

A man and a woman are running on a city sidewalk. The man is on the left, wearing a grey and orange jacket over a red shirt, black pants, and blue sneakers. The woman is on the right, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, a green camouflage vest, patterned leggings, and yellow sneakers. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a brick building with a sidewalk.

**RUNNING IN
THE MORNING,
STRENGTH
TRAINING,
EATING EXTRA
VEGGIES—
INGRAIN
THESE
ACTIONS
INTO YOUR
“NORMAL”
ROUTINE
TO BECOME
FITTER,
HEALTHIER,
AND HAPPIER.**

**BY CINDY
KUZMA
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
PETER YANG**

Hop on the
**NEW
YEAR,
NEW
YOU**



Katie Hoaldrige (center) trains with Travis Mahoney and Greta Feldman of the New Jersey New York Track Club.

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RUNNERS DREAM BIG. Tackling a new distance, posting a personal best, losing 20 pounds—we embrace grand challenges. But what happens after you accomplish your goal, or if your resolve weakens before you succeed? You risk stalling—unless you’ve changed your routines to those of a stronger, healthier runner. “Runners who are consistent with good habits have the most success,” says Tom Holland, an exercise physiologist, sports nutritionist, coach, and author of *The Marathon Method*.

This year, consider resolutions based on process instead of outcome. That way, you can sustain momentum by celebrating small, frequent victories. And you’ll avoid the all-or-nothing thinking that triggers massive disappointment if factors beyond your control interfere along the way—for instance, if you wake up to a sweltering race day.

The benefits of healthy habits spill over into a better life beyond running, too. Here are 12 healthy habits to embrace in 2015, with expert advice on how to make them your own.

HABIT

Become a morning runner

> You meant to log those five miles today, but between family, work, and social obligations, it just didn’t happen. Or you find your digestive system rebelling—or your sleep disrupted—courtesy of evening runs. The solution: Put running first on your agenda. “People who start to run early in the morning get hooked on that feeling of having accomplished so much before others are even awake, as well as the extra energy they get from that morning rush of endorphins,” says Lisa Reichmann, a Maryland-based running coach.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Test the waters.** Start with one or two days per week. Knowing you have the other five mornings to snooze makes getting up early less painful. And make

Habit Trail

sure you can get to bed on time the night before a crack-of-dawn call, or you risk skimping on sleep, Reichmann says.

- **Lay it out.** Set out your clothes, shoes, water bottle, and reflective gear the night before to eliminate excuses and get out the door quickly. Set your coffeemaker on automatic so your brew is ready when you wake. And put your alarm across the room—jumping out of bed to turn it off makes it harder to hit the snooze button, Reichmann says.

- **Make a date.** Nothing keeps you from going back to bed like knowing someone's waiting for you. "Good conversation with running friends almost makes you forget that you are running at zero dark thirty on a cold morning," says Julie Sapper, who coaches with Reichmann at Run Farther & Faster in Montgomery County, Maryland.

- **Give it time.** All habits feel awkward at first. Since it requires resetting your body clock, morning running may require a little longer than most—at least three or four weeks—to sink in. Consider trying this habit in the spring, when weather and darkness are less likely to interfere. (And morning runs aren't right for everyone, so re-evaluate after a month or two, Sapper says.)



HABIT Strength- train regularly

> Building muscle improves your health, reduces injury risk, and, according to a review in the journal *Sports Medicine*, improves your running performance. Across 26 studies of endurance athletes, strength-training programs (either plyometrics or heavy weights) boosted fitness, increased efficiency, and reduced runners' times in 3-K and 5-K races. Design your own program by picking six exercises:

two for each of your major muscle groups (upper body, core, and lower body), with one working the front side (say, planks) and one the back side (bridges), says Rebekah Mayer, national training manager at Minneapolis-based Life Time Run. Do them two or three days per week. And remember that intense strength-training DVDs or classes don't always pair well with a running routine, says Sapper—if you do them, leave rest days between hard efforts. For an equipment-free at-home workout, see "Pumping... Rubber?" page 94.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Build it in.** Runners that Reichmann and Sapper coach had an easier time incorporating strength moves when they penned them into their training plans. Now, their schedules might say: Run three miles, then do three sets of 15 one-legged squats, mountain climbers, planks, and push-ups. For best results, strength-train later in the same day as your more intense or longer running workouts, allowing a full day of recovery in between hard sessions, Mayer says.
- **Break it up.** Try "exercise snacks"—planks when you get

up in the morning, push-ups before you leave for work, lunges on coffee breaks.

- **Take a class.** Don't want to DIY? Choose a runner-friendly strengthening class that sounds fun, like Pilates, a barre class, or BodyPump. It might cost money, but spending can increase the odds you'll follow through, Holland says.

- **Change it up.** In about a month, your body will adjust to the routine. "Make it harder—whether it means doing more repetitions, more weight, or different exercises—or you'll stop seeing results," Mayer says.

STYLING BY SHEA DASPIN, HAIR & MAKEUP BY JESSI BUTTERFIELD FOR EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS; CLOTHING ON OPENING SPREAD (LEFT TO RIGHT): NORTH FACE JACKET, REEBOK SHIRT, NEW BALANCE PANTS, NIKE SHOES; NORTH FACE VEST, ROXY TOP AND LEGGINGS, NIKE WATCH, SALCONY SHOES, NIKE JACKET, CAPRI, AND SHOES



Do planks two or three times per week post-run to build core strength.

your longevity as a runner,” Mayer says. If you do get hurt, you’ll also have a familiar option for maintaining fitness.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Stay consistent.** Sticking to a regular class at the gym is an easy way to automate cross-training. Even if you go solo, set up a regular date and location, such as cycling in your neighborhood on Monday mornings—context cues help habits to form.

- **Be realistic.** Don’t set yourself up for failure by choosing a class you’ll have to rush to attend. Search for an option that meshes with your schedule.

- **Choose wisely.** Gunning for a PR? Go with a type of cross-training that mimics running, such as cross-country skiing or pool running. If, however, your goal is overall fitness, select an activity that’s very different, like swimming or cycling, Mayer says.

- **Keep it easy.** Treat cross-training like an aerobic recovery day; schedule it after hard running days and keep your effort level low enough to carry on a conversation, Mayer says. (However, if you’re injured and can’t run, you can cross-train harder.) And keep in mind that boot camp or fitness classes that involve treadmill running or road sprints don’t count as cross-training—that’s a running workout.

HABIT

Cross-train regularly

> If you’re struggling to squeeze three or four runs per week into your schedule, you shouldn’t worry about adding in other aerobic activities. But once you have a steady running habit, workouts like swimming, cycling, or rowing can boost your fitness without the impact stress of running. And by engaging different muscle groups, you can correct muscle imbalances and net a stronger, more well-rounded body. “This can increase

HABIT

Eat more vegetables

> Low-calorie and packed with nutrients, veggies should be a staple in every runner’s diet. Their high-quality carbohydrates power your workouts, and their antioxidants help you recover. “Vegetables also keep you regular, and we all know runners don’t need any ‘surprises’ while on a long run,” says

Conni Brownell, who serves as the Brooks Running Beastro Chef (cooking for employees at the shoe company). The benefits last long after your cooldown: Each daily serving of produce (up to five) reduces your risk of early death by about five percent, according to a new study.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Indulge in your favorites.** Don’t choke down kale if you hate

it. Pick up produce you actually want to eat, even if it’s more costly or less of a “superfood.”

- **Add them to your menu.** When you buy a new veggie, know when you’ll consume it, says Jennifer Plotnek, lead behavior coach at weight-loss company Retrofit. Will you cook that spinach into your omelet, blend it into your postworkout

Colorful veggies provide vitamins A, C, and K.





smoothie, or make a big dinner salad?

• **Start on the side.**

Dive into the veggies first to avoid filling up before you get to them, says sports nutritionist and exercise physiologist Felicia Stoler, D.C.N., R.D. No sides (or only French fries)? Ask to swap or add vegetable soup or a salad and eat it first—you might consume fewer calories overall, according to Penn State University research.

• **Snack smarter.**

Trade chips or candy for a produce/protein pair—carrots and hummus or tuna on cucumber slices, for example—to improve between-meals eats.

HABIT

Warm up before a run; stretch and foam-roll after

> The repetitive motion of running tightens muscles, increasing your injury risk. Dynamic stretches before a run prep your body for more intense activities, says Gary Ditsch, lead exercise physiologist for weight-loss company Retrofit. Afterward, static stretching can return your muscles to their prerun length, even if you don't actually gain flexibility, Mayer

says. And foam rolling—either immediately postrun or later in the day—loosens tissue in ways that stretching alone can't.

Ditsch advises a 10- to 15-minute warmup routine: Start with leg swings (first front to back, then side to side), then walk, march, and skip before you finally run. Postrun, stretch your hip flexors and hamstrings (which tighten during running and sitting), calves (to prevent Achilles tendinitis and plantar fasciitis), and your chest and shoulders. “We don’t think about using our arms during our run, but they can

also get very tight,” Mayer says. Foam-roll any area that still feels tight, holding for a few seconds on tender points to help release them.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

• **Start small.** Don’t kick things off with a 30-minute full-body elongation session. Start with 10 to 15 seconds of a single stretch after a run, then celebrate—the feeling of declaring victory each time you incorporate a habit strengthens it over time, Plotnek says.

• **Pair it up.** Create a bond between an activity you’re doing daily anyway—say, watching *The Daily*

Show—and foam rolling.

• **Keep it in sight.** Buy your own foam roller instead of relying on your gym or training buddy. Keep it in a visible spot near where you’ll use it, and have a massage stick in your office, Sapper says.

• **Factor in the time.** If you have a 45-minute run on your training plan and exactly 45 minutes to do it, chances are you’ll rush into it without the dynamic stretches. Adjust your schedule so you have a full hour for your workout, or consider decreasing the mileage to accommodate the warmup.

CLOTHING (LEFT TO RIGHT): NIKE HALF ZIP, LEGGINGS, SHOES; LULULEMON JACKET, SWEATY BETTY LEGGINGS, ASICS SHOES; SUPERDRY JACKET, ASICS ORANGE ZIP, NEW BALANCE PANTS, ASICS SHOES; SWEATY BETTY SHORTS, OAKLEY SPORTS BRA, NEW BALANCE SHOES

Postrun stretching and foam rolling can work out tightness caused by running. (Plus, it feels good!)



HABIT Unplug on the run once a week

> For data-obsessed runners, occasionally ditching the GPS reconnects you with your natural pacing and rhythms. “You’ll learn what conversational pace feels like and what your breathing should sound like at different intensity levels,” Mayer says. And while no one doubts the motivating power of music, removing your earbuds sometimes offers other advantages. For one,

you’ll stay safer in unfamiliar territory; plus, you’ll notice and appreciate your surroundings more without auditory distractions, Mayer says. And if you’re planning a race that forbids tunes, you’ll line up prepared.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Time it right.** Easy runs, trail runs, and periods when you’re coming back from an injury or recovering from a race are prime times to go gadget-free. “Without the pressure of seeing your pace, it can be easier to take it easy while you’re ramping up again,” Mayer says.

• Remind yourself.

This habit is tricky because you’re shifting your routine on just one day of the week. You lace up, slap on your watch, and grab your phone—and you’re out the door with all the gear you meant to leave behind. So choose a consistent day—say, a tech-free Tuesday—and set a recurring phone alert for before you head out, Plotnek says.

• Go by time.

Measuring some runs by time instead of distance lets you at least downgrade from a GPS unit to an analog watch. If you feel the need to note your pace and mileage at the end, choose a go-to route—you’ll at least avoid continually checking your pace, Reichmann says.

- **Reset your motivation.** On gadget-free runs, focus on contemplation, prayer, or disconnecting from the stress of the day. You might experience your runs in a new way and embrace being unreachable, Plotnek says.

HABIT

Cook at home more often

> Extra calories, fat, sugar, and sodium lurk in restaurant dishes, so dining out adds extra pounds that weigh down your running performance and your health. One study in the journal *Public Health Nutrition* found that two or more restaurant meals per week added up to an extra quarter-pound of bulk per year on average. Research suggests that carrying just two excess pounds can add 12.4 seconds to your 5-K time and one minute, 45 seconds to your marathon finish. You don’t have to transform into a top chef, but mastering kitchen basics has perks beyond weight control. “Preparing your own food teaches you what works for your fuel needs and what doesn’t,” says Brownell. “You’re in control of the food choices and also the cost.”

MAKE IT ROUTINE

• Get a jumpstart.

Sign up for a cooking class. Whole Foods offers courses at their stores; you can also seek out local options or check out instructional videos at runnersworld.com/quickbites.

- **Clean up your kitchen.** Ditch or stow gear you never use to clear real estate for daily tools like a chef’s knife, a cutting board, a pot, and a grill pan, along with common ingredients like olive oil, salt, and pepper.

- **Re-create your cravings.** Have a restaurant fave? Google it—you may find the recipe or something similar. Experiment at home to replicate the flavors while controlling the ingredients.

• Plan for flavor.

Take 30 minutes to an hour each week to find recipes and go to the grocery store. Don’t forget fresh herbs, which “keep meals interesting, and if you are interested, you are more likely to eat at home,” Brownell says.

HOW TO FORM ANY HABIT...

Habits are your brain’s behavioral shortcuts, says Wendy Wood, Ph.D., a psychology and business professor and vice dean of social sciences at the University of Southern California—once they’re ingrained, they’re automatic. Here’s how to get there.

- **Follow your “why.”** Write down the benefits you hope to gain, from a smaller waist to that half-marathon PR.
- **Schedule it in.** Whatever calendar you use, block time in it for your new behavior.
- **Blab about it.** Ask family and running partners to hold you accountable (or to join you).
- **Change your surroundings.** Remove triggers for old habits and make new ones as easy and visible as possible.

HABIT**Add a weekly long run**

> Efforts of an hour or longer build endurance, grow capillaries that carry nourishing blood to your muscles, strengthen bones and ligaments, and prepare you for races of any distance. Newer or low-mileage runners first need to focus on running regularly three or four times per week, then building up to an hour on one of those runs, says Ditsch. Designate one day a week as your

long day, even if that means 20 minutes of run/walk instead of your usual 15. Then add 10 percent to your longest run per week, but never any more than a half-mile to two miles at a time, Ditsch says.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Plan it out.** Write out your long-run progression for the next month or two in advance, then sit down each Sunday night or Monday morning and plug your long run (and the others) into your schedule. Be flexible—if you need to reserve weekends for family activities, try early

Friday mornings for long runs.

- **Turn in early.** “If you’re going longer on Saturday, Friday night should be a little more mellow. Eat and drink appropriately for what’s coming up,” says Mayer.

- **Try a new scene.** Drive to a nearby trail or forest preserve. Varying your surroundings will make the hours or miles pass more quickly.

- **Find some buddies.** A support system helps any new habit take root. But groups provide added benefits as the miles add up—safety, distraction, and an opportunity to develop bonds.

HABIT**Get enough sleep**

> Few habits have as much of an impact on your running and your health. “Everything is so much worse when you don’t have enough sleep; it not only permeates your running, it affects your work life, your family, your relationships,” Sapper says. While you snooze, your body and mind recharge, repairing the damage done from hard training, releasing human growth hormone to build muscles, and strengthening

connections between nerves and muscles. Regularly shorting on shut-eye has been linked to everything from limits on your muscle glycogen storage to injury risk and moodiness, weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease. Most people need six to nine hours per night; if you regularly feel like you might nod off during meetings or if you conk out immediately when you hit the sack, you’re probably not sleeping enough.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Declare bed-time sacred.** Start

Build up to at least one hour once per week by gradually lengthening your longest run.



with a month-long commitment to add between a half-hour and an hour more to your regular sleeping time. Clear that block of time plus an hour beforehand to wind down. Ask your friends and family to nix late-night calls and texts, says Shelby Harris, Psy.D., director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at Montefiore Medical Center.

- **Unplug.** During that final hour, shut down all your screens, including phones, TVs, tablets, and computers. The blue light they emit dims production of the sleep hormone melatonin. Designate an old running-shoe box for electronics—at the appointed time, plunk your devices inside and shut the lid until morning. Do something relaxing, like reading a book or completing a crossword, instead.

- **Watch the caffeine.** Rethink that late-afternoon latte. A caffeine jolt as long as six hours before bedtime can disrupt your slumber, decreasing the restfulness of your sleep without you even realizing it, according to a study in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*.

- **Choose sleep over miles.** If you're an early morning runner but can't seem to hit the sack early the night before, cut your run a few miles short rather than setting your alarm earlier, Sapper says.



To avoid burning eyes, put sunscreen on only the bottom half of your face. Wear a hat and sunglasses to protect the rest.

HABIT Apply sunscreen before every run

> An estimated one in five Americans will develop skin cancer—and with long hours on the roads or trails, runners face a particularly high risk. In fact, an Austrian study found distance runners had more irregular moles and other cancer risk factors than nonath-

letes. Ultraviolet light also causes wrinkles, brown spots, and other cosmetic damage, says marathoner and Boston dermatologist Robin Travers, M.D. Fortunately, sunscreen protects you from all these consequences, provided you use it properly. While visible sunlight dims on cloudy or winter days and at dawn or dusk, cancer-causing UVA rays still shine through—so unless your entire run will be completed with the

aid of a headlamp, you need to slather up, she says.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Go up an SPF.** A sun protection factor of 15 adequately protects you from skin cancer, but only if you use the recommended ounce to cover your body—and most people, even dermatologists, don't, Travers says. "I can't tell you how often I've been on the Boston Marathon bus in the morning and I see people applying

these teeny tiny dabs of sunscreen to their faces," she says. If you move up to 45 or higher, you're more likely to get the protection you need even if you skimp.

- **Make it last.** Most sunscreens contain active ingredients that, paradoxically, break down after two to three hours in ultraviolet light. Look for ingredients that say they're photostabilized, meaning they'll last four to five hours with one application. And make sure the bottle says "water resistant for 80 minutes"—while recent labeling changes mean no sunscreen can claim to be sweatproof, these formulas resist moisture the longest, says American Academy of Dermatology spokesman Darrell Rigel, M.D.

- **Stick it in your shoe.** Store the sunscreen in your trainers, so you literally can't go for a run without noticing it, Travers says.

- **Avoid the sting.** If burning eyes are holding you back from sunscreen application, try Travers's trick: Apply sunscreen only from the eyes down, then protect your eyes with sunglasses and your forehead with a running cap.

HABIT

Eat breakfast every day

> Your muscles can store only about six to seven hours' worth of glycogen for energy, so each morning you wake up depleted, says Stoler. A morning meal offers you a chance to replenish them and also sets the tone for the rest of your day. Studies of people who've lost weight and kept it off show 78 percent of them eat breakfast on a regular basis.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Choose something over nothing.** Your stomach may need to adjust to eating first thing. Even a piece of fruit can get you started, Plotnek says.
- **Balance it out.** Add on until you're eating a meal that's about 300 to 400 calories, featuring half produce, one-quarter whole grains, and one-quarter lean protein. If you eat it after your run, aim for a 4:1 ratio of carbohydrates to protein to satisfy you and begin

to repair the muscles you damaged during your workout.

- **Expand your definition.** You don't have to stick with traditional breakfast food if you're not a fan, says Stoler. Leftovers, sandwiches, salad—anything is fair game.

- **Pregame it.** Spend Sundays prepping a week's worth of breakfasts—dole out cooked oatmeal into single-serving containers or boil eggs. If you're a smoothie fan, clean, chop, and store the fresh ingredients when you get home from the store.



A post-run smoothie can provide a 4:1 carbs-to-protein ratio. For a recipe, go to runnersworld.com/smoothie.

MAKE IT ROUTINE

- **Track it.** Log your sitting time or strap on an activity monitor—manufacturers like Polar and Garmin now make models that double as GPS devices. Then consider this: Six to seven hours of total daily sitting time harms your fitness about as much as an hour of running helps it, according to a study in the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

- **Set mini-goals.** Use that tracker to look beyond your total daily step count, which is skewed by your runs. Most devices tally the hours you spend sedentary; aim never to log more than two in a row where you're getting fewer than 1,000 steps.

- **Remind yourself.** Set two alarms on your phone, computer, or fitness tracker mid-morning and two midafternoon to tell yourself to move.

- **Demand to stand.** Make rules for your workday: Rise each time someone comes into your office, pace on every call, hover in the back of the room during meetings. Anchor it to what you're already doing and you'll find it easier to remember, and over time, the first behavior will become a trigger for the new habit. 📱

HABIT Sit less

> Even runners spend an average of 10 hours and 45 minutes per day with their butts parked in chairs. As you rest, your hip flexors and hamstrings tighten and your posture slumps, boosting injury risk, Ditsch says. And the research on the health harms of sedentary behavior has grown so alarming that many experts call the problem "sitting disease." An exercise habit alone won't save you from consequences like weight gain and heart disease, but research also shows that standing or walking breaks can make a big difference.

...AND HOW TO STAY ON TRACK

You can't measure habits with a clock or a scale. So set up your own system—whether it's checkmarks on a calendar or an app like Tiny Habits (free in the iOS App Store)—to keep tabs on your progress. Instead of panicking if you lapse, try this:

- **Know you're not alone.** Even the most successful people slip up; what's important is getting back in the habit.
- **Be kind.** Beating yourself up does you no favors. Self-compassion is better for progress.
- **Reframe lapses as data.** Figure out why you didn't do what you wanted, and make the necessary changes to your goals or your approach.

CLOTHING: MANGO COAT, VOLCOM PANTS, SUNSPEL SHIRT AND BLAZER, ECCO BAG