format. Include some calisthenics like push-ups, sit-ups or lunges somewhere in the obstacle course to add some variety.

Octopus: Played like British Bulldog except the player in the middle is an octopus that runs and tries to tag players as they cross the field or gym. As the octopus tags people, they remain in their spot and act as tentacles, trying to tag players without moving their feet. To make this game go a little faster, try limiting the playing space or starting off with more than one octopus in the middle.

Pacing triangle: (More of a running drill than game) Set up a triangle in a gym or field using 3 pylons, 25–50 m apart. Participants will walk between pylons 1 and 2, jog between 2 and 3 and sprint between 3 and 1. Repeat several times and change directions after a few minutes.

Port and starboard: Tell participants to imagine they are on a ship. You yell out commands and the participants must obey. The last person to complete the command is out of the game. Some of the commands you can try are starboard (run to the right), port (run to the left), bow (run to the front), stern (run to the back), scrub the deck, hit the deck (lying face down), submarine (lying on back with one leg up in the air), and captain's coming (stand at attention and salute). Be creative and make-up some of your own commands.

Rabbits and hounds: Choose three or four of the faster participants to start out as hounds while the rest are rabbits. Start the rabbits running around a lap of the field or gym. Once they get a head start, let the hounds loose by yelling “the hounds are loose” or “who let the dogs out?” The hounds run after the rabbits which are considered caught once they are passed by the hounds. Depending on the size of your lap, let the kids do one or two laps. Choose your next hounds from the group of rabbits who were not caught.

Relay race: There are an endless number of relay races to choose from. Use forward, backward or sideways running; hopping; skipping; crawling; cart-wheeling; running in pairs; wheelbarrows in pairs;

leap frog; etc. Incorporate actions like sit-ups, push-ups, or jumping jacks at the turn-around spot.

If you want to keep participants really active, have them do jumping jacks or run on the spot while waiting their turn to go.

Rock, paper, scissors: Played like the hand game except participants are in teams and act out the action. Have two teams face each other on two lines. Each team goes into a huddle to choose rock, paper or scissor. They return to face each other and on three, display their choice with their bodies (rock by squatting, paper by reaching to the sky and scissors with arms scissoring). The “winning” team chases the other team to try to tag players before they reach an out-of-bounds line. Those tagged, join the other team. The team with the most members at the end wins.

Simon says: Use actions – like 10 jumping jacks, push-ups, burpees or run 2 laps – to make this traditional game really active.

Snatch it: Divide the group into two lines. Have the opposing teams form lines facing each other approximately 20 feet apart. Number the members of each line from opposite directions so that the number one participant of one team is opposite, for example, the number 20 participant of the other team. Place an object, such as a bean bag, in the middle of the floor between the two teams. Yell out a number and have corresponding players race each other to pick up the object. The player who is able to snatch the object and return to their spot without being tagged by their opponent gets a point for their team.

Statues: Try playing this popular game with or without music. Have the kids jog around the field or gym. When the music stops or you blow a whistle, everyone must freeze like a statue. Anyone caught moving is out.

Stormy seas: This is a variation of British bulldog. Divide participants into two groups, one being fish, the other being whales. Line each team up at different ends of the field. Choose one or more sharks to stand in the middle of the field. The sharks yell out either “fish” or “whales.” Those participants must then try to run to the other side of the field without being tagged. If tagged, they become seaweed and must stand

on the spot and try to touch others as they cross the field. If the sharks yell “stormy seas” members from both teams run across the field. The last person to be caught starts off the next game as the shark.

Tag: There are many variations of tag that will keep the kids running. To reduce overly zealous tagging which can result in participants being hurt, use a 2-foot section of a pool noodle to be used by taggers. If you have a large group, you may want to have a few kids as “it.”

Freeze tag can be played many ways. The person who is tagged and therefore “frozen” must stand still with their legs open. He/she becomes free when another player crawls between their legs or runs under one of their out-stretched arms. If you have a large group, designate a few people to be “it.” To change this game a little, try having participants do 10 jumping jacks or five push-ups to free themselves instead of running under each other’s legs.

Blob or amoeba tag involves the person who is “it” holding hands with those they tag and gradually forming a huge line of players that works as a unit to continue chasing the others. The blob can break into groups of two, three or four and continue trying to tag the remaining players.

Heads and tails tag is played in teams, one team with hands on their heads, the other with hands on bottoms. They chase each other and have to convert if tagged.

Partner tag starts by everyone except the person who is “it” finding a partner. The person who is “it” chases the pairs. When one partner of a pair is tagged, the other partner breaks loose and becomes “it.” The person who was “it” remains with the new partner and tries to avoid getting tagged.

Hospital tag is similar to traditional tag except that once tagged, the person must hold the place they were touched, as if it is an injury, and continue running around. If they are tagged again, they must use their other hand to hold the second injured area. A third touch means they are out of the game. This can be a lot of fun if the people who are it are able to touch people in different spots, like a leg or top of the head.

Ultimate Frisbee is a variation of football. Divide the group into two teams. The object of the game is to get the Frisbee across the field and into the end zone. Players may not run with the Frisbee. The only way to get a turnover is when the Frisbee is dropped or intercepted.



CIRCUIT TRAINING

Due to the climate in Nova Scotia, there will be days when inclement weather may prevent outdoor running. If you have access to a gymnasium or large classroom, you can provide the participants with a workout that will challenge them aerobically and work on their strength. Circuit training involves moving from one exercise to the next with minimal rest between sets.

SETTING UP FOR CIRCUIT TRAINING

- Break participants into groups of four to eight
- Organize the stations so similar activities are not beside each other (e.g., wall jumps should not be beside wall sit)
- Demonstrate all exercises before beginning
- Post a sign at each station describing the exercise to be done
- Use a stopwatch and whistle to move participants from station to station
- Do a 5 or 10 minute warm-up and cool-down of jogging
- Music can be used to motivate participants and indicate when to switch stations
- Each station lasts one minute, with 30 seconds to move to the next station
- The number of stations you have will also dictate how long the workout is. If you have 10 stations with one minute at each station, and 30 seconds rest between, that is 15 minutes for a full rotation. Plan on doing the circuit training for approximately 30 minutes, not including warm-up and cool-down.

SAMPLE EXERCISES

Abdominal crunches: Choose from a variety of abdominal exercises. Have mats at this station if possible.

Bicycle: A good overall abdominal exercise. Have participants lie on their back, alternating touching opposite elbow to knee, keeping shoulders off the ground.

Modified plank: Great core exercise. Have participants lie face down on the floor with weight resting on forearms and toes, keeping the rest of the body flat like a plank by engaging the abdominal, gluteal and lower back muscles. It's important to keep the spine in line with head. Add an extra challenge by asking them to rock forward and back.

Back-strengthening exercises: Back extensions are done lying face down and lifting arms and legs either separately or together. Participants hold the position for 10–15 seconds, rest and repeat. An easier version is to alternate raising left arm and right leg, then right arm and left leg.

Running laps: This activity is only possible if you have a gymnasium to use. Set up pylons to prevent corner cutting and stop participants from running through other stations.

Skipping on the spot: Have participants skip continuously on the spot. Ensure this station has enough space to accommodate the number of students skipping.

Wall jumps: Have participants stand facing the wall. They must jump off the ground with both feet and try to touch their hands as high as possible on the wall. They should continue jumping until the whistle is blown.

Lunges: Have participants stand with their hands on their hips and alternate stepping forward with each leg, letting their weight drop so the front leg bends at a 90-degree angle. The lunge should stop when the knee is in line with the toes. Lunges should be done fairly slowly. Options are walking lunges, step-back lunges, twisting lunges or lateral lunges.

Kick backs/butt kicks: Have participants do a running motion and try to kick their buttocks with alternating feet. This is done on the spot, as fast as possible and with knees pointed towards the ground.

Push-ups: The push-up is a great upper-body exercise. Remind participants to keep their bodies flat, hands under their shoulders and not allow their butts to stick up. The three-quarter or modified push-up (avoid calling it a “girl’s push-up”) is easier and is done with the participants’ weight being supported on their knees rather than toes. This exercise is meant to be done slowly.

Squat jumps: Have participants squat down partway and then jump up, in an explosive manner, reaching as high as they can, then return to the squat position.

Step-ups: Use a box, step or bench that will not tip as participants step on it simultaneously. Have them step up with one leg, touch the top of step with the other foot, and then step back down. Make sure they are alternating legs when stepping up. The height of the step should not be greater than 30–45 cm.

Wall sit: Have participants lean against the wall and bend down into a sitting position. They will need to walk their feet out slightly in order to do this. Their knees should be at a 90-degree angle. Participants should hold this position until they need a break.

High-knee leg raises: Have participants go through the running motion with an exaggerated knee-lifting action and hopping off the ground. The direction of motion is more upward than forward, so this can be done on the spot. The upper body is kept upright with arms pumping vigorously. This exercise should be done at a quick tempo.

Triceps/bench dips: Use a bench or step that won’t tip for this exercise. Students have their backs to the bench and reach back so their hands are on the edge of the bench, fingers pointing toward their body. They should walk their feet out slightly until their knees are bent at a 90-degree angle. The students then drop and lift their weight by bending and straightening their arms. This exercise works the triceps. It can also be done on the floor.

Shuttle run relay: This can be done if you have groups of four or more per station. Designate a distance of approximately 10 metres and mark it with a line or piece of tape. Have each person run to the tape, touch the ground and return, moving to the end of the team’s line.

Other ideas: Calf raises, burpies and jumping jacks.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The benefits of physical activity

It's important to share information regarding the benefits of physical activity with participants. The hope is not only to educate them but to motivate them to continue leading active, healthy lives. Please share the following information during one of your tip of the week sessions.

Being active every day can improve your health and well-being by:

- Building strong bones and muscles
- Strengthening your heart
- Lowering your risk of disease
- Helping you grow and develop properly
- Promoting good posture, flexibility and balance
- Helping achieve a healthy weight
- Helping you be a better student
- Providing a chance to meet new friends
- Improving self-esteem and mood
- Helping you deal with stress and to relax
- Increasing energy levels
- Having a lot of fun

The Canadian **24-Hour Movement Guidelines** for children and youth recommend a **minimum of 60 minutes** of moderate to vigorous daily physical activity. Included in this are vigorous

activities at least three days per week and muscle and bone-strengthening activities a minimum of three days per week. (Visit www.csep.ca for more information.) Spend a few minutes in one of the first running clubs to get participants to brainstorm the many ways they can be active (activities like playing games, skipping and using active transportation count as physical activity).

Health Canada recommends kids **reduce** the amount of **non-active** (sedentary) time they accumulate each day and avoid extended bouts of inactivity. Challenge participants to spend an hour less per day doing activities that don't require much energy, like watching TV, playing on the computer, or scrolling social media. (The maximum amount of recreational screen time recommended for kids aged 5–17 years is two hours per day).

Nutrition

Inactivity is only one of the unhealthy habits leading to poor health in today's society. Poor eating habits are equally to blame and we must do something to improve them. You're in a position to not only provide participants with information about good nutrition but also to have an impact on their eating habits by convincing them of the importance of taking care of their bodies. Remind them they have only one body to last a lifetime and that it will feel better and last longer if it's run on high-quality versus low-quality fuel.

HEALTHY CHOICES: SETTING UP FOR CIRCUIT TRAINING

We have included some basic information in the Runner's Handbook about Canada's Food Guide and healthy food choices and encourage you to remind participants about ways they can strive for a healthy diet. Please share the following tips with participants:

- Eat three meals a day, including breakfast
- Use Canada's Food Guide to learn about healthy foods
- Learn how to read food labels and ingredient lists
- Drink water rather than sugary drinks like pop or juice
- Include at least one vegetable or fruit with each meal and snack
- Choose lower fat milk products such as skim or 1%
- Take smaller amounts of food, eat slowly and stop eating when you're full
- Avoid foods and drinks high in sugar, fat, sodium and artificial ingredients
- Pack healthy snacks and lunches for school or outings
- Avoid temptation by not having unhealthy foods in the house

Hydration

Staying properly hydrated by drinking water regularly is important when exercising and for overall health. Whether being active or sitting in class, the body needs water. In fact, over 60% of the body requires water to function properly, so encourage participants to drink healthy drinks regularly throughout the day.

Drinking fluids is especially important when exercising as it replaces water lost through sweat, helps you perform to the best of your ability, prevents dehydration and helps maintain a healthy body temperature.

Here are some tips regarding hydration:

- Encourage participants to drink water throughout the day.
- Excessive amounts of water are not necessary. Use thirst as an indicator of when to drink.

- Participants don't need to carry water with them during their runs unless running for longer periods (more than 45 minutes) or on very hot/humid days.
- Sweating still occurs when running in colder temperatures so remind participants to stay hydrated when exercising in the winter.

Fueling for exercise

A healthy diet will prepare participants for any type of exercise, including running. There's information available regarding what our bodies need before, during and after exercise, but it can be confusing. Here are some tips to share with participants regarding fueling before, during and after running:

- Stay hydrated during the day by **drinking water regularly**.
- Plan your **meals and snacks** so that you run two hours after a meal but have had a snack to prevent starting your run feeling hungry.
- Unless you're running for more than 60 minutes, **water** is the best drink to stay hydrated.

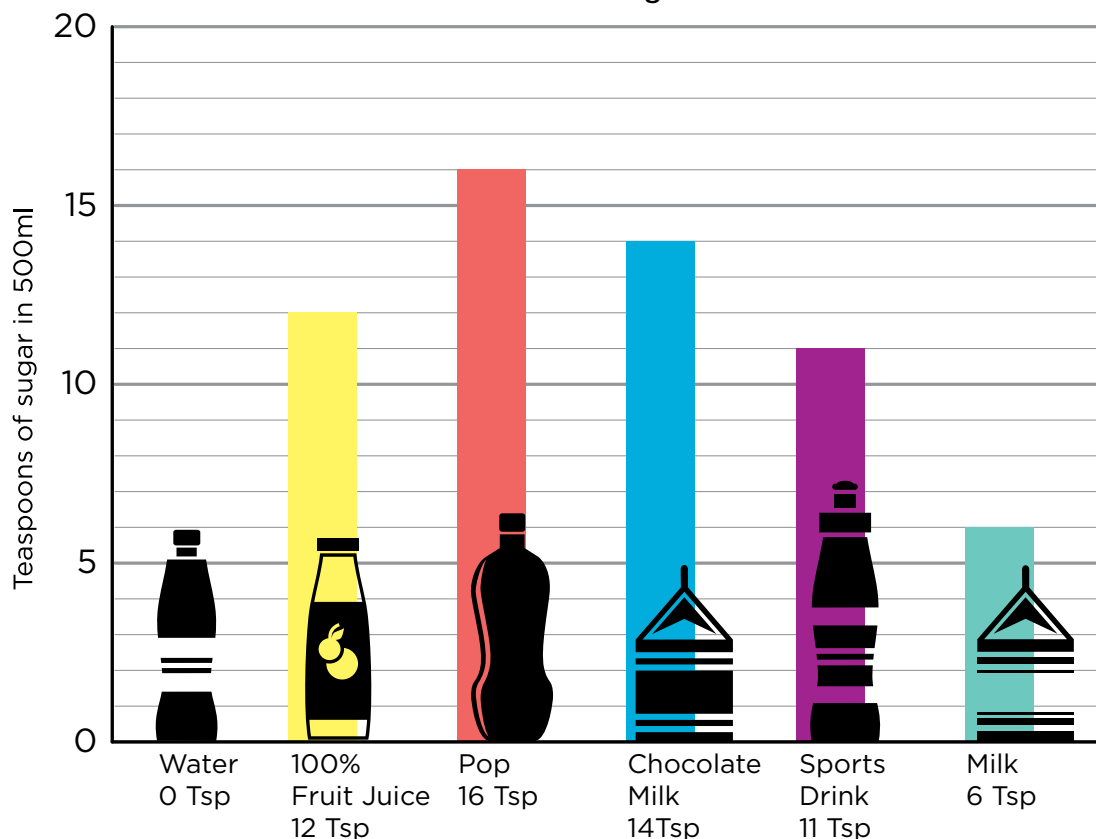


- **Drinking during a run:** unless your run is expected to be 45 minutes or more, or in very hot, humid conditions, having water while running is not necessary. If you are properly hydrated, you'll be able to complete your run comfortably. Make sure to have a drink of water when you finish.
- **Sports drinks** were developed for athletes participating in a vigorous activity for more than one hour. They contain a lot of sugar and other ingredients most athletes don't require. If you're expecting to be very active for more than an hour and will need something to keep you going, make your own "sports drink" by mixing 1/3 cup of 100 per cent fruit juice with 2/3 cup water.
- **Eating during exercise** isn't recommended as you will likely get a stomach ache, especially if you're doing an activity like running that involves bouncing.

However, if you know in advance that you'll be active for several hours, like at a track meet or tournament, you'll need to bring healthy snacks that can be eaten in small quantities without causing stomach problems. Some examples are fruits, yogurt, granola, small amounts of nuts or seeds, and cheese and crackers.

- **Refueling after running** is also important, especially if you've had a long or hard workout. Drinking water and having a healthy snack will do the trick in most cases. **Chocolate milk** is a sugary drink and should not be promoted as a healthy post-run drink.
- **Energy/caffeinated drinks** are not safe for children and youth because of high levels of caffeine, sugars and other stimulants. A young person with a healthy diet has enough energy to last all day, even if they're very active.

Go with H2O! Kick sugar to the curb



THE HEALTHY LIVING CHALLENGE

Adequate physical activity and eating a balanced diet are the keys to good health. This means we must not only help participants increase their level of physical activity but also help them adopt healthy eating habits.











In an effort to encourage both physical activity and proper nutrition, Kids Run Club includes the Healthy Living Challenge, found in the Runner's Handbook and online. To complete the challenge successfully, participants are asked to achieve 90 minutes* of physical activity each day; list a healthy item they ate or drank and an unhealthy item they chose not to eat or drink; and reduce their screen time by one hour every day for five days.

Once you've established the basic running program, choose one particular week to focus on this challenge in order to give it some extra time in your discussions. Check in with participants to see how they are doing, especially with regard to their eating habits. You may want to send a note home to parents

to explain how the challenge works and encourage them to work together or even as a family to complete the challenge. It's quite possible for your participants to have a significant impact on their entire family's activity level and eating habits. Encourage them to share what they learn from you with their parents. Participating in Kids Run Club may be just the impetus they need to make important changes.

The Healthy Living Challenge can also be used as a classroom tool to support healthy living curriculum. For more information, contact Kerry Copeland at 902-481-4908, or email kerry.copeland@doctorsns.com.

**The physical activity guidelines recommend a minimum of 60 minutes physical activity each day but state that more health benefits will occur with more physical activity. Therefore, Kids Run Club has set our challenge at 90 minutes to encourage participants to be even more active each day.*

HEALTHY LIVING CHALLENGE					
	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
1 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY Complete one hour for every 10 minutes of activity you do. Leading a healthy life isn't as hard as you think. Here's a chance to give it a try. Your goal is to get 90 minutes of physical activity, replace an unhealthy food or drink with something healthy and spend at least 1 hour less in front of a screen everyday for five days. Encourage your family to take on the Challenge with you. Plan a fun family event like going bowling or for a hike to celebrate having completed the Challenge.	 My favourite activity _____	 My favourite activity _____	 My favourite activity _____	 My favourite activity _____	 My favourite activity _____
2 HEALTHY EATING Replace unhealthy food and drinks with healthy alternatives. See the table for more information.	Today I ate/drank _____ (something healthy) Instead of _____ (something unhealthy)	Today I ate/drank _____ (something healthy) Instead of _____ (something unhealthy)	Today I ate/drank _____ (something healthy) Instead of _____ (something unhealthy)	Today I ate/drank _____ (something healthy) Instead of _____ (something unhealthy)	Today I ate/drank _____ (something healthy) Instead of _____ (something unhealthy)
3 SCREEN TIME ALTERNATIVES Reduce your screen time by at least one hour. Use other skills for time or what to do instead.	 I reduced my screen time by 1 hour today. What I did instead: _____	 I reduced my screen time by 1 hour today. What I did instead: _____	 I reduced my screen time by 1 hour today. What I did instead: _____	 I reduced my screen time by 1 hour today. What I did instead: _____	 I reduced my screen time by 1 hour today. What I did instead: _____

VISIT KIDSRUNCLUB.CA FOR MORE INFO ABOUT HEALTHY LIVING



RESOURCES

ONLINE COACH'S CORNER

Coach's Corner on www.kidsrunclub.ca

Visit Kids Run Club website and follow the link to Kids Run Club where you will find all the information related to the program. There is a special section for coaches containing downloads of the handbooks, form letter, Healthy Living Challenge and links to our coaching videos.

Online coaching videos

The New York Road Runners have developed a series of videos for coaching children and youth in running. The videos are broken down into elementary, middle school and high school and cover technique, drills and games. Find them at www.nyrr.org/youth-and-schools/running-start

RUNNING EVENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Blue Nose Marathon

Doctors Nova Scotia Youth Run
Where: Halifax
When: May
Distance: 2 and 4 km
Cost: \$20 before June 1
Goodies: T-shirt and medal
Website: www.blunosemarathon.com

Cape Breton Fiddlers Run

Doctors Nova Scotia Youth Run
Where: Sydney
When: June
Distance: 2.1 and 4.2 km
Cost: \$10
Goodies: T-shirt and medal
Website: www.capebretonfiddlersrun.com

Youth Running Series

Where: Various locations
When: April – October
Distance: 1 to 3 km, depending on age
Cost: \$5 per event/\$25 per season
Goodies: Participation ribbons
(School participation cash prizes at end of series)
Website: www.youthrunningseries.ca

Johnny Miles Running Event

Where: New Glasgow
When: June
Distance: 80 m to 5 km
Cost: Free!
Goodies: T-shirt
Website: www.johnnymiles.ca



**‘Kids’ Triathlons –
Triathlon Nova Scotia**

Website: <https://triathlonnovascotia.ca/>

**For a list of other running events
in Nova Scotia, visit:**

www.runnovascotia.ca
www.raceeventguide.ca
www.raceroster.com
www.runguides.com

**TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING
IN A FUN RUN**

- Remind participants that drinking too little or too much water can have a negative effect on their performance. They should be well hydrated before the run and unless they expect to be running long distances (i.e., over 5 km) won’t need to bring a water bottle with them. Most fun runs have water stops, which will be sufficient for keeping them hydrated.
- Remind participants to have a healthy meal approximately two hours before the event, and make suggestions on healthy food choices.
- Runners should check the forecast in order to know what to wear. Dressing in layers will allow them to remove items as they warm up.
- If the temperature is hot or gets warmer during the race, runners should make sure they don’t push themselves too hard. Higher temperatures will increase their need for water and can make running more difficult.
- Stress the importance of running at the pace they’ve been doing during their training. Getting caught up in the excitement and trying to run faster because it’s a fun run or race will likely result in them getting tired sooner and possibly not completing the distance.
- It doesn’t hurt to remind participants to tie a double-bow in their shoelaces.
- Remind participants to keep it fun. Being too serious may take away from the enjoyment of the whole experience.



WEBSITES OF INTEREST

www.kidsrunclub.ca

The Healthy Tomorrow Foundation
www.healthytomorrow.ca

Doctors Nova Scotia
www.doctorsNS.com

New York Road Runners
www.nyrr.org/youthandschools/running-start
(Great videos for coaching youth)

Kids Running
www.kidsrunning.com

Sport Nova Scotia
www.sportnovascotia.ca

Athletics Nova Scotia
www.athleticsnovascotia.ca

Running Clubs/Teams
www.athleticsnovascotia.ca ›
clubs and tracks

Youth Running Series
www.youthrunningseries.ca

Centre for Children's Running
www.childrensrunning.org

Nourish Nova Scotia
www.nourishns.ca

Coaching Association of Canada
www.coach.ca

Canada's Food Guide
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines
www.csep.ca
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Active for Life
www.activeforlife.com

Be Fit for Life
www.befitforlife.ca

Canadian Sport for Life
www.canadainsportforlife.ca

Run Nova Scotia
www.runnovascotia.ca

Race Event Guide
www.raceeventguide.ca

Race Roster
www.raceroster.com



RUNNING LOG

This is a sample of the running log provided to all participants. Encourage participants to include group and individual runs in their logs.

DATE	DISTANCE KM	DURATION MIN.	COMMENTS	DISTANCE TO DATE

[illegible]

[illegible]

CONTACT



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KIDSRUNCLUB.CA

A program of the

