

Rod Dixon's Nine PRINCIPLES FOR RUNNERS

PRINCIPLE 1: Set Realistic Goals

Setting realistic goals is an important requirement for achieving steady progress. Some runners seem to believe that more is better and “overstating” their goals will make their dreams come true. Setting realistic short-term goals that are progressively attainable, places the proper emphasis on the ‘Training and Conditioning’ and the preparation process that is required before any level of improvement can be achieved in running.

PRINCIPLE 2: Develop Good Habits

Good intentions and goals are useless, unless you have a sound training program and adhere to it. Habits are developed through practice and a consistent schedule. Keep a training diary and record your daily progress, this should have an honest personal account of your thoughts feelings in your training. Capitalize on your strengths in running and racing and focus on improving your weaknesses in training. Take the time to warm-up and warm-down properly. Make time to include some yoga type stretching and strength training in your daily or weekly training routine. Commit yourself to a nutritious diet and understand good eating habits. Understand the value of a balanced diet and the real value of **Recovery**.

PRINCIPLE 3: Balance Your Activities

For a balance in your life, you should have other interests and activities. Develop some new interests, enjoy your family and social life. Dedicating time to running is an experience that should *enrich* your life, not be a substitute for it. Your running should also benefit all the significant others in your life through your enhanced healthy lifestyle, increased energy, and the opportunities for travel and the wonderful experience to participate in destination running events.

PRINCIPLE 4: Gradual Progression

Productive training for any sport or physical activity is based on the principle of gradual progression. For runners, the gradual increase in training time and distance and/or the pace of some of your runs...together with sufficient recovery is the balance for improvement. It is difficult for some runners to grasp the fact that improvement occurs during **Recovery**. Rest and recovery, are *part* of training—and an essential part at that. Increases in your training volume (mileage or minutes) or intensity (pace or effort) should never exceed 10% per week.

PRINCIPLE 5: Stress and Recovery

If you train too hard you will exhaust both your body and your resolve. If you train too little your progress will stagnate. Between these two extremes lies an optimum point where your training will produce maximum improvement. “Rest and Recovery” for a runner begins as soon as you finish running and or exercise, and includes, recovery nutrition, restful sleep and other “restoration” techniques that enhance recovery, for example: massage, and cold water therapy (ice baths or walking waist-deep in the ocean).



PRINCIPLE 6: Consistency

Consistency means making your running a healthy habit. It doesn't mean **never** missing a day of training—which, for one reason or another, will happen to almost everyone. Crawling out of bed with a fever of 101° just to continue your “streak” of consecutive running days is more likely to prolong your illness. Struggling through a long run because you haven't fully recovered from a previous hard training session will only serve to prolong the recovery process—or worse yet, lead to injury. Running or training 3-4-5 days a week, and taking the time you need to recover from illness or injury, will often produce the best results.

PRINCIPLE 7: Prepare for Success

For runners, training should be a balanced lifestyle. Prepare yourself for a balance of the **Emotional, Physical, Spiritual** and **Mental** combination for successful improvement. It is the synergy and balance of the four parts that make the whole. Prepare yourself for success **Emotionally** by striving to be you're 'very best' today, be excited about today's events and not disappointed by yesterday's results. Prepare yourself for success **Physically** by following a well-planned, sensible training program. . Prepare yourself **Spiritually** by believing in yourself and enjoying what you do. Enjoy and embrace every day. Prepare yourself for success **Mentally** by setting progressively higher but realistic goals and savor the achievement. Organize your running life around these goals and prepare to take advantage of your opportunities.

PRINCIPLE 8: Be prepared to Test Yourself

Progress and improvement doesn't occur in running until it first occurs in training. Measure your progress in training by testing yourself occasionally over measured training loops, in Time Trials and Races.

PRINCIPLE 9: Savor the Benefits of Being a Runner

Enjoy the benefits of being a runner. Enjoy challenging the elements by training and running in all kinds of conditions. Enjoy the adventure of a new training circuit, traveling to running events and exciting destinations. If you are not having **FUN**, you are missing the expression and excitement of your running.