

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's feet in trail running shoes, stepping on a dirt path. The background is a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise, creating a warm, golden glow. The person is wearing dark leggings with a pattern of small orange and yellow dots.

**FINDING NEW PATHS GOOD
FOR THE BODY AND MIND**

*How to Start
Trail Running*

INSIDE

- FREE WORKSHOPS
- PATIENT SUCCESS STORY
- SONIA'S CORNER

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FIND OUT HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY
CAN HELP YOU BECOME HEALTHIER,
STRONGER, AND MORE ACTIVE!

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FINDING NEW PATHS GOOD FOR THE BODY AND MIND — HOW TO START TRAIL RUNNING —

INSIDE:

- *Sonia's Corner*
- *Patient Success Story*
- *Optimum Physio Therapies*
FREE Workshops



Article written by
Jessica Dutton

Are you an experienced runner looking for a new challenge? What about a road runner looking to get away from cars and the hustle and bustle of urban routes? How about someone who enjoys walking or hiking trails and is interested in getting in faster or more intense exercise? Or are you someone who enjoys being outside in nature and is looking to find a way to exercise and improve your health?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, then trail running might be a great fit for you!

WHAT IS TRAIL RUNNING?

When thinking of trail running, many people picture elite ultrarunners doing something like racing for days in the desert, setting Fastest Known Times (FKTs) on the Appalachian Trail and earning a namesake trail running shoe, or nimbly ascending and descending gnarly rocky terrain high in the mountains. However, that is just the extreme end of the sport's spectrum and what trail running may look like for the world's fittest long-distance running athletes.

For the rest of us, it's much simpler than that. Trail running is just running on unpaved surfaces. There are truly no rules or parameters beyond that, it's just off-road running. It can be different for everyone depending on your geographical location and your level of fitness or comfort but does not have to include any elevation gain or loss. Flat running is also trail running. It may be a gravel path or a dirt road, a grassy field, a steep rocky trail leading up a mountain, a soft undulating forest path interspersed with tree roots, or a singletrack trail.

One important thing about the sport of running in general: if you run, you are a runner. Don't believe that you have to be fast to be considered a runner. It is an accessible and welcoming sport and community and is currently one of the fastest-growing sports in the world, according to World Athletics. Running looks different for everyone and is whatever you make it! It may be sprints, a steady-state aerobic pace, or jogging with walking breaks.

Another common misconception about trail running is that you must venture far out of the city and into remote wilderness or rural areas to get in a trail run. You can find unpaved paths that still immerse you in nature within cities. San Antonio actually has some spectacular parks within city limits that are great for trail running! Phil Hardberger Park is perfect for beginner trail runners with mostly flat and soft dirt or gravel paths, while McAllister Park is ideal for those ready for longer trails and hills, and Friedrich Wilderness Park offers a fantastic mix of flat and steep rugged rocky terrain.

Continued inside.

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BENEFITS OF TRAIL RUNNING

The health benefits of regular exercise such as running have been widely studied and proven. Running:

- Enhances sleep quality and concentration
- Boosts mood and protects against anxiety and depression
- Improves cardiovascular health and lowers your risk of heart disease and cancer
- Strengthens muscles and joints
- Improves memory and protects against age-related cognitive decline
- Reduces stress
- Can help you lose or maintain weight

In summary, running is amazing for you! However, immersion into nature and running on the varied terrain and usually softer surfaces of trails has its own advantages of unique health benefits. Trail running may improve your health and wellness by:

- Practicing mindfulness, requiring being present and aware of every step taken
- Reducing the risk of overuse injuries, since the changing gait of trail running gives the body a break from the stress of the repetitive exclusive forward gait of road running
- Being easier on and better for the joints due to the softer surface of trails
- Engaging different muscles and especially strengthening the foot, ankle, hips, and stabilizers such as the core
- Challenging and improving balance and agility, key components of running power, efficiency, and injury prevention
- Enhancing stress reduction and mood-boosting by

reconnecting with nature, breathing fresh air and getting away from city stressors such as vehicle traffic

- Experiencing awe when noticing breathtaking views or spectacular flowers or other nature scenes which can lead to an expanded sense of time and enhanced feelings of generosity, well-being, and humility

SO, WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

Does trail running sound awesome, much easier and more accessible than you thought, and amazing for your health — but you're still not sure if you can do it?

Many people are afraid that their ankles are too weak or unstable to begin trail running. Running on flat dirt paths is completely safe and easy, but more technical trails do contain hazards for tripping or falling if you don't stay engaged and agile. Others may be worried about their coordination or reaction time for the trail's variability.

Do you have nagging knee pain that shows up when logging miles on the road? Do you want to address an unstable ankle you've had from an old injury before exploring trails? Do you have hip tightness that prevents you from enjoying running? Do you want to improve your balance, agility, and footwork to be able to take on the trails with more confidence?

Physical Therapy Can Help!

HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP GET YOU ON THE TRAIL

The expert physical therapists here at Optimum Physio Therapies can address all these concerns that may be holding you back from trying running or trail running. Our skilled and experienced therapists will begin your first visit with a thorough evaluation including medical history and selected assessments to determine if you have any kind of injury, restricted or weak muscles, or muscle imbalances leading to your pain or movement dysfunction. They will discuss your health and fitness goals and together you will come up with a plan to fix your pain or restrictions and help you reach those goals.

Your plan will include a therapist's hands-on treatments to address things such as joint mobility, stability, muscle flexibility and strength, and posture. They will also prescribe therapeutic exercises to improve your mobility, strength, dynamic stability, balance, and coordination. If trail running is a goal of yours, they may prescribe agility work to train your neuromuscular system and improve your movement efficiency, balance, footwork, and reaction times.

Whether you may need ankle strengthening, better knee stability, or agility work to build your confidence and capabilities to get out on the trail, our team here at Optimum Physio Therapies can get you there!

Call our office today to schedule an appointment with one of our knowledgeable and highly-trained physical therapists, and learn more about how our services can benefit you.

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FREE

WORKSHOP

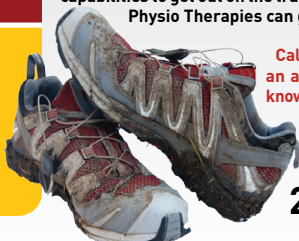
**Rotator Cuff Workshop
June 22nd at 7pm**

Optimum Physio Therapies offers **FREE** workshops to help keep you informed and feeling better. Scan the QR code to register or for more information on our Rotator Cuff Workshop.



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The raffle will last through June.



PATIENT SUCCESS STORY!



“3 months later and I am now pain free and back to running,”

“When I first came to Optimum Physio, I was feeling hopeless and frustrated because I had been experiencing low back pain from a running injury for over 4 months. However, here I am 3 months later and I am now pain-free and back to running, thanks to the expertise and patience of the Optimum Physio Team! The doctors and movement specialists took the time to get to know me both as a patient and as a person, and were able to create a custom recovery program for me that meet my personal needs and goals. Thank you!”

— Marissa

We want to hear your PT success story!

Scan the QR code to visit our review page and share your story.

You could be someone's inspiration to get the help they need.



IS IT YOUR BIRTHDAY MONTH?



If so, don't forget to come in for your **FREE LASER THERAPY SESSION** any time during your birthday month!

SONIA'S CORNER

MINI EGG BITES

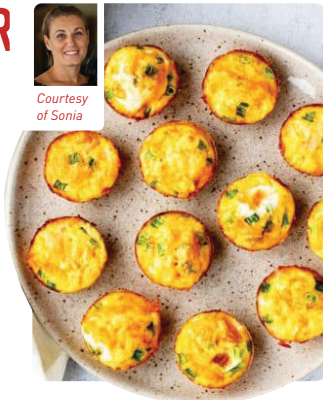


Courtesy of Sonia

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup oat bran
- 8 eggs
- 1/2 cup almond milk
- dash of pink Himalayan sea salt
- dash of fresh cracked pepper
- 1 cup shredded organic sharp cheddar cheese
- grass-fed butter
- mini muffin cups
- mini muffin pan

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. With a paper towel, wipe the inside of the muffin cups with butter. Put about 1/2 tsp. of oat bran at the bottom of each cup and tap muffin pan to lightly coat sides of each muffin cup. Whisk eggs, almond milk, salt and pepper together until blended. Then stir in cheddar cheese. Spoon the mixture into the cups. Bake for about 12 to 15 minutes or until firm. Serve warm.



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WE'RE HIRING

THE OPTIMUM PHYSIO FAMILY IS GROWING!

Do you know someone who would be a good addition to our staff? **SEND THEM OUR WAY!**

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