

Changing the world  
with **women and girls**  
**act:onaid**



# Training advice for **ActionAid** runners

Children in Doti, western Nepal, enjoying a break from lessons in their school playground.

# Running with ActionAid

Thank you for registering to take part in a running event for ActionAid.

Whether you're participating in your first 5K or your fifth marathon, we hope you find this running guide helpful when planning your training regime. You might want to check out our downloadable guide to eating and drinking too.

Just as a disclaimer, everyone is different so please do tailor our advice to suit your personal needs! This guide aims to enhance your performance, but we cannot take responsibility for any injuries or health issues that occur after following this advice.

If you're yet to lace up your trainers and sign up to a running event for ActionAid, please visit [actionaid.org.uk/running](https://actionaid.org.uk/running) to find a challenge that suits you.

From the London Marathon to the December Santa Run, there's something that will appeal to everyone and we'll be here to support you every step of the way!



Schoolchildren are pictured running during a PE break at the Kalas Primary School in northern Uganda.

# Before you start

The start date of your training is dependent on the type of run you're doing and your fitness levels, but there's no harm in starting as early as possible. For a marathon, roughly 12 to 22 weeks of preparation is advised. Less time is generally needed for shorter runs.

However, before you get running there are a few things you need to do.

## Shoes, shoes, shoes!

You may feel fond of the cheap and cheerful trainers you wear on the weekend, but if you're embarking on some serious legwork then it's time to invest in a proper pair of running shoes.

Don't rely on internet shopping. Instead, spend time trying on trainers (take a run round the store if you can!) to work out what feels most comfortable.

## What to wear

Depending on your experience you may be kitted out with running gear already, from shorts made from the latest fabric technology to lightweight tops that help you regulate your body's temperature.

If you're more of a running novice, you may want to think about what will make you feel comfortable and confident, whether that's a fitted sports bra or a handy windstopper jacket. Most high street retailers stock sportswear, so have a browse and see what takes your fancy.

## Keeping track

Before you start training, you might want to think about tracking your runs. Seeing how far and fast you're going and how you're improving can be really motivating.

Spend some time researching different running apps and thinking about what will work for you. The popular Couch-to-5K app is great for newbie runners and guides you through three workouts a week. Strava or MapMyRun are useful for more advanced runners as they provide you with feedback and advice about improving your workouts.

## Have fun!

If you're new to running, don't give yourself unrealistic objectives or you'll be setting yourself up to fail. Think about ways you can make running fun, whether that's listening to a podcast you enjoy, varying your route on a daily basis or teaming up with a local running club.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself and aim to enjoy your training as much as you can.

# Warming up before exercise

Warming up before exercise is extremely important. It mentally and physically prepares your body for running and can help prevent both long-term and short-term injury.

The act of warming up brings your heart rate up and gets your blood pumping around your body, reaching and warming your muscles and preparing them for the activity you're about to put them through.

Most warm ups involve a mixture of cardiovascular activity (this could be in the form of a short jog), stretching and strength exercises, which prepare the body for sudden movements in the near-future.

Children play in Nyanga, Zimbabwe. Their school has benefited from an ActionAid programme that supplies porridge to 11 primary schools.



© Samantha Reinders/ActionAid

## **March on the spot**

March or jog on the spot for three minutes. Up the pace if you're feeling active!

## **Knee lifts**

Briskly lift your knees in the air alternatively for 30 seconds. Take a break and repeat.

## **Jumping jacks**

Extend your arms as wide as you can as you jump in the air, legs apart. Try and do 30.

## **Knee Bends**

Lower yourself gently by bending your knees. Do this for 30 seconds, take a break and repeat.



The NHS recommends that your warm up should take around six minutes, including cardiovascular activity and stretches.

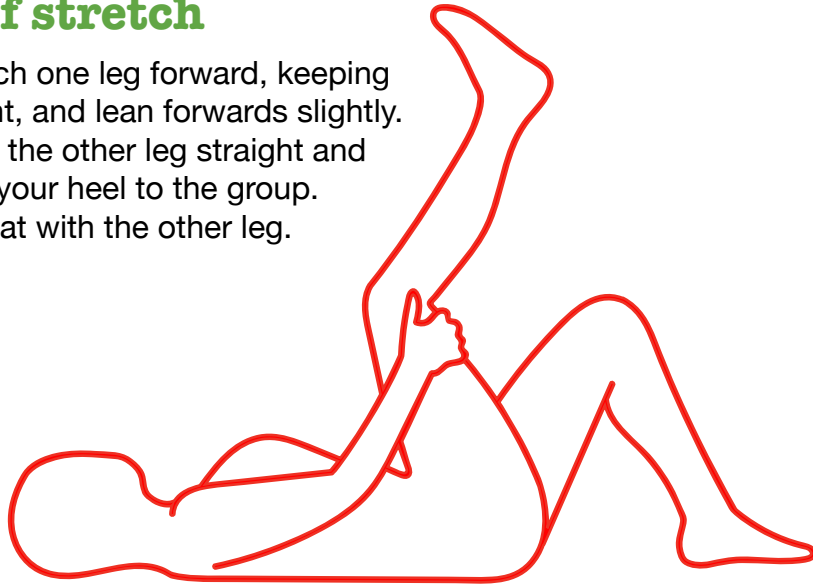
# Cooling down after exercise

It's also important to cool down after you exercise. This usually consists of a light jog and some stretching as you gradually slow your heart rate down.

Here are some effective cooldown stretches:

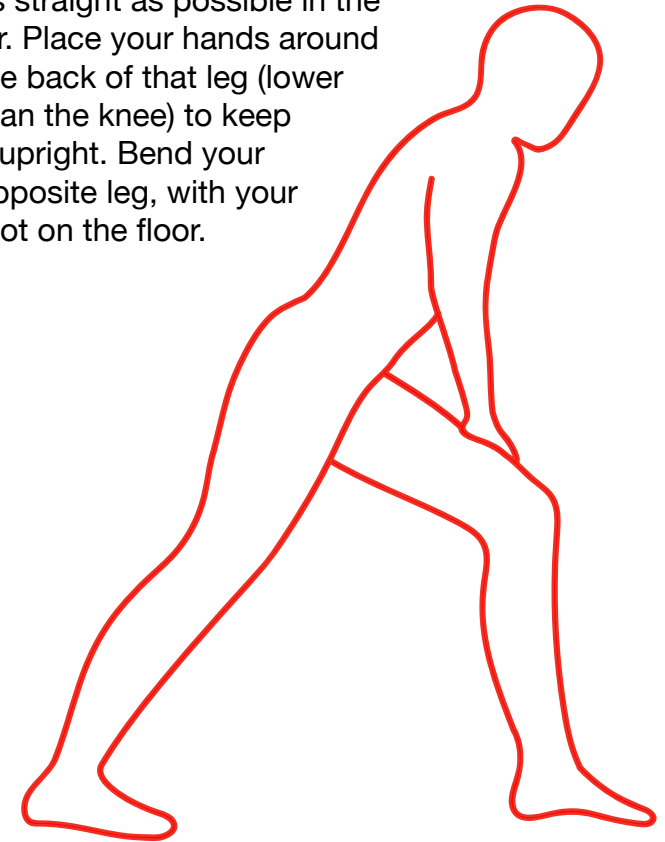
## Calf stretch

Stretch one leg forward, keeping it bent, and lean forwards slightly. Keep the other leg straight and hold your heel to the ground. Repeat with the other leg.



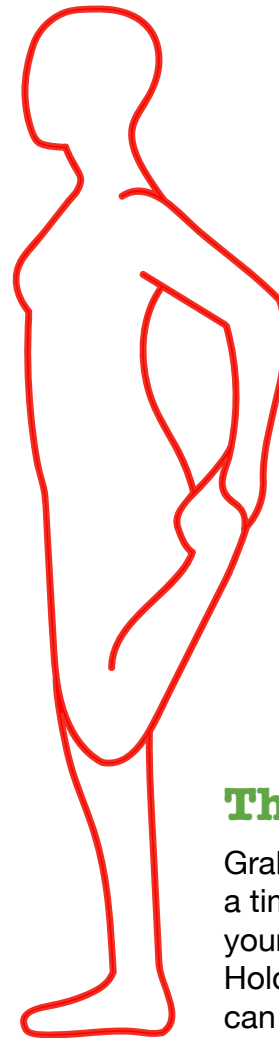
## Hamstring stretch

Lie on your back and raise one leg as straight as possible in the air. Place your hands around the back of that leg (lower than the knee) to keep it upright. Bend your opposite leg, with your foot on the floor.



## Thigh stretch

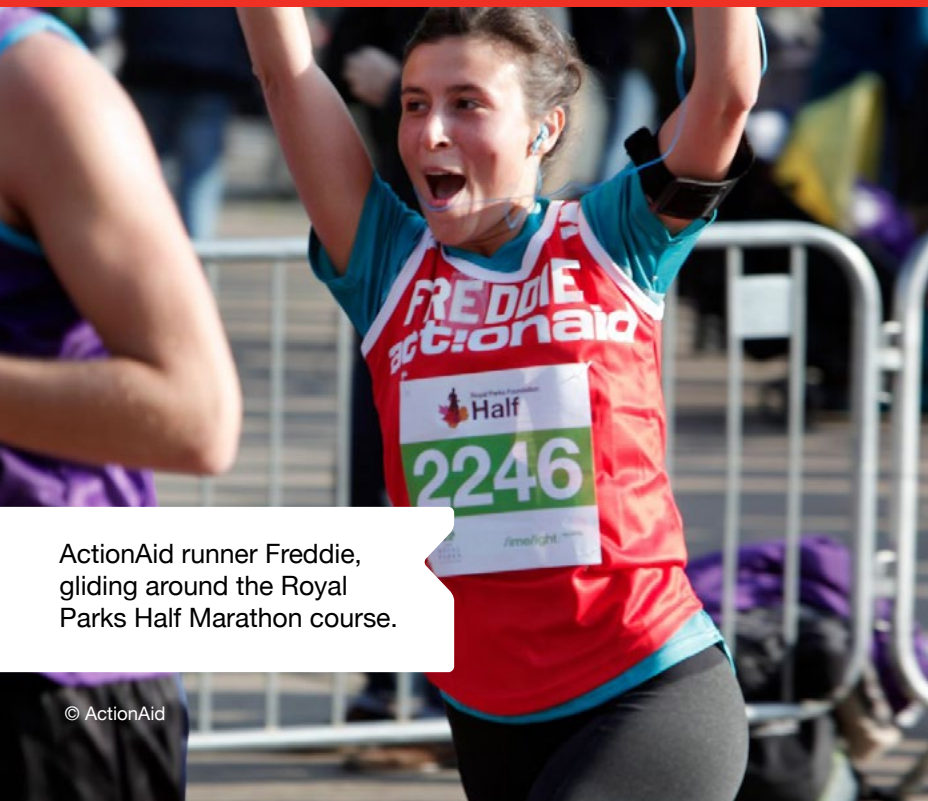
Grab the top of your foot (one foot at a time, of course!), to gently lift it and your bent leg towards your buttock. Hold in position for 10 seconds. You can do this standing or lying down.



# Time to train

Write out your weekly (or even daily) goals on a calendar planner and stick it somewhere you will see it regularly.

Think about what you want to achieve, but also what is realistic for you and your schedule. For example, if you're already balancing a full-time job with caring for three children, challenging yourself to run three hours a day is just not going to happen.



ActionAid runner Freddie, gliding around the Royal Parks Half Marathon course.

## Types of training

To avoid your training becoming monotonous, why not spice it up a little? Rather than just straightforward running, you could try out some different types of training.

Here are a few ideas:

### Fartlek training

Fartlek, which means 'speed play' in Swedish, involves varying your pace, distance and terrain for an unstructured run with varying levels of difficulty.

### Cross training

Cross training involves incorporating another sport, for example swimming, cycling or even volleyball, into your training routine to improve your level of fitness.

### Interval training

This type of training involves alternating between periods of low or high-intensity exercise and rest. For example, it could involve sprinting for a minute, then walking or jogging for two minutes.

### Continuous training

Continuous training is exactly what its name implies: continuous! It involves exercise of any kind without rest, and can be performed at any intensity.

### Weight training

Another self-explanatory training method, weight training involves the controlled use of weights to help build muscular strength (and size!).

### Altitude training

One for the more hardcore athletes, this involves training in places that are high above sea level, like mountains, where oxygen levels are lower.



The ActionAid cheer squad supporting our London Marathon 2018 team.

# Good luck!

We wish you all the best of luck with your running activity and want to thank you again for choosing to support ActionAid.

Your support is making a real difference. Our dedicated local staff are changing the world with women and girls. We are ending violence and fighting poverty so that all women, everywhere, can create the future they want.

If you're yet to sign up to take part in a running event for ActionAid, visit [actionaid.org.uk/running](https://actionaid.org.uk/running) to find a challenge that suits your fitness, experience and interests.

 01460 238 000

 [events@actionaid.org](mailto:events@actionaid.org)

 [actionaid.org.uk/running](https://actionaid.org.uk/running)

ActionAid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales (company number 01295174). Our England and Wales charity number is 274467, and our Scottish charity number is SC045476. Our registered office is 33-39, Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R 0BJ

