

# JUST START RUNNING

GETTING OUT THE DOOR IS THE HARDEST PART, BUT HEALTH BENEFITS, BEAUTIFUL SCENERY AND NEW FRIENDS AWAIT.

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**'IT'S LIKE A MINI VACATION FOR AN HOUR. I LOVE THAT YOU CAN FIND PLACES TO REALLY RUN FAST OR PLACES TO JUST STRETCH OUT AND GET LOST.'**

**S**ummitting a mountain trail on a leg of a 198-mile relay might be a dream for some, but to many, it's an intimidating nightmare. The benefits of running are countless but so are the number of excuses people make for themselves not to run. Fortunately, Clatsop County is one of the best places to start putting one foot in front of the other. Getting out the door is the hardest part — but with beautiful parks, gung-ho running partners and one of the best climates around, there's no reason to not start your own personalized training regimen today.

Before you use the weather as an excuse, appreciate that the North Coast carries pretty mellow conditions. While locals might complain that 78 degrees is too hot, remember that Portland temperatures can be near triple digits this time of year. Having to choose between a light sweatshirt or long sleeves means that the chances of getting heat exhaustion or caught in a torrential downpour are slim around here.

A major deterrent that keeps people from running is the misconception that you need a track or treadmill to get moving. You were not given complex cartilage and leg muscles to just move back and forth while staring at a television. While treadmills do have their uses in the case of injuries or extreme weather, running outdoors allows you to enjoy fresh air and nature — and the scenic views of the North Coast are something you shouldn't pass up.

If counting laps on the track is your thing, then by all means, head to Astoria High School. However, with a surplus of trails and sights to see, a short drive can bring you to many different running locations to break up monotony. To keep track of your distance and time consider using a free app on your smart phone; there are also a lot of reasonably priced GPS watches that work the same way. Seeing mileage add up and times drop will help you visualize personal progress and keep up your motivation.

The Astoria Riverwalk is a straight shot along the beautiful Columbia River. Barring the occasional aroma of fish guts or heckling from a sea lion, the Riverwalk provides a nice running path with a constant



Members of the Astoria Social Running Club go for an afternoon run along the Astoria Riverwalk in downtown.