



The Cardinal Rules of Jogging Safety



So you're a jogger or, excuse me, a RUNNER! Joggers or runners do much of their training on city streets. Their faster speed and their lesser attire make them less visible to traffic. Running or jogging comes with its fair share of natural injuries so it makes sense taking precautions to prevent "unnatural" accidents, the kinds usually caused by the bumper of a car, for example.

- Stay on the **sidewalk**! Unless you're running with a 200-pound rubber bumper wrapped around your knees, you cannot compete with traffic for space on asphalt. Runners that insist on running right on the road are difficult to see and unpredictable. Runners on busy city streets antagonize all drivers against runners and make it worse for everybody else.
- There are six exceptions to the "stay off the street" rule where the street is better than the sidewalk: an organized road race, a quiet residential or country road, a road without sidewalks, a time of day where traffic is virtually nonexistent, sidewalks which are hazardous because of icy conditions, or to sidestep a sidewalk which presents a temporary hazard greater than running on the street such as an aggressive animal or a construction site.
- Run or jog **facing traffic** as much as possible.
- If you are running or jogging on a road and a car is approaching without taking a **wide berth**, don't challenge the car or try to "hold your ground". Swallow your pride and get off the road even if it means stopping for a moment!
- If you are involved in a near accident or a dangerous or aggressive maneuver by a driver, try to remember the license number and report the incident to the police. Unless you are in training for a heavyweight boxing bout, thin and lightly-clad joggers (angry though they may be) are no match for testosterone-overdosed drivers nor is there anything to gain from a shoving match or fisticuffs with a drunk or "mentally-challenged" driver.
- If a car appears to be following you at low speed, jog calmly into a public building and call the police and from safety, try to get the license number and watch the vehicle's reaction. If the vehicle reacts in such a way as to indicate that you were or are being followed, call the police. If you are far from public buildings, a residence can be used as a refuge-of-last-resort.

- Don't run on a nagging injury or skimp on the stretching before your run. Why is this a safety issue, you ask? Because stretching can alert you to a pull or a strain which might stop your run midway and in the middle of nowhere! Also, stretching will minimize the risk of pulled muscles during your run or jog, thus minimizing the risk of having to stop midway through your run.
- Always carry your cell phone and perhaps some bus money or a token. Spraining your ankle on a can, stick or rock you did not see, some six miles from home, is painful and embarrassing enough without having to panhandle or beg charity from a bus driver just to get home! In addition, accidents like this could happen late at night or during a cold spell. We recommend one piece of paper money because it will be easier to slip into a sock or pocket.



- Double-knot your laces before leaving. You may not notice an untied lace until it trips you or, worse, you may suddenly need to avoid an object, person or vehicle and the sudden movement causes you to step on your untied lace, aggravating the dangerous situation.
- When crossing a road, always use the "look thrice" rule which means looking for traffic coming from the direction closest to the curb, looking the other way, and then checking one last time in the direction closest to the curb. The reason for this is twofold. First, roller-bladers or bicyclists may evade your peripheral vision at first glance. By the moment of your second scan, they will have moved into your peripheral vision. Also, runners or joggers tend to "deep think" when jogging, or might be engrossed in conversation with a partner. This reduces the runner's attentiveness to hazards. The "look thrice" rule will become a habit and will eliminate many hazardous situations which were not caught by a cursory first glance.
- Do not jog or run with any portable music playing device while wearing both ear buds under any circumstances. Some serious injuries can be avoided given a moment's

notice of an onrushing vehicle. Earphones will rob you of that chance by virtually eliminating your hearing. You will be oblivious to car horns or hollers to "watch out".

- Avoid running or jogging in darkness. If you must, always tell someone what your route is and how long you expect it to last. That way, in case of serious assault or injury, you have a person to rely on to search for you.
- For night jogging/running, always wear clothing with reflective articles. At the very least, wear light colored clothing.
- In cold, winter conditions, avoid lonely country runs where storm warnings prevail. A serious snowstorm can stop any runner and without shelter and wearing minimal running clothing, you could be in grave danger.
- For winter running or jogging, always carry a warm hat with you. Even though you may not need a hat to keep your head warm while actually running you will freeze without it if you have to stop. Too much perspiration is better than any amount of hypothermia or frostbite. The body loses thirty per cent of its heat from the head.



- If you twist your ankle on an object, try to fall and roll loosely into the twist. This may result in some scraping of the skin on the hand or elbows but it will minimize the sprain. Unless you are fully confident that the sprain is extremely minor, and there is no swelling, walk or take the bus home. A properly treated sprain will heal much faster than if you continue to run on it right after the sprain.
- The biggest constant threat to urban runners is alleys or driveways from which cars could emerge at any time. A runner must learn to constantly monitor the path before them and anticipate vehicles at every cross-path.
- While running in pairs or a group, exercise extreme caution if you are running side-by-side, especially on country roads. Cars coming up behind you could result in one trying to pass another with the back car having not seen you, crossing the yellow line and engaging on the side on which you are jogging at high, passing speed. The runner on the extremity would be in grave danger of sudden impact at great speed.