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Running is not just a thing of the past for many; it's an obsession. Running allows you to escape the troubles of everyday life and disappear into your own world. In this section you will find articles on marathon training, running health and more. Here at Greatist, we believe in taking the day off. Instead of our regular Saturday programs, our writers have the chance to write about living a greatist lifestyle and, basically, whatever they want. This is one of those amazing articles. Enjoy! Share on Pinterest It was over a year ago, but I still remember my favorite run. I'm a runner. It took me about three years, three half marathons, five 10K and numerous shorter races to become confident enough to say it out loud, but I'm actually a runner. Why am I running? Because this is the easiest, cheapest way for me to keep fit. It works for me, for my body and my life. But that's not all. My answer to this question changed last June when I had my favorite run. I read an essay in Runner's World in which the writer described his favorite run, not a favorite running route, but a favorite particular run that took place at a certain point in time. At the time I read the essay, I didn't have a favorite run. I thought maybe my first half marathon would be my favorite run, but it wasn't. It was my most proud run, no doubt, but it's different from being the favorite. All my races are proud of running, and some of my morning runs are tough runs or surprising runs or fun runs, but none stood out in my mind as the favorite. When I walked outside that morning, turned on the garmin and tied the laces again, I was delighted that the weather was basically perfect for running: 60 degrees, breech and just starting sunny at 5:45. It was hot, humid, sticky, and just a generally gross feeling in New York for a week or so before, so the prospect of a comfortable run in almost perfect conditions had me giddy. I set off on my 4.5-mile route, which I had run countless mornings before. The route starts on a hilly residential street in my Brooklyn neighborhood, then takes me back and forth on a short pier, then continues along the bike path next to the highway and ends at the foot of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. I know I'm lucky enough to live in New York city and run regularly on a tree-lined street and a path over the water in connection with one of the most impressive suspension bridges in the country, but it has become routine for me. I didn't realize it was my favorite run until halfway through when I turned around at the end of the pier. I saw lower Manhattan, just the resurrected sun in my eyes, a breeze coming to my left. Right, as I changed direction, the chorus of My Life Would Suck Without You Kelly Clarkson kicked on iPodzie, and I smiled big enough to get early morning fishermen to see. Immediately to my head came the thought: This is I'm running. All the other reasons I thought I ran no longer mattered: I don't run to lose weight, I don't run to stay fit, I don't run because it's cheap and I don't want to pay for gym membership. I run through moments like this where the light is magical and the air is crisp and the right song comes at the right time and I feel like I can run forever. When I turned down the bike path, the wind on my back for the last two kilometers of my run, I knew I was going faster than my normal speed. For a split second, I was worried that I would burn out and regret the pace later, but I pushed the thought out of my head. My legs moved automatically, my arms were down, my eyes were forward. When I passed other runners, walkers and cyclists, I knew my form was high and strong, my breath even. Before I knew it, I had half a mile left to go and found another gear I didn't even know I had. I wovnen around a group of middle-aged women that I see walking together every morning and crossed my personal finish line- the NYC Parks leaf logo printed on the asphalt near the base of the bridge. I stopped the clock on my watch. I ran those 4.5 miles faster than ever before, even during the race. But the time for my watch doesn't matter, feeling non-leg pain, heartbeats, red face, endorphins pumping all over my body. Breathly and sweaty, I couldn't stop smiling as I returned to my apartment feeling completely and completely alive. I'm a runner and that was my favorite run. And I can't wait for the next one. First, some disappointing news: No one is able to create a widely used, absolutely ironclad running routine that determines the ideal number of miles or minutes to achieve optimal human performance. But those of you ready to break the classic indeed, zero guns is the perfect amount of zinger you are so much missing. Running regularly is definitely healthier than not doing so, both in terms of reducing the risk of heart disease and increasing the life expectancy of your life. Besides, there are several thumb rules that should be helpful in your quest to find the perfect routine for optimal performance. To this end, we asked several experts to consider how to weigh, how far and how to run quickly and how to know when it's time to stop. For beginners: Stick to the basics According to Road Runners of America certified trainer Laura Norris, the first step for rookies is to start slowly, and not be afraid to embrace run-fighting intervals. Of course, your initial sessions won't double as Rocky's training assemblings, but you need to give bones, muscles and tendons to catch up. Increasing mileage before adjusting the musculoskeletal system increases the risk of injury, he says. Hitting the too enthusiastic is a common mistake, says former NCAA and New York City distance coach running coach Sean Fortune, especially among younger, untrained men. Instead of aiming for specific mileage goals, Norris encourages beginners to reduce the duration of walking breaks up to 30 uninterrupted minutes of running. There's nothing wrong with some cross-training on how to work toward that milestone, either; things like swimming, cycling and elliptical will help develop aerobic fitness with less impact, says Norris. Every week, four or five sessions of these sessions is ideal for maintaining basic, healthy cardio levels. Ultimately, says running coach Bobby McGee, you want to make sure you get to that day's starting line - whatever that term means to you- healthy and fresh. If your training didn't allow for this scenario, you trained too much, says McGee. Watch: Usain Bolt, champion runner and... Dancer? For intermediates: You know thyself Once already figuratively hit your stride, you're going to figuratively hit the fork on the way, too, and increasing the difficulty of sliders can be a difficult task. There are two indications that you need to change your routine: mental burnout and physical plateau, says Norris. The mind and body develop on the variety. Explore Health Conditions A-Z News Coronavirus Diet & Nutrition Fitness Beauty Mind & Body Lifestyle Weight Loss Newsletter Promo Promo

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