

Motivation

Set Goals

A great motivation technique is to set running goals for yourself so that you can monitor your progress on a weekly or monthly basis. As you are able to see your progress, your enthusiasm for running will soar.

Listed below are some specific goal setting tips:

Be specific

In order to stimulate your motivation, you need to be specific with your goal setting. Instead of saying you are going to set a personal best in a 10K road race, set a goal to improve on your personal best by 15 seconds in the next six months.

Set a deadline

Complacency and an attitude of "I'll work on that later" will set in if your deadline for achieving your goal is not defined. Add a sense of urgency to your goal by adding a specific timeframe and watch your motivation skyrocket!

Set realistic but difficult to obtain goals

Your running goals should be achievable and challenging at the same time. An unrealistic goal will kill motivation but a goal that is too easily obtained will lead to boredom.

Write and Review Your Goals

Writing down your goals creates your roadmap to success. Although just the act of writing them down can set the process in motion, it is also extremely important to frequently review your goals. Remember, the more focused you are on your running goals the more likely you are to accomplish them.

Develop a Plan and Work It

Develop a plan of action to achieve your running goals and then **Just Do It!** By taking the time to decide on the specific steps needed to achieve your goals, you increase your motivation and your chances of success. The final step is to get out there and work your plan.

Utilize a Training Log

Keep a training log of each run. Record times, distances, time of day, weather, your pulse rate, progress toward goals and any other statistic or aspect of your running you might find valuable. A [training log](#) allows you to monitor your progress and learn from your mistakes. Many runners regularly review their training logs to look at the work they've done in the past to provide motivation for the future.

Implement the Buddy System & Music

Run with a compatible training partner or running group. Finding others with which to run makes time fly, provides accountability, builds friendships, and provides mutual motivation on those days when you or your partner(s) just "don't feel like it."

Don't know of anyone to run with? Check out your local running club (www.cullmanrunningclub.com). A running club is a great place to find other runners who run your pace. Running clubs include runners at every level and, if they don't, they soon cease to exist.

Surround yourself with Reminders

Sustained motivation is key to achieving your potential. One way to keep your motivation high is to find out what fires you up, and then surround yourself with it. Examples include: posters, quotes, photos, inspiring literature, biographies of successful runners, running books, running magazines, and videos. Place your "mental stimuli" where you can see it every day. Remember, as a man thinks, so he is.

Be Creative with your Workouts

Doing the same workout day after day leads to boredom and burnout. Alter your workout routine by incorporating some or all of the following:

- Leave your watch at home. Run for the enjoyment of it without worrying about time goals.
- Change the time of day you normally run. If you are a morning runner, switch to running in the evening and vice versa.
- Find some new running routes.
- Alter the distance you normally run.
- Challenge yourself by adding some speed or hill repeats to your workout

Being creative with your workout will add new life to your running.

Set Completion Goals, Not Time Goals

At some point, you just won't be able to beat the clock any longer. All runners eventually reach the point where they aren't going to get any faster. To avoid discouragement and possibly even quitting the sport, cultivate new running goals. Decide to complete a specific number of races a year or to complete a longer distance race. Whatever you determine, keep your running fresh, challenging, and new by setting some non-time related goals.

Do more than Run

To add a boost of motivation, incorporate some cross training in your workout routine. There are many other activities, other than running, that can increase your strength, flexibility, and aerobic conditioning. Mix in some cycling, swimming, in-line roller skating, hiking, cross-country skiing, or weight training. In the now famous words of Nike, **Just Do It!**

Visit a Running Store

Stop by a running store on a regular basis to pick up a race application, running accessory, new running magazine, or the latest running book. Your motivation to run will be lifted when you put yourself in an environment that supports your goals. Running stores thrive based on people like you who love to run. They are thrilled to answer your questions, give suggestions, and discuss your training.

Occasionally Enter a Race

Want to increase your motivation and feel the adrenaline of competition? Enter an occasional fun, local race. The spill-over effect will keep you motivated for weeks afterward and may even spur you on to enter even more races!

Reward yourself when you Succeed

Rewards can be a powerful motivator. When you do succeed, make sure to do something nice for yourself. Many runners who have reached their goal treat themselves to some tangible reward: a new running shirt, a sports watch, a meal at a nice restaurant, or a special trip. The ideas are limited only by your imagination. Bottom line: **Be good to yourself.**

Quotes

"It's very hard in the beginning to understand that the whole idea is not to beat the other runners. Eventually you learn that the competition is against the little voice inside you that wants you to quit." – George Sheehan

"Why aren't you signed up for the 401K? I'd never be able to run that far." – Scott Adams, Dilbert (4/2/01)

"Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going." – Jim Ryun

"Aspire to be great instead of good, aspire to be remembered instead of forgotten, aspire to accomplish what others have and have not done, aspire to be yourself and nothing else for when you strive to be yourself everything is limitless because you are not holding yourself to the limits of others." – Troy Streaker

"Now if you are going to win any battle you have to do one thing. You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do. The body will always give up. It is always tired morning, noon, and night. But the body is never tired if the mind is not tired. When you were younger the mind could make you dance all night, and the body was never tired..You've got to make the mind take over and keep going." – George S. Patton, U.S. Army General and 1912 Olympian

"You also need to look back, not just at the people who are running behind you but especially at those who don't run and never will...those who run but don't race...those who started training for a race but didn't carry through...those who got to the starting line but didn't get to the finish line...those who once raced better than you but no longer run at all. You're still here. Take pride in wherever you finish. Look at all the people you've outlasted." – Joe Henderson