Dream Runners
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FREEDOM Trust

Tete- A - Tete with Ramani Sir
(Ramani Ramaiah Venkat)

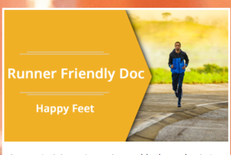
When did you start running?
I have been physically active all along and in 1991 started running in a small way. The labored run of about 3kms from light house to Marina Grounds was then considered a feat. The 6kms SNEHA run in 2002 was the only event I had participated till I joined Chennai Runners in July 2007. Since then, except for few months break due to ITB, been running regularly and been participating in events and done twenty full marathons and four 50Kms runs. I aspire & dream of better timing but keeping in view the age factor, training intensity, methods and frequency, console myself that the next event it is going to be always better.

What motivates you to run:
As you age, the only sport you could take up, I guess, is running. It is rather, the only sport left which can be taken up with ease and enjoyed to the fullest. Believe me; it is really a "Stress Buster" and one of my running slogan is "I run to Retain Sanity".

Your advice to runners who are apprehensive about running after they cross 50:
Been advising since long that anyone of any age and shape can and should start running. Undeterred by the initial physical discomfort that may be caused when one takes up running, if a person keeps at it for couple of months with some regular frequency, " RUNNING" is sure to become an addiction. Try it, keep at it, one would not be disappointed. The feel good factor, the adrenaline which pumps thorough when one stands in the start line of an event is to be experienced rather than to be read or told.

Your testimony / thoughts/ wishes for DRHM:
I consider the "Dream Runners" signature event as one of the boldest initiative in Chennai. Kudos to the whole team of Dream Runners. It judged correctly that runners are out there, craving for good & quality events. Over years, DRHM has established its place in the "Running Calendar" of India. It has emboldened other running groups and chapters to have their own runs, albeit in a smaller way. Sure to enjoy the run this year as I did in two other earlier occasions. "Dream Runners" as an organization can and should dream big.

- By Rekha Sudarsan



Runner Friendly Doc
Happy Feet

As your training gets moving, suddenly you begin to hear these interesting terms like pronation, flat feet and how the minimalist shoes are the greatest human invention since teabags. The idea slowly forms in your head that the reason you are behind the times, is because your shoes aren't right and the latest pair of Nike air max will get you upto speed.

Let's get one thing straight, the right pair of shoes is not going to make you Usain Bolt but the wrong pair of shoes can definitely put paid to all your dreams of running in the DreamRunners half marathon. So which is the right shoe?

The right shoe is never decided by brand, colour or look.

It's decided by size, fit and comfort.

The brand that works for your buddy may not be the one that works for you.

Go with an open mind and try atleast 3 different pairs and hopefully more.

Whoever said running was the cheapest form of exercise never went out to buy good running shoes.

For those of you astounded by the choice of running shoes, here are a few pointers.

The most common running shoe brands with a good range of shoes include Nike, Adidas, Asics, New Balance, Saucony, Skechers and On Cloud. Your perfect shoe could be any among all of these. When you wear the shoe, choose a shoe that has one thumb breadth of space in front of your big toe. Your feet swell when you run and if you don't want ugly black toenails, this is important. Some of us however feel a black toe is a badge of honour.

The widest part of your foot is the part just below your toes. If you have flat feet (pronator), make sure that the shoe has a sufficiently wide sole at this point. Asics and Saucony both have many options in shoes with a wide sole.

When laced up, you should not be able to slide your heel out of the shoe. If you are able to then the shoe is a size too big or it's not laced up right. The shoe should hold your foot snugly around the midfoot. This may require you to lace through the last hole at the top.

It is better to try your shoes with a similar pair of socks as the one you plan to use.

You never grow into a shoe that doesn't feel perfect at the time of first trial. Wear them and run in them around the corridor. Trust me, it doesn't look half as silly running in a mall as it does sitting with a very expensive shoe that only gives you pain. Or else try a shoe at a store that has a treadmill. These are available at the Running Lab store, the Puma showroom at Phoenix mall and the Asics outlet at express avenue.

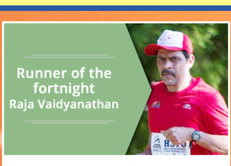
Running shoes generally fall into stable, neutral or minimal categories based on the amount of cushioning or support they provide. In general, the heavier the runner the more support required, which isn't to say that those elite Kenyans only run barefoot. I would suggest that you err on the side of more cushioning rather than less, unless you are a masochist. Any transition to a lesser cushioned shoe must be very gradual with a constant assessment of whether any new pains are emerging. The answer should not be to reach barefoot running but to stay injury free. Still don't know what the question is...

If you have proved to yourself that running is now an inseparable part of your life, it might be time to consider buying and using two if not three pairs of shoes in rotation. This allows your shoes to recover from their workout, let you have one reliable pair while you break in another new pair, allow you to choose a different lighter pair for speed work and more cushioned one for longer runs and finally and importantly the structure of different shoes activates your foot muscles differently and allows them to get stronger and remain injury free.

So when is it time to change your shoe? Usually a pair of shoes will last for around 600 km give or take a hundred based on weight and usage. If you see the sole worn unevenly, where the tread is not visible in one portion of the shoe, it needs to go. If your favourite most reliable pair is suddenly making you get foot pain, it needs to go. Don't try to squeeze the last drop from your shoe.

Good shoes make happy feet. Happy feet make happy runners!

- Dr. Parthasarathy Srinivasan



Runner of the fortnight
Raja Vaidyanathan

If Bryan Adams crooned **'18 till I Die'** as an eternal anthem for feeling young, then Raja Vaidyanathan can take pride in coining **'21@60'** to live the famous adage **'age is just a number**. It's not just a reference to the distance he's run when he turned 60 years but also a pointer to how young he feels at this age.

Raja was into team sports during his school and college days but never into distance running ever. Settling into sedentary lifestyle started showing results on the weighing scales. Realizing this he shook himself out of slumber and hit the road. This was in the 1990's. 'Chennai' was still 'Madras' and gyms and fitness fads still a few years away. He still distinctly remembers the first run from RA Puram to Marina... not for the distance... not for the speed... but for the 'feel good' of the wind against his face and adrenalin rush. He was hooked...! Slowly but surely he started to feel the positive effects of this simple sport.

Mostly into shorter distances, the distance running bug found him sometime in 2014 and as a celebration of reaching the grand age of 60... he registered for the half marathon at the TWCM 2014. He had found 21@60...! Says he of the experience, "the adrenalin rush on reaching the finish cannot be explained but only experienced."

Though he ran that race and completed, he realized that structured training would make it simpler and better only after the he became a part of the free training offered by Dream Runners for the DRHM 2015. He finished strong with a personal best of 2:19 at the DRHM2015.

He now volunteers to train few of his friends to run and plans to continue to run till his body gives him the signal to stop.

So all of you who think you are too old to run, start tomorrow. It is never too late. You will realize what you've been missing so far.

- Prashant Sankaran

Ram Vishwanathan
Founder, Chennai Runners

Age is just a number - Just Be Consistent

Mark Twain once said **"Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."** We don't have go far & wide to look for examples, from **Fauja Singh (100+)** to our own **Venugopalan Arunachalam** (70+), are living examples of how one can keep running at any age.

So, how do you take up running at any age? It is not just about taking up running, but keeping with it and making it a lifelong habit.

Regardless of age, anyone can start running and benefit beyond health. Like any other habit, the secret key to lifelong running is consistency. Set yourself to a comfortable routine and adhere to it.

Personally, I rediscovered running at 40+ and a decade later I still enjoy running. I tried to follow these **three mantras to stay regular** touch with running.

- No two consecutive days missed
- 10K per run
- 50K per week.

Find your own running mantra, stick with it and start running today.

Even if you start today, you could debut in a running event with DRHM which is happening in July.

- Ram Vishwanathan
Founder, Chennai Runners

Thoughts from Jai
Anna Nagar Dreamers (AND)

Age is a mist - move beyond.

A veteran in life, but scared to run, why? May be you never thought, I too can run! There are quite a few young hearts who started running at 56 and completed a marathon within 2 years and then some who started running at 45 with 118kg, yes 118 kg and completed half marathon before 48! There are at least a 100 stories like this in and around Chennai and a million world over.

The age, weight is only in the mind, actually the joy of running starts really at older ages. The 40+ age makes the achievement of a 10K, half marathon or a full marathon a joy worth celebrating. It's like reversing the myth and making you ageless. Makes you laugh, laugh at whoever thought you're crazy or even lazy. All that you need is to wear your attitude and get set go for one more transformation in your life. To do what looked undoable till yesterday.

You run behind everything in your life. Why not for once start running ahead of your life, in your own term.

So what stops you from running? Nothing but the child in you that has been told that you can't be child anymore. Maybe be lack of childlike curiosity and the excitement to explore and see what's next or absence of childlike determination to get what you always wanted.

How can the chance to be with the morning fragrance, the sea, the beach, and the fresh air hold your feet from running? How can the chance to be young and energetic confine you from running?

Mind you, it's all within you. Yes within you.

Someone had put it very beautifully; the longest distance that you will ever find difficult to the run will be the distance between your bed and your running shoes. Is that a big distance to not run and miss celebrating your life?

When was it the last time you did something for the first time...get it done and dusted at DRHM!!

Bring the child in you to us and we'll wing it.

DRHM Training happens in 7 different locations across Chennai.

- Jai
Anna Nagar Dreamers (AND)