

SUMMER FITNESS CHALLENGES 2018

INTRODUCING THE LINE-UP OF SIX EARNED RUNS SUMMER CHALLENGES FOR THIS YEAR.

Memorial Day, the last Monday in May, is the unofficial holiday date that bookends the start of the summer season in the USA, which closes on the Labor Day Holiday, the first Monday in September. There are potentially 14 weeks to unloose an inner carefree spirit and disrupt the rigid schedules that traditionally anchor the rest of the year to school and work.

Yes, 'summer' is a state-of-mind, a mostly mythical period of imagined golden fun, the reality of which can never measure up to the magical experience we want it to be. However, with planning, the likelihood of actively enjoying the great outdoors, in ways that differ from what we do during the rest of the year, can be increased. If summer is going to be a memorable one, we must work a bit to make it so.

Until the end of this month Earned Runs will be introducing and explaining some physical activities that are designed to fill the summertime weeks and make them special. Alone or with others. There won't be an excuse that no one else wants to "come out and play". [This was a childhood lament when my mother would ask why I wasn't outside doing something fun.] Having a formal 'play-date' or a group of like-minded, similarly available buddies isn't a requirement. You might entice others to join you eventually, when they notice how much you're enjoying this summer!

Check out the options below, briefly explained. Each of the five challenges will be detailed, featured in a separate later post. Initially, each challenge only involved running; then walking challenges were added. This year each challenge has been re-worked to involve running/walking/biking as options, when possible.

SUMMER CHALLENGE I: STREAKING

The original summertime challenge, it is also the easiest. Run, walk, or bike a mile every day of the summer, rain or shine. This challenge requires the least amount of mental energy. You know what is required, and you must do it every day. Record each effort with a tally mark on your Earned Runs bib or another log. It's amazing how much satisfaction can be derived from this simple activity. It also is a very easy challenge to present to others.

SUMMER CHALLENGE II: RUN/WALK/BIKE 'ACROSS AMERICA'

Want to complete a virtual trek across the North American continent on a trail that extends coast to coast from the U.S. Pacific Northwest to New England? Adapted from a TrekTravel bicycle tour route, this 3,730+ mile journey requires following a weekly distance schedule that is determined by the participant's choice of mileage scale (map miles ratio to actual miles run, walked, biked = 10 to 1, 20 to 1, 30 to 1, 40 to 1, 50 to 1, or 100 to 1).

A higher or lower number of miles can be covered by each participant. Even after starting, the scale ratio can be adjusted to fit the desired level of effort, easier or harder! There will be BLOG posts describing nearby "sights". This challenge can provide an opportunity to learn about the geography, history, and scenery along the cross-country route. Family fun!

SUMMER CHALLENGE III: FASTEST 5K OR SUMMER OF FUN 5K'S

This challenge is for those who like to compete. Running or walking. Organized official races or custom designed personal events. For a break from preparing for 10K or longer distance competitions all fall, winter, and spring, think about taking a break and only signing up for fun 5k's, or training to set a personal best in one special short race. It could be a 'miler' (1 mile)!

SUMMER CHALLENGE IV: SERIES SWEEP

Introduced last year in mid-summer, but only for walkers, the 'Series Sweep' involves following a 30-minute HIIT (high intensity interval training) routine: 5 cycles of 6-minutes (3 minutes easy-moderate pace, followed by 3 minutes of moderate to vigorous pace) when walking, jogging, or biking, on 4 days of each full week (7 days) all summer long.

This activity encourages the kind of higher intensity physical effort that has been shown to increase aerobic capacity, build thigh strength, and lower systolic blood pressure in older adults. Without a specific plan, just walking, running, or biking might be performed at a level too low to yield health improvements. It's for those who wish to 'up' their usual aerobic exercise efforts. It can be performed on an elliptical, stationary bike, or other gym equipment.

NEW TRIAL! SUMMER CHALLENGE V: BUDDY-UP

Obtaining 'in-person' contact time is the objective in this activity, which is being 'trialed' this summer. It's intended to be a hedge against the development of loneliness for those who tend to spend more time than desired exercising alone. The concept is simple but the reality is a bit more difficult.

Syncing up with another person such that an in-depth conversation is possible while walking, biking, or running is the activity. The other person can be beside you, in person, or on the phone (if done safely). Each activity performed while reaching out to someone is tallied on a bib or other log. At summer's end challengers can hope to have developed stronger relationships and a page/bib full of marks for their efforts.

NEW TRIAL! SUMMER CHALLENGE VI: OBSTACLE COURSE TRAINING

Entering and competing in an obstacle course competition is NOT required!!! When resistance training is combined with aerobic exercise the health dividends are increased. A 6-week obstacle course training plan will be offered for those who are looking for a structured approach to incorporating strength work into aerobic sessions. It can be performed outdoors. Earned Runs will use a plan developed by Pete Williams released in 2013 by womensrunning.competitor.com. Potentially 2 six-weeks sessions can be scheduled in one 14 week summer period, between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

NOTES: Memorial Day doesn't need to be the kick-off date. Plan your own schedule such that chances of persevering and completing a goal challenge are highest. Work around your vacation, weekends; don't allow anxiety about a challenge ruin these most important times.

If you have not yet requested FREE Earned Runs Bibs (you'll receive 4), do so soon. Bibs can be used to run/walk personally designed races, for training purposes, and for charting progress toward a challenge goal. Look for more explanation during this week.

Special bib stickers are being developed as well as and a plan to offer them free.

RUN & MOVE HAPPY!

<https://www.verywellfit.com/best-exercises-for-metabolic-syndrome-4159159>

http://womensrunning.competitor.com/2013/11/training-tips/6-week-obstacle-race-training-plan_17987/4