

6 Tips to Start Trail Running



By Sarah Bowen Shea

You may have to hop over rocks and roots, but the benefits of trail running are well worth the effort. Running on uneven terrain burns more calories and helps improve your balance, agility and coordination. Tina Vindum, the author of *Tina Vindum's Outdoor Fitness*, shared the following six trail running tips to make your transition to the trails a breeze.

Trail Running Tip #1: Wear the Right Trail Running Shoes

If you're going to hoof it on a wood-chip or packed dirt path, your regular running sneakers will do. But trail-running shoes provide more protection for your feet and have lugged outsoles to improve your traction, key for rocky and slippery routes. Check out the best women's [running and athletic shoes](#) to find the right pair for you.

Trail Running Tip #2: Start Slow and Flat

Trails work your leg muscles and ankle joints harder than roads or treadmills do, so begin on flatter paths and run for only 10 to 15 minutes during your first outing. Increase your time and/or distance by about 10 percent each week. Try training for a challenging hike to acclimate yourself to the uneven terrain with this simple [hiking plan](#).

Trail Running Tip #3: Adjust Your Stride

To prevent tripping over roots and rocks, lift your feet—especially your toes—slightly higher than you would if you were running on pavement or indoors on a treadmill.

Trail Running Tip #4: Look Straight Ahead

Keep your gaze on the trail—about 10 feet ahead, not down at your feet—so you can see the upcoming terrain and avoid any obstacles.

Trail Running Tip #5: Don't Be Afraid to Walk

If you're losing running motivation on a steep hill, walk—even experienced trail racers do it. You should also walk if you're approaching a tricky obstacle like a stream or log. Whether you stop to walk or not, stay motivated with the top 10 ways to keep your running motivation strong.

Trail Running Tip #6: Share the Path

Always stay to the right on a trail. When you approach a person from behind, loudly say, "Passing on your right [or left]." If you encounter someone on horseback, move to the side of the trail and ask if it's safe to pass. If the horse is approaching you, stop moving altogether and allow it to pass.

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