

Movement Methods: 10 Golden Rules of Running

Alberto Salazar knows a thing or two about his sport. A former world-record holder in the marathon, and three-time winner of the New York City event, Salazar was the face of American distance running's last golden age, which peaked during the Reagan administration. Salazar also learned his lessons the hard way: The famously competitive runner's body broke down at age 27, as a result of years of superhuman, 150-mile training weeks. Now fully recovered, the 55-year-old coach of Nike's Oregon Project, which includes 2012 gold medalist Mo Farah and silver medalist Galen Rupp, has paired cutting-edge technology with meticulous workouts to shape some of the most successful American runners in a generation. This is a man who has almost given his life to the sport on multiple occasions—he was once read his last rites after crossing a finish line with a 108-degree fever—and he's lived to share a few pieces of essential wisdom.

- 1. BE CONSISTENT** Find a training plan that you can stick to long-term. If you can run four days a week, every week, you are going to get 90 percent of the benefits of training seven days a week.
- 2. TAKE RECOVERY DAYS SERIOUSLY** The day after a tough workout, the most you want to do is jog lightly or do some form of cross-training, like cycling. You need a recovery day after a hard day. No exceptions.
- 3. INCREASE MILEAGE GRADUALLY** Do not increase your weekly mileage by more than 10 percent every month. No matter how good you feel, be very gradual. You won't know until it's too late that you're overdoing it.
- 4. STAY ON THE TRAIL** Pavement damages joints, tendons, ligaments, and muscles. The more you can run on grass, woodchips, or dirt, the better off you are. My athletes run 90 percent of their workouts on soft surfaces.
- 5. RUN FASTER** It's hard to race faster than you train. However fast you want to run a race, you've got to do some shorter intervals—what we call speed work—at least that fast.
- 6. STRENGTHEN YOUR WHOLE BODY** Good runners condition their whole bodies. The arms drive the legs. Keep your upper body and core toned with a lot of push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and back raises (don't forget that the back is part of the core). Stay away from machine weights and stick to Pilates, climbing, and dynamic flexibility work like yoga.
- 7. WEAR THE RIGHT SHOES** The second-most-common cause of injuries, next to running too much on hard surfaces, is foot pronation and shoe instability. The more you run, the more support your foot needs.
- 8. PERFECT YOUR FORM** Every motion your body makes should propel you directly forward. If your arms are crossing or you are overstriding, you're losing force. Your posture should be straight, and your striding foot should land directly underneath you.
- 9. TACKLE DOUBT HEAD-ON** At some point you're going to push yourself harder, you're going to enter into a gray area that can be painful, and you're going to doubt yourself. Push through it. Never think you are mentally weak.
- 10. EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY** If you don't have enough knowledge behind what you're doing, you're not going to run well or you're going to injure yourself. With the Internet, GPS phones, advanced heart-rate monitors, and even your iPod, you now can be coached individually, even while you run. I have an antigravity treadmill in my garage. Use the knowledge and tools that are out there.