



Get yourself
race ready

AUTISTICA

Building brighter futures through autism research

Motivation

Don't forget why you're doing this

Whether you have a personal connection to autism, you're looking to beat a personal best or simply want to do what you can to aid autism research, know that you are helping Autistica to make the biggest difference to people's lives. Your efforts will contribute towards funding science to understand autism better, improve diagnosis and develop new interventions so everyone with autism can fulfill their potential.

Train with others

Why not recruit a training buddy or join a club? As well as being more fun and sociable, a little healthy competition can give you that extra push on those days you're struggling.

Keep it interesting

Prevent boredom by mixing up your training regime. Try different routes, locations, terrain and distances.

Weekly goals

Setting weekly goals will help you on the days when you're thinking 'I'm too busy or too tired' – imagine the sense of achievement you'll feel when you reach those goals.

Share your event

Keep people posted on what you're doing, both in person and on social media. You'll be more likely to be asked how your training is going which will motivate you to keep up the hard work.

Fundraising while you train

Seeing people donate to your race provides great motivation. You'll be spurred on when you see all your friends putting their money behind you and your cause.

Rest days

Rest days are important for injury prevention and motivation. Giving yourself a break allows you to re-charge your batteries and re-focus on your goals.

Injury prevention

Warm up... and down

Before every training session, it is vital that you spend 5-10 minutes warming up your muscles beforehand. Start slowly and only push yourself on when you're ready. It's equally important to make sure you spend 5 minutes stretching after your session too.

Stay safe

Wear high-visibility clothing if you're out in the dark. Take a phone in case you run into trouble like injury or a punctured tyre. Stay alert and, if wearing headphones, keep them at a low volume so vehicles can't take you by surprise.

Stay hydrated

Drink plenty of water to replace the salts you've lost through sweating. A lack of hydration will affect your performance.

Running

Whether you're running a 5k, 10k, half marathon, marathon or triathlon, there are a few training essentials that all runners should follow:

Kit

First things first – invest in a good pair of running shoes. It's worth going to a specialist store, being fitted properly and spending a little extra to prevent injury and ensure an enjoyable running experience.

Proper cushioned running socks can reduce your chance of painful blisters. Women should invest in a decent sports bra. No matter your size, it's important to be supported whilst running.

Build up gradually

If you're new to running, don't attempt anything crazy on your first training run – you'll need to build up your stamina and fitness slowly but surely. Set short-term realistic goals and try different techniques, perhaps mixing running and walking initially, then pushing yourself a little further each time.

Track your progress

There are so many running apps available that can track your speed, distance and personal progress. Lots of them are free and work off GPS so shouldn't cost you a thing.

Mix up your exercise

Try other forms of exercise alongside your running. Perhaps swimming, cycling or yoga? This will strengthen muscles and keep up a good general level of fitness.

Focus your mind

Setting distance and time goals will help focus on what you want to achieve. Envisage reaching your end goal and the huge sense of achievement and pride you'll feel.

Energy levels

For long runs, it's important to take on carbohydrates beforehand. To keep your blood sugar levels up, keep energy gels, sports drinks or jelly babies on hand during your run.

Taper

As you approach the day of your event, it's vital to begin tapering two or three weeks beforehand. This means to gradually wind down your training so your body has plenty of rest before the big day. Make sure to factor in this tapering period when drawing up your initial training plan.

Cycling

When you're spending a lot of time in the saddle in preparation for your big day, it's important to keep your body and your bike fighting fit.

Kit

It's crucial that you have the right size bike for you to avoid back and neck pain. Go to a specialist bike shop to get fitted for your correct frame size.

A helmet is essential for keeping you safe on the road. Reflective clothing is another must; get yourself a high-visibility jacket to make sure you're seen at night. And remember, it's now a legal requirement in the UK to have a white front light and a red rear light attached to your bike.

Mileage

Establish a good fitness base by building up your mileage very gradually. This foundation will help you increase your stamina, which will be key to your training and race-day success.

Focus your mind

Preparing mentally for race day is just as important as physical preparation. Setting distance and time goals will focus your mind on what you want to achieve. Envisage reaching your end goal and the huge sense of achievement and pride you'll feel.

Mix up your exercise

Spend some exercise time away from the bike. Add some cross training to your regime, or perhaps swimming or yoga. This will strengthen muscles and keep up a good general level of fitness.

Take on those hills

The best way to improve leg strength is to climb hills. Start with an easy incline before gradually building up to steeper climbs.

Good luck!
Now get out there
and get sweaty.





And we're off

Here we go! You've done it. You've signed up for a race to raise funds for Autistica. You legend.

But before the big day comes the hard work of preparation. Success depends on making sure you're physically and mentally ready ahead of race day, so following a training plan is a great way to stay on track.

It's vital that you tailor your plan to suit your ability and lifestyle to give yourself the best chance of sticking with it. And if you have any health issues, it's always advisable to speak with your doctor before starting a new training plan.



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