

GUIDELINES FOR RUNNING AND EXERCISING IN HOT WEATHER

Jacksonville on average experiences approximately 93 days per year when the temperature is over 90 degrees Fahrenheit. As the hot weather approaches it is important to take certain precautions when training and racing in the extreme environment.

Certain people are more prone to heat illness. The obese, those un-acclimated to the heat, unfit, dehydrated, those with previous history of heat stroke and anyone who runs while ill. Children sweat less effectively and acclimatize slower than adults. Certain drugs can contribute to heat injury: tricyclic antidepressants, antihistamines, diuretics, beta blockers and anticholinergics are a few.

The Following Guidelines Should Be Followed to Avoid Heat Injuries

1. Prior training in the heat will promote heat acclimatization and thereby reduce the risk of injury. Four to seven sessions of exercising 1 to 4 hours can acclimatize a person to heat. One should start gradually, 15 minutes of work, alternating with 15 minutes of rest and build up tolerance.
2. Proper hydrating, Fluid consumptions before and during training are a must to prevent heat injury, especially on longer runs. Fifteen to twenty minutes before exercise, 15-20 ounces of cool fluid, preferably water every 15 minutes is recommended. Cold water is absorbed

more rapidly. Electrolyte replacement sports drinks (Gatorade, Exceed, and Powerade) are typically only needed during endurance exercise (events lasting longer than 90 minutes of continuous effort). Remember, thirst is not a good indication of hydration status.

3. Dress appropriately – wear light colored clothing to decrease the amount of radiant energy absorbed by the body. Clothing should be loose fitting to allow good air circulation about the body. Clothing should be washed regularly after exercise because dirt, oil and salt close the holes in oven cloth, reducing air circulation and the “wicking” of sweat. Evaporative cooling is more efficient when clothing is wet; therefore, when clothing becomes wet, do not change into dry clothing.

4. Beware of the early signs of heat illness. Warning signs of illness include:

Dizziness	Clumsiness	Stumbling	Flushing
Nausea	Confusion	Headache	Cessation of sweating
Rapid pulse	Fainting	Any gradual impairment of consciousness	

5. Run with a partner, each being responsible for the other’s well being

6. Be observant of the temperature and humidity at your training or racing times. A color-coded flagged system is used to indicate the risk of heat injury at races. This flag system has been developed by the American College of Sports Medicine and was determined for runners clad in running shorts, shoes and a T-shirt.



This flag system should be utilized to educate runners about climatic conditions and help them plan for proper clothing and the need to drink adequate amounts of fluids during the races.

- White Flag: Low risk, but possibility for cold-related injuries
- Green Flag: Low risk for heat-related injuries
- Yellow Flag: Moderate risk, remember that air temperature, humidity and the sun's radiating heat will increase during the course of the race. Runners sensitive to heat will increase during the course of the race. Runners sensitive to heat should slow their pace.

- Red Flag: High risk, this signal would indicate that all runners should be aware that heat injury is possible and that person particularly sensitive to heat or humidity should not run.. All runners should slow their pace
- Black Flag: Race has been cancelled because of dangerous weather conditions