

# Pounding the pavement: Traditional training methods are still safer, more effective

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A flurry of tools - websites, books - for do-it-yourself marathon/triathlon training have emerged, prompting more interest in the sport for first-timers. Photo courtesy stock.xchg

(PhysOrg.com) -- Race season is here again, and that means more first-timers on the marathon/triathlon circuit. Officials from some of the biggest marathons and triathlons in the country are reporting record numbers of participants, many of whom are first-time competitors.

In Philadelphia, for example, around 23,000 participated in the 10-mile Broad Street Run this year; ten years ago, there were about a third of that number.

The reason behind these increased numbers could be the growing number of resources available to first-time runners. An industry of books, websites, “e-coaching” programs and DVDs all aimed at the beginning runner has grown over the past several years, all with the promise of helping a rookie achieve his or her best time.

While it’s great that so many people are getting excited about getting active, Howard Palamarchuk, director of [sports medicine](#) at Temple’s podiatry school, says it’s not the best way to go.

After treating runners at some of the most grueling [fitness](#) events in the country, he calls what he’s seeing at the finish lines “a little scary.

“How many of those 23,000 [at the Broad Street Run] are truly runners or athletes that train on a regular basis,” he said. “Or is this event now a happening — the cool thing to do if even if you don't properly train for it?”

To prevent injury and make sure first-timers are truly ready, Palamarchuk says there’s no substitute for face-to-face training — such as joining a local [running](#) club or running with a more experienced partner — and careful medical screening.

“In the old days, runners had to have a doctor’s certificate to show they were in excellent health before they could even be considered as a participant,” he said.

Palamarchuk lauds events like the Susan G. Komen walk, because organizers provide careful medical screenings, excellent preparation and training standards and [medical information](#) months before the event.

In the end, he says, no book, or website, or high tech running gear (except for maybe a sturdy pair of shoes) will make a marathon or

triathlon any easier for a rookie.

“Just proper training, careful planning, and careful attention to one's health, limitations and injuries,” he said. “That’s the correct way of race preparation.”

Provided by Temple University ([news](#) : [web](#))

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