

TRENTHAM RUNNING CLUB

As runners you have a responsibility to do your best to prevent harm to yourselves, your running partners or members of the public. It should be acknowledged that as club members you owe a duty of care to not wilfully injure yourselves or others by your negligent acts or omissions. Running, however safely organised, carries a certain amount of risk and those taking part in any running need to be aware of those risks in order to minimise and accept them. Your public liability insurance cover through England Athletics is only applicable for organised club activities and may be invalidated if you are negligent.

Winter running guidance

When the temperature outside drops and it gets dark earlier, lacing up your running shoes might be the last thing you feel like doing. But don't let the winter weather stop you from being physically active and keeping fit. Try the following tips to help you stay safe and motivated when you're running in colder weather.

Dress for the cold

Dress sensibly by wearing layers – a bit like an onion. The base layer could be a lightweight top, ideally made from a technical running fabric. Stay away from cotton because it holds the moisture and will keep you wet. The next layer will depend on the weather. It could be a lightweight fleece or, if it's windy or raining, a light waterproof jacket. If you get too hot, you can take it off and tie it around your waist.

A pair of leggings or running tights underneath a pair of shorts, or some tracksuit bottoms will keep your legs warm. A pair of gloves and a hat or fleece headband stop you losing heat from your head and hands. As much as 30% of your body heat escapes through your hands and feet and about 40% of your body heat is lost through your head.

After running in rain (or snow!) clean your shoes with a cloth and remove the insoles if you can. Stuff your shoes with newspaper to absorb the moisture, and put them somewhere nice and warm in time for your next run.

See and Be seen

If you go running before or after work during the winter, it's likely you'll be running in the dark. If you are running in darkness, it's reflective clothing and lights that will ensure you get seen by drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, rather than dayglo colours.

When running after dark, it's essential that you're visible to other people, particularly motorists. Your clothes should be reflective or a bright, light colour, such as white or fluorescent yellow. Don't wear dark clothes as drivers may not see you.

Fluorescent colours react with the sun's UV rays so that they appear very bright. The effect is obviously stronger in poor daytime light conditions such as drizzle, fog or toward dusk. This means you will easily be spotted by drivers and cyclists and will stay safe.

Reflective materials work best at night when it is dark and there must be a light source, such as car headlights, so that they can bounce it back. Reflective materials can help drivers to see you three seconds sooner at night – which could save your life!

There's a difference between a light to aid visibility and one to help you see where you are going. A blinking light gives better 'perception distance' (the point at which a driver spots you) than a solid one, but isn't much use if you're trying to light your way. That's where a head torch comes in, leaving your hands free and lighting the route ahead. Certain paths can look very different after dark, running with a head torch can light your way, helping you to pick out the safest route if the ground is uneven and help prevent you from tripping up.

Stay safe

No matter how careful you are when you run at night, be prepared for unforeseen events. Always tell someone where you're planning to run and roughly when you'll return, and consider taking a personal alarm and mobile phone.

Stick to well-lit areas and avoid running anywhere you don't feel completely safe. When you run in the dark your sense of balance shifts due to a loss of peripheral vision, so it's important to train your body to adjust to running at night rather than expecting it to cope automatically. Instead of choosing a route based on scenery, try to find a well-lit run with an even surface.

Always face the on-coming traffic when you're running on a road with no pavement so you can take evasive measures if necessary. The only exception to this rule should be when you're approaching a blind corner, when you should cross to the opposite side of the road then cross back again as soon as it's safe. This applies at any time of day but especially at night when drivers may not expect to see a pedestrian.

Always select a safe route to cross roads and avoid crossing in blind spots, near parked cars etc. Use pedestrian crossings if appropriate and avoid running across roads during reds. Abide by the Highway Code and don't assume that car drivers can see you just because you can see them.

If the weather is particularly bad and the pavement is icy, it's best not to run outside at all. If you have access to a gym, you could run on the treadmill or do another activity, such as swimming or a session on an exercise bike.

Bear in mind that surfaces are most likely to be icy in the early morning and evening and, if possible, opt for trail or grass which doesn't take on icerink-like properties with the first frost. In adverse weather, consider running loops

closer to home rather than tackling a long 'out and back' run, in case you need to bail out. If it's seriously windy, run into the wind when you are fresher, at the start of a run, and have it at your back on the way home. If you're running in the dark, stick to routes that you know well so you are aware of any hazards and don't risk getting lost. Avoid wearing headphones so you can stay alert to your surroundings.

Freezing temperatures combined with rain and snow can lead to all manner of hazards, but one of the worst is ice. Look out for darker areas of snow and frozen puddles. Tyre tracks get particularly slippery too as do leaves, wood and concrete. Take it easy and use smaller strides to help minimise the chance of slipping.

Warm up and cool down

A good warm-up is essential to avoid injury, but it's particularly important in winter when it can take a little longer for your body to warm up.

Start slowly with some very gentle running or even walking. Gradually increase your pace until, after around 10 minutes, you get to the pace you're going to maintain for most of the run. To cool down, carry on running at an easier pace or walk for five to ten minutes. This will help your body recover after your run. But don't stop and stretch outside or you could get too cold. Do some stretches indoors instead.

Hydrate: It is just as important to drink fluids in your winter runs as it is in the summer. Make sure to hydrate before, during and after your runs to avoid dehydration. Use warm fluids in your water bottle or tuck it under your jacket to avoid freezing.