



Wake Up Little Muscles - Time For Your Sponge Bath!



I'm here to help you start a running program. "Running program? That doesn't sound very sexy." I hear you cry, "It sounds like something Bill Gates does." OK then, I would like to help you make running a part of your life. How does that sound? Or how about, I'll change your life for the better! Actually I just lied. You are going to have to change your own life for the better, but I would love to help.

I have been pounding the pavement since the Beatles conquered America and I am starting to think I should stick with this running thingy, it's not bad you know. During these 45 years I have learned a lot and nothing would make me happier than to help Running Free readers experience the pure joy of running. I promise I will be gentle.

If you're a total novice then the best way to start is to not even think about running...Yet. I want you to wake up your muscles slowly. Forget that image you have of a running coach as a Drill Sergeant with a bullhorn screaming, "Damn it! I know you've done nothing but sit on the couch for two decades, but in one day we're gonna transform you into Ahnold Swarzhneggah, you maggots!" Think of me more as a kindly nurse, softly coo-ing "Wake up muscles, it's time for your sponge bath." And if that sounds a bit creepy, it might just come useful later...

Anyway, we are going to start by walking - actually you are going to walk. I'm going to do nothing. Oh God, now I'm reminding myself of my high school coach, I can hear him now

bellowing, "We're going to run 25 miles today, gentlemen." That bloody bastard never ran a step. OK, so I promise to run if you promise to walk. Deal?

Walk every other day for 4 to 6 weeks, for 20-30 minutes, depending on your starting fitness. Avoid hills and, in the beginning, don't push yourself. Over the weeks slowly increase your walking speed. To help you do this, try visualising Frankenstein's Monster closely following you - and he's not wearing any pants. If you find yourself slowing for his embrace, you could alternatively try thinking of your mother-in-law, the tax man, or your ex-boyfriend, whatever doesn't turn you on really.

You may wonder why I am suggesting you start so slowly. It's like this: If you suffer no injuries, you'll take one step forward. But if you were to have a physical setback, you'd take many steps backwards. I don't want that to happen to you. It's really depressing to throw yourself into something only to be slapped in the face by an injury. Do not try to be a tough guy early on, be a big baby. If anything hurts, stop immediately, rest and ice the area of soreness.

After several weeks you may want to pump up your walks. You know that hill you've been avoiding? Cease avoidance. Hills are great for your heart and great for your bum. Please venture down slowly though or you and your knees will have a long and painful discussion.

After you have successfully walked for 4-6

Coach Carvey's Tips for Total Beginners:

- Wait at least two hours after eating before jogging.
- If you are jogging on a road with cars, always face the oncoming traffic.
- Stay hydrated.
- After you are warmed up, do some gentle stretching and stretch again after running.

Five Favours Jogging Does for You:

1. Helps reduce blood pressure.
2. Lifts your mood and reduces depression.
3. You'll sleep better.
4. Burns calories
5. Tones your muscles

weeks, it'll be time to mix in some short jogs. After walking for ten minutes, jog 100 meters, one block, or the space between telephone poles. Walk until you feel recovered, maybe a minute or two and repeat the 100 meter jog. Try to run softly, using short strides and don't bounce. Imagine a tea cup on your head. (See how I'm putting British references in for you? Am I all heart or what?) Slowly increase the amount and duration of your jogs until you can run the entire way.

Keep it up and some day soon a person will inquire, "Hey, are you a runner?" and you will lift your chin and proudly reply, "Why yes...Yes I am!". My work here is done.

Join Coach Carvey next month for more of his unique take on running. Or for more Carvey craziness right now visit his website: www.carveyrunningtips.com