



NEWS RELEASE

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Lace up your running shoes this spring

*By Chris Halagarda,
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FORT LEE, Va. – May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, and what better sport to start this spring than running for physical fitness?

Running is a great form of exercise, and when performed correctly and safely, it is one of the most time-efficient and effective weight maintenance strategies available. Plus, it can be therapeutic for the mind and body — and you can't beat the cost!

But don't just run wild. When not performed correctly and safely, running can break you down and put you on the sideline. Follow these rules and you'll have a long and successful exercise program for life.

Six Rules for Running

- **Update your running sneakers regularly:** Running shoes and socks are like shocks and tires for your car. Don't ignore them. They are the only equipment essential to running. Replace sneakers every 300-500 miles or three to six months. Use the lower recommendation if you are a "Clydesdale" runner – weighing more than 180 pounds. A sneaker's sole will wear out long before its shell looks damaged, so graduate "old" sneakers to mow the lawn in or donate them back to a running store where they can give the less fortunate a chance to run. For first-time runners, consider trying on shoes at a running store, and don't forget to buy your shoes at the local exchange.

- **Recovery nutrition:** Be sure that you are eating something immediately after your run. Too many people ignore their post-exercise meal and miss a great opportunity to quickly repair tissue and replenish glycogen stores (stored carbohydrate used as fuel during running). Get low-fat chocolate milk or soy milk from the commissary and have it ready for your next post-run fueling beverage.
- **Proper rest and active rest days:** Running is great, but more is not better! Just like weight training or any other exercise, you need to allow for rest after your run and get plenty of sleep at night. Optimal sleep is seven to nine hours each night. The more active you are, the more sleep you need. The sleep will help promote recovery and prevent the immune system from breaking down. Active rest days or cross-training days are also great. Try slow-paced walking, bicycling, elliptical training, rowing or swimming.
- **Strength training:** Weights, resistance bands and body weight are all going to help strengthen muscles and may prevent imbalances created by our lifestyle. Strength training will even help your running directly by increasing the muscles' efficiency. Don't be afraid of strength training. Perform one to three full-body weight training workouts per week.
- **Walk-run:** Trademarked by former Olympian and running guru, Jeff Galloway, adding short walk breaks can actually improve your times and recovery process. Walk breaks are frowned upon by many inexperienced or "hard-core" runners, but adding walk breaks is a wise choice for beginners or the avid "ground pounder." Start by walking a minute, then running a minute. Gradually, over weeks and months, increase your running time.
- **Don't run through injury:** Although there is going to be some discomfort associated with starting a running program, pain is not weakness leaving the body. Real pain is a signal from your body that something is wrong. Stop running and have a doctor check it out. Most injuries, when caught early, can be healed with some rest, ice, compression and elevation. If you try to push through pain, you'll find yourself sidelined for a lot longer, or worse, in need of surgery.

Running, like many sports, carries a potential risk for injury; but done correctly, it can help prevent dozens of diseases and provide miles of unique experiences. Jeff Galloway states it best when he says, "If exercise was a controlled medication, it would be the most heavily prescribed on record."

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*