



Walk to Run
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Run to Yoga! **by Lynn Gray**

The benefits of practicing yoga for walkers, joggers, and runners are numerous. Yoga helps the runner maintain mental concentration and focus, especially as it relates to breathing and running form. The speed of your movements and the relationship of movement and breathe are brought to your awareness while “on the move”. Since yoga promotes keeping your airways wide open while doing the pose, it assists the athlete practicing aerobic movement in getting the amount of oxygen they need while exertion is taking place.

Yoga strengthens all the ligaments and connective tissues used by the avid walker or runner. Practicing yoga postures maintain a strong foundation of the entire musculoskeletal system, especially the abdominal and deep back muscles. Yoga postures forces your body to move slowly in and out of positions. In so doing, the walker or runner is reminded to become aware of how the body functions as a complete unit...meaning that the forearms, elbows, arms, shoulders, feet, ankles, legs, knees, thighs, hips, pelvis, abdomen, chest, neck, and head should work in concert with each other.

Avid walkers and runners many times push the envelope of pain. Yoga teaches you to listen to the messages of your body so that you become aware of pulled muscles, tendinitis, pinched nerves, inflammed disks, and other nuances which the “hard pounding” on the pavement creates. Yoga creates muscle balance and reverses the injury process from even beginning.

Lastly, the walker or runner learns patience through yoga. Many walkers, joggers, and/or runners continually want that faster time and/or the longer distance without allowing the body to catch up with the physical goals demanded from their body. Yoga teaches us patience and to move forward steadily, no matter how slow your progress seems to you.

So, knowing about the above should help both walkers and runners alike to begin with yoga and end with long term agility and aerobic ability.
