



A guide to
completing
27 miles in
27 days

27 Days
27 Miles



 mind
for better mental health



On your marks....

Hayley, our Head of Physical Activity at Mind, shares with us her top tips for newbie runners and those who may be a bit more experienced but looking for some further guidance.

Aside from 20 years' experience of working in the sport sector, Hayley's qualifications include BA Hons in Sports Studies, Leadership in Running Fitness coach (England Athletics), Fitness Instructor and many more!



Your running plan

We hope this guide will help you achieve your 27 miles, whilst fundraising for the 27% of us who report mental health problems while at Uni.

Click one of the options below to download and print your running plan:

Beginner

Intermediate

Experienced



As you raise money for mental health you will also be helping your own physical and mental wellbeing.

Studies have shown getting active helps reduce the risk of developing depression by up to 30%.

Physical activity can make you feel good through lifting your mood through the release of endorphins, helps you to deal with stress better and gives your self-confidence a boost.



Top Tips to get started:

- **Create a routine that works for you** and fits around your studies and work, some plans will tell you to run specific distances on specific days, move this around so it works for you.
- **Make it fun** – whether that is through running with a friend (following social distancing and government guidelines), listen to a podcast or your favourite tunes – making sure you can hear the traffic at all times or completing your own ‘mind games’ or challenges to keep it interesting from running the alphabet of street names, to mindful runs taking notice of your surroundings.



- **Dress up** – it can be tempting to wear thick warm clothing or even a coat, but you will be surprised how quickly your body warms up. Wear thin layers that can be removed and tied around your waist. Don't forget to wear a sports bra if you need one.



- Be kind to your feet by wearing suitable running shoes. These don't need to be expensive especially when you are starting out, but they should have some cushioning and ideally space between your big toe and the end of the trainer. Advice varies from suggesting half a size to a full size larger than your usual shoe size, but your toe nails will thank you for it.



- **Track your mileage** – to help you achieve your challenge you will want to track your progress you can do this through downloading and recording it on our printable plan or through using Apps such as Strava which can be linked to your fundraising page. Don't have access to a tracker? Other options include running a route that you know well or is pre-marked, using athletics track or treadmill.
- **Keep safe in early mornings and the evenings by staying visible** – wearing fluorescent clothing or lights.



- **Be gentle with yourself and don't worry about pace** – some people like to know their pace (how fast they are running per mile or kilometre). Aim to run at a moderate level of intensity you should be able to talk but not be able to sing. If running at a high level of intensity talking is more difficult save this for your sprints at the end!
- **Don't overthink it too much.** Lots of people get concerned about breathing patterns and their running form. Try to keep an upright posture by imaging a helium balloon coming out the top of your head. Focus on breathing out but try to relax to enjoy it.



27^{Days}
Miles 27

- **Put your health first** – If you haven't been active for a very long time, are experiencing a long term health condition or have been advised in the past to be careful when exercising talk to a health professional before you get started to make sure it is safe to do so.



Warming up

We know you just want to get your trainers on and just get out there, but have ever thought why the first few minutes of running feel so difficult?

This is because your body is shocked from being in a comfortable resting state to having to having to work harder – with your heart pumping faster and muscles becoming activated.

Warming up properly will help prepare your muscles and prevent injuries such as muscle strains.



Take 5 minutes to warm up. This could look like:

- A short 5-minute brisk walk to get started
- Some gentle exercises to mobilise the joints such as marching on the spot, alternating raised knees to elbows, arm circles and hip rotations. There are lots of ideas [here](#).



Cool down

At the end of each session it's important to take time to cool down the body gradually, through gentle activity. Combined with stretching this will improve your flexibility and prevent injury. This could look like a short walk or jog for the last few minutes of your session. Remember to stretch all the key muscle groups including your upper and lower legs, back and trunk.

To find out how to stretch properly take a look at these [cool down stretches](#).



Rest days

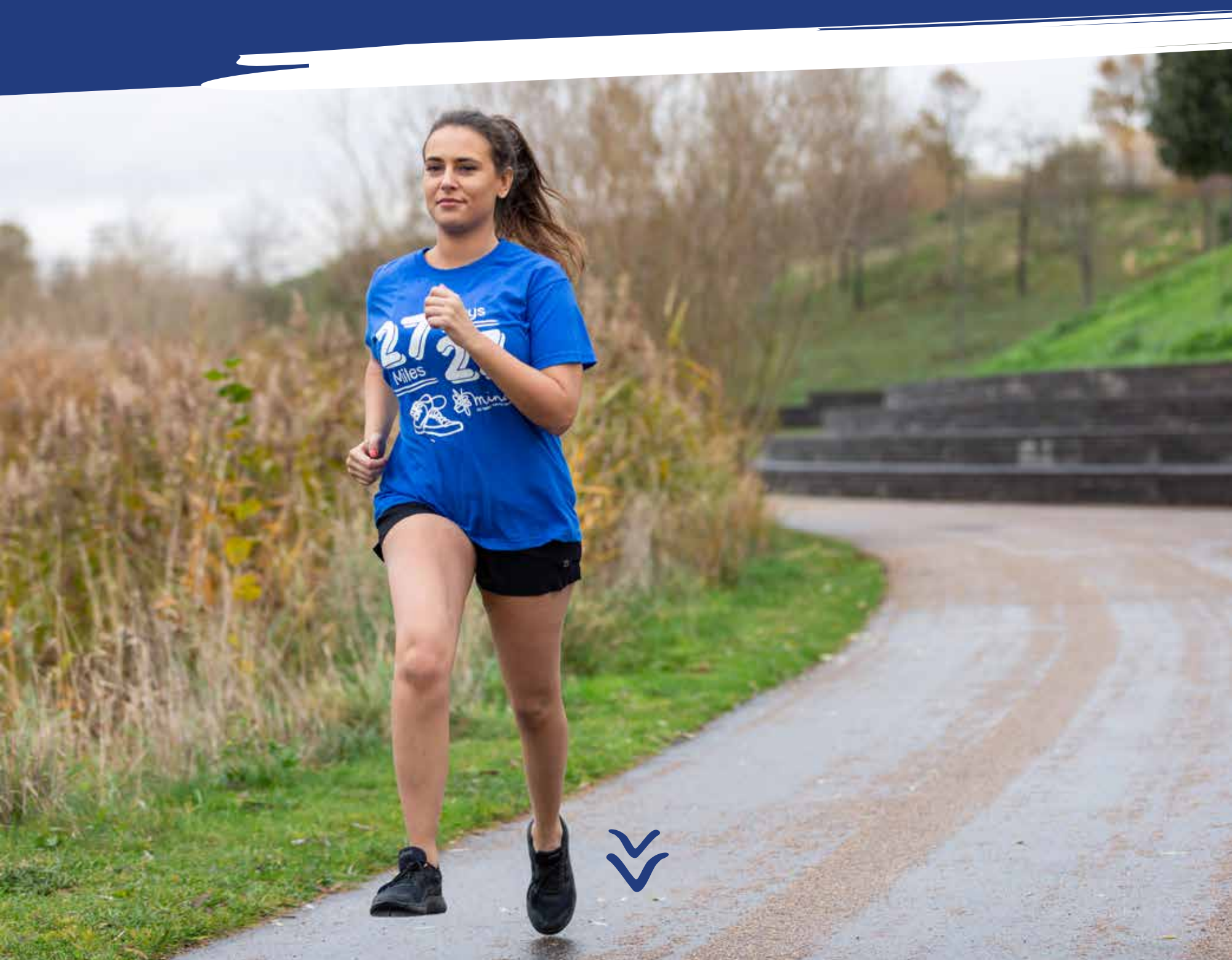
It is really important that your body has time to recover and repair. You should have at least one rest day from running, if not more each week. Everyone is different. Some people will rest completely, but many prefer 'active' rest days – this means that you rest from your main activity (running) but to keep active you may walk, do yoga, add in a HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) or stretching to help your muscles repair.



27^{Days}
Miles 27

Want to keep going?

Our friends at England Athletics run a successful #RunAndTalk programme to support better mental health and have a network of over 1,000 Mental Health Champions across their Run Together Groups and athletics groups. To find a running group near you visit englandathletics.org/find-an-athletics-club/



27 ^{Days}
27 _{Miles}

Share how you've got on!

One of the best ways to get more donations to share your running progress on social media with a link to your fundraising page. We would love also love to hear from you about your progress, so please tag us in @MindCharity



Finally a huge **thank you** from all of us at Mind and have fun on your runs!



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27 Miles

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