

~~#~~mind **27** miles **27** days



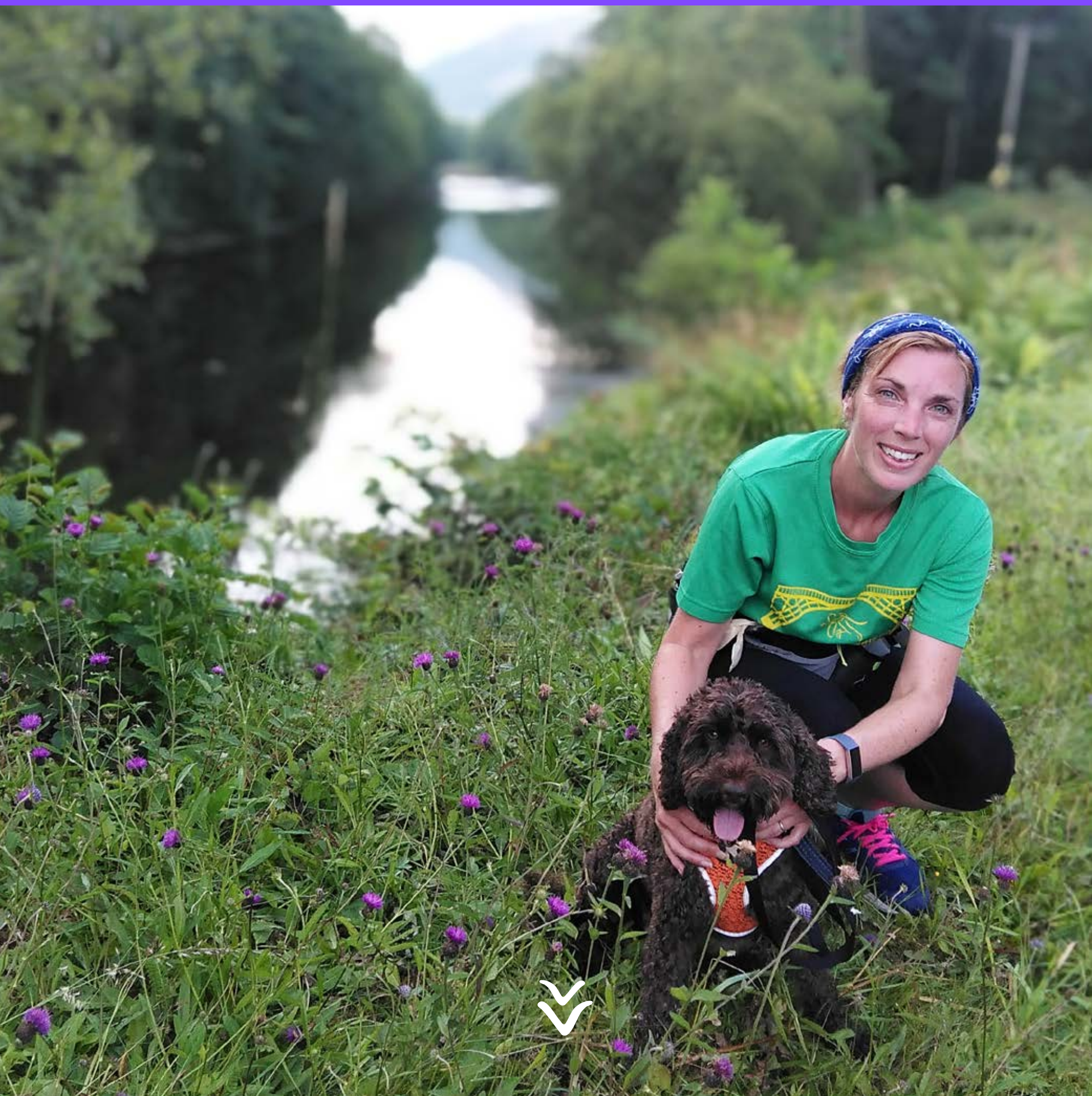
A guide to completing
27 miles in 27 days



27 miles
27 days

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.



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Your running plan

This guide will help you run all 27 miles while fundraising in support of student mental health.

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

[Beginner](#)

[Intermediate](#)

[Experienced](#)



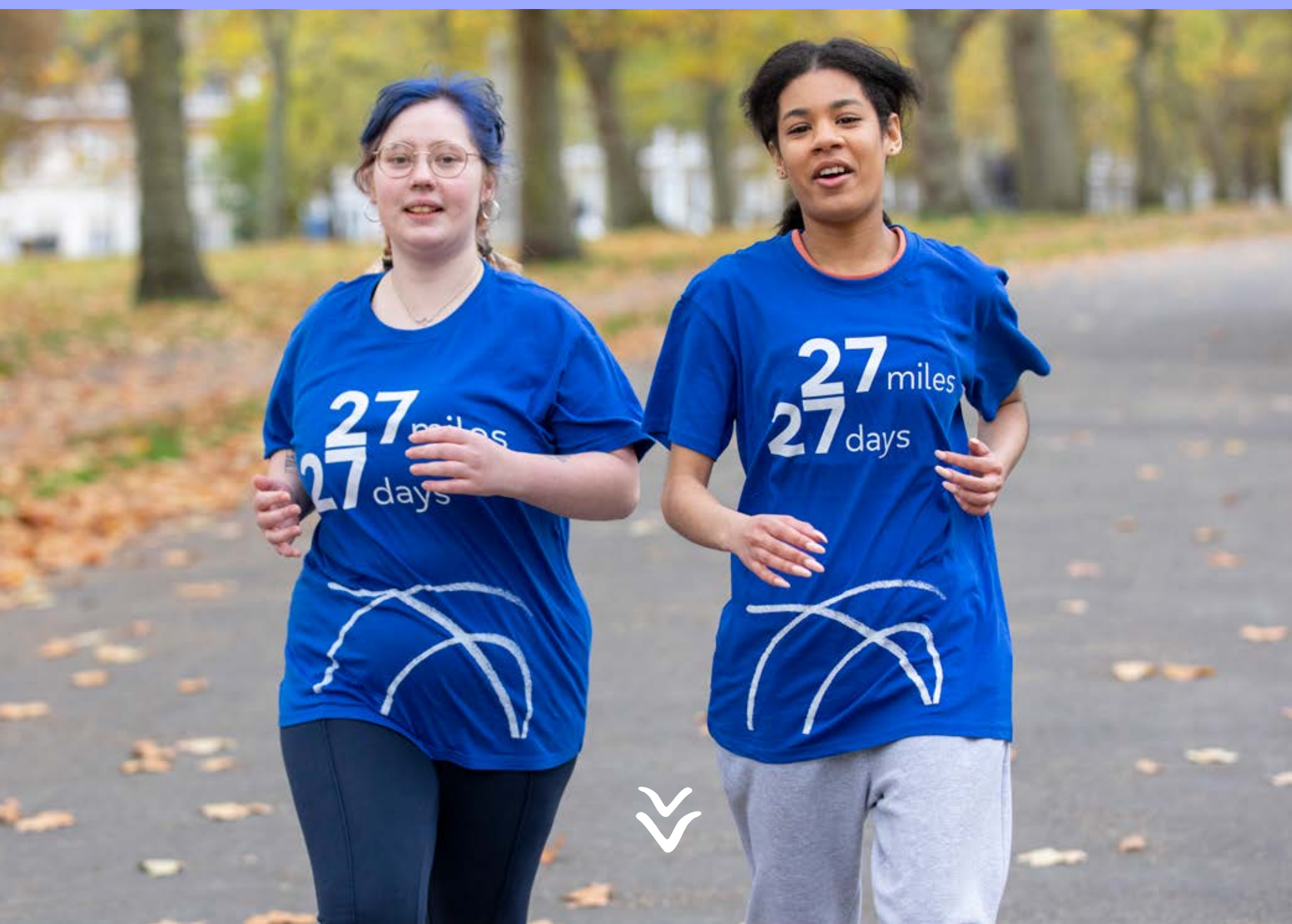
27^{miles}
27^{days}

Benefits of running

You might be running to raise money for mental health, but it can help your own mental and physical health too.

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

Physical activity can make you feel good. It lifts your mood through the release of endorphins, helps you deal with stress better and can boost your confidence.



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Top tips to get started:

- **Create a routine.** Some plans will tell you to run specific distances on specific days. Move this around so it works for you and fits around your studies and work.
- **Make it fun.** You could try running with a friend, listening to a podcast or your favourite tunes, or completing your own mini-challenges while running. Whatever you do, make sure to keep safe and that you can hear any traffic at all times.
- **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.



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- **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 – your toes will thank you for it.
- **Track your mileage.** To help you achieve your challenge you might want to track your progress – you can do this by 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, or by using an athletics track or treadmill.



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- **Keep safe in early mornings and the evenings by staying visible.** Wear 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!



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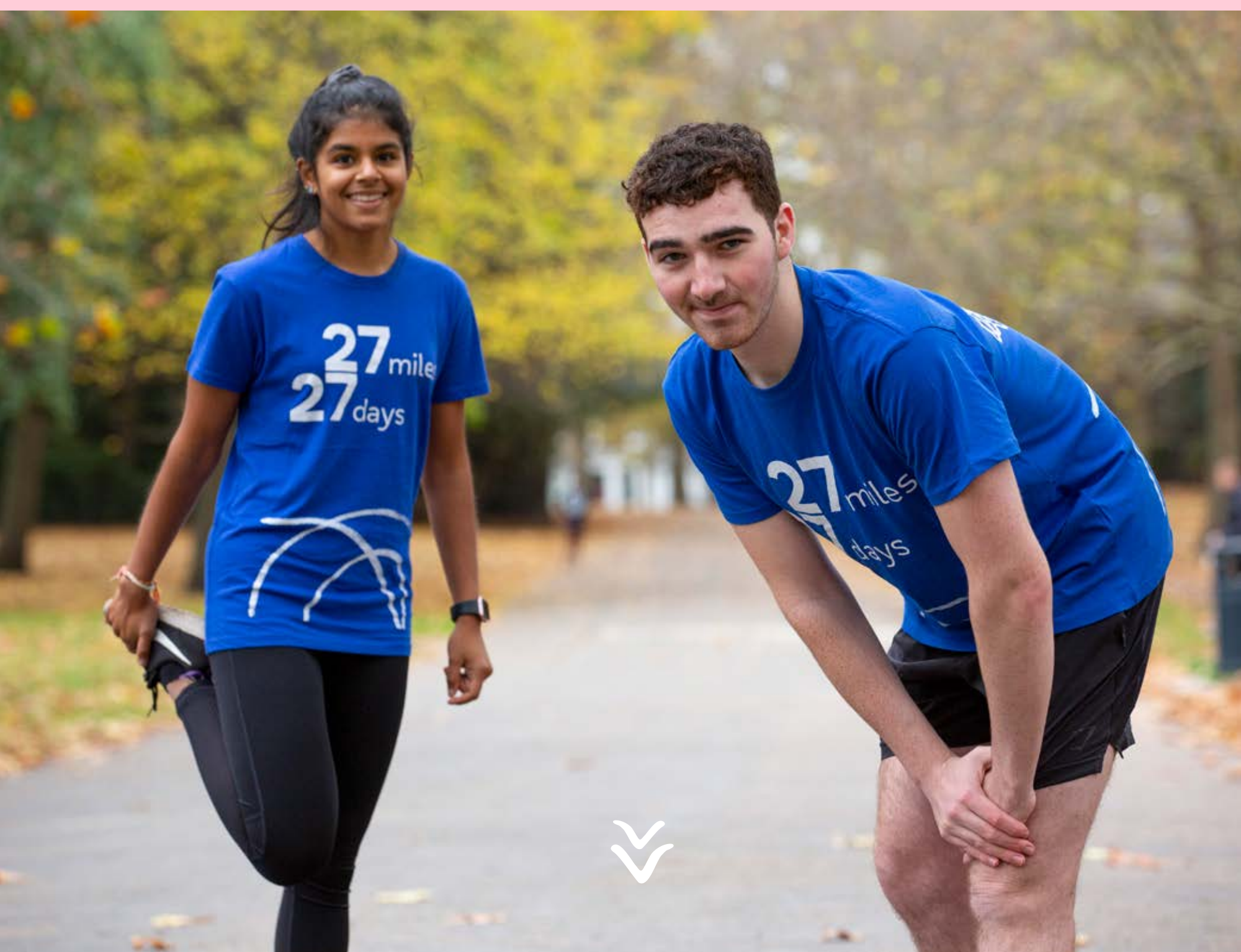
- **Don't overthink it.** Lots of people get concerned about breathing patterns and their running form. Try to keep an upright posture by imaging a helium balloon coming out the top of your head. Focus on breathing out, but try to relax and enjoy it.
- **Put your health first.** If you haven't been active 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.



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Warming up

We know you want to get your trainers on and just get out there, but have you 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 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.



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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 like marching on the spot, alternating raised knees to elbows, arm circles and hip rotations.

There are lots of ideas [here](#).



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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](#).



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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 each week, if not more.

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.

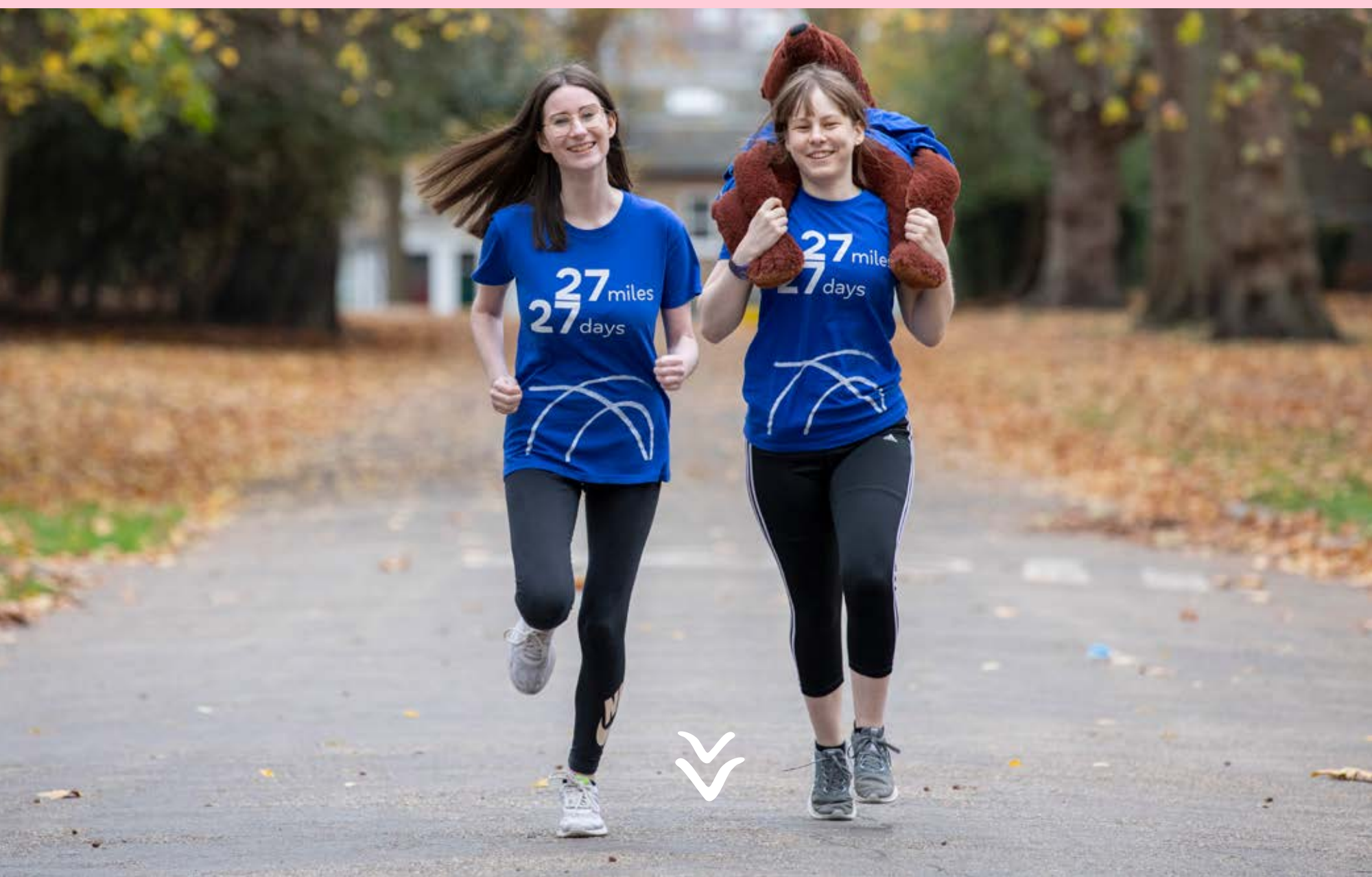


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Want to keep going?

Our friends at England Athletics run a successful #RunAndTalk programme to support better mental health, and have a network of over 1,300 Mental Health Champions across their Run Together Groups and athletics groups.

To find a running group near you visit englandathletics.org/find-an-athleticsclub

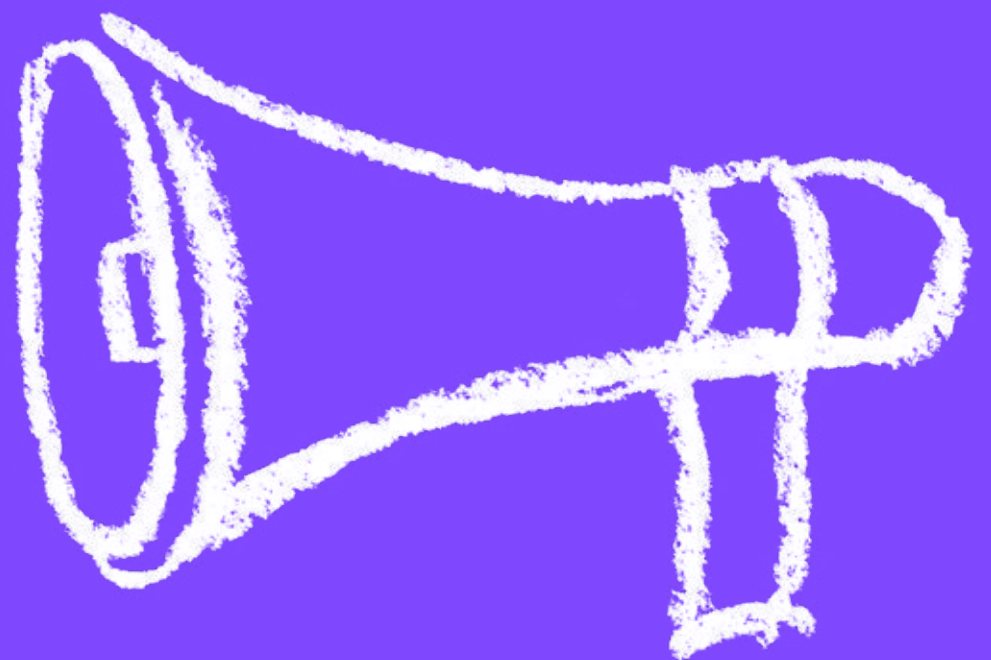


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Share how you've got on!

One of the best ways to get more donations is 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



From all of us at Mind, **thank you** so much and happy running!





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[#2727challenge](https://www.mind.org.uk/challenge/2727challenge)

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