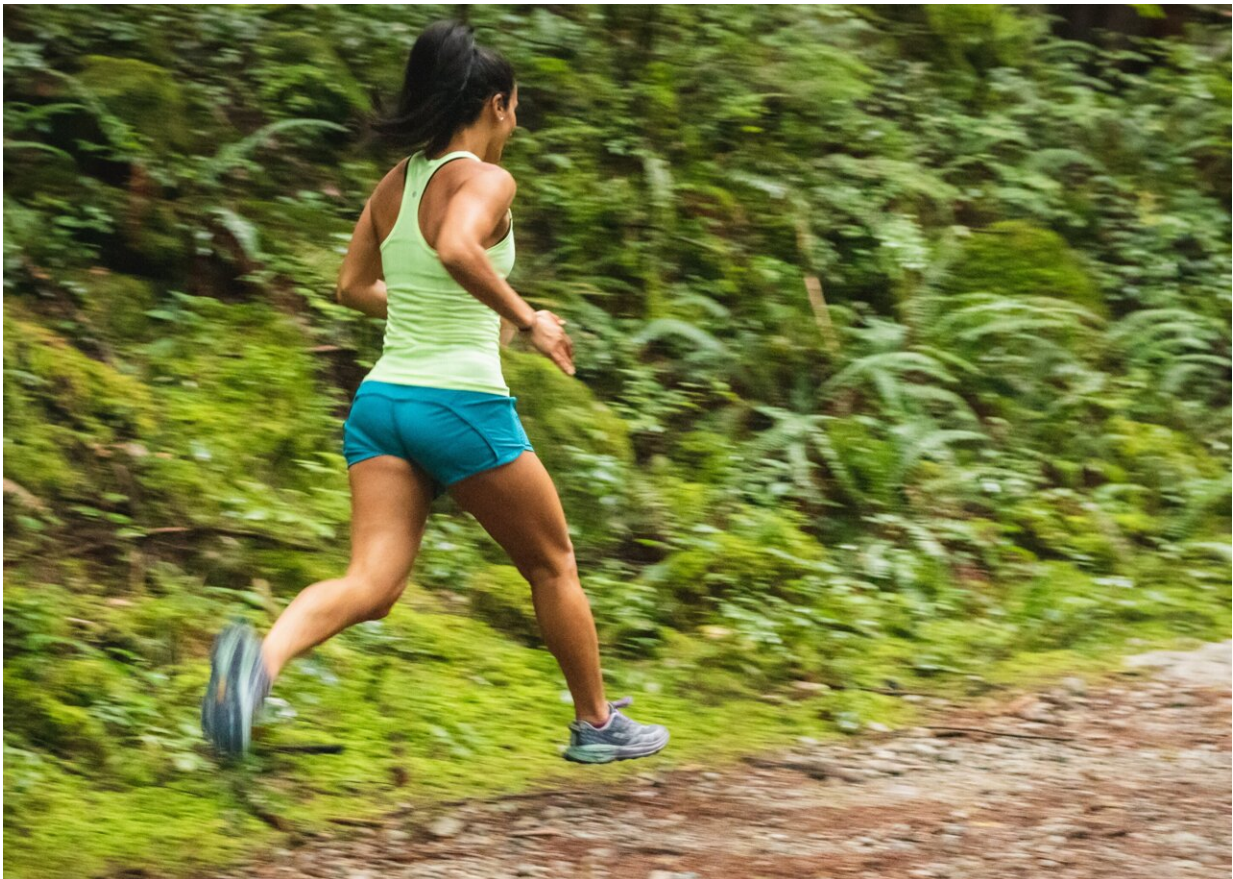


Physician (and runner) suggests ways to beat the heat while running

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The heat is on, especially across the South, Southeast and portions of the plains. The National Weather Service has issued several heat and

excessive heat advisories. When summer goes from warm to hot, exercising could become risky—unless you're prepared.

"Staying active, even exercising in [hot weather](#), can be done safely, but you really have to pay attention to the environment and your body to make sure a good thing doesn't go bad," says Chaun Cox, M.D. , a Mayo Clinic Health System Family Medicine physician and an avid runner.

Here are a few tips from Dr. Cox for exercising in the heat:

Know the weather

If you haven't been exercising in hot weather already this [summer](#), don't choose a hot day to start. Your body needs to acclimate to the heat, so start with shorter periods of exercise and gradually extend the duration of your workout. High humidity prevents sweat from readily evaporating from this skin, which puts added stress on your body. And pay attention to the forecast—and the sky. Severe weather can develop rather quickly, and there are no extra points for trying to outrun a thunderstorm or tornado.

Stay hydrated

Your body cools itself by sweating, and if you stay hydrated, the body is pretty good at cooling itself. When you become dehydrated, your body starts to store heat inside. Your core temperature begins to increase, and that can put your organs and [nervous system](#) at risk. Drink water before, during and after you exercise. Additionally, make sure you have food throughout the day.

Slow down

Don't try to keep up your normal pace and intensity in hot weather. Get comfortable knowing you'll have to take things a bit easier when the mercury rises. Save your goal of setting a personal best for another, cooler day. Don't think you have to keep up with your running or workout buddies—at least until the temperature cools off a bit.

Dress smart

Clothing for exercise or working out in hot weather should permit evaporation of sweat from your skin. Wear light-colored, lightweight and loose-fitting items. Clothing also can help protect your skin from the sun, along with plenty of sunscreen.

Listen to your body

The old adage "no pain, no gain" is false. You should slow down or stop exercising at the first sign of discomfort. Other warning signs of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, [muscle cramps](#), fatigue, weakness and dizziness. Heat stroke, which is more serious, may be indicated by a rapid, weak pulse, confusion and loss of consciousness. If you experience any of these warning signs of [heat stroke](#), call 911 immediately, or alert someone to make the call on your behalf.

Summer fun can include [outdoor exercise](#) and workouts. The trick is to be smart about it. By following some simple tips, you'll get more out of your time outdoors and reduce the risks associated with hot weather.

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