

The Many Faces of Running

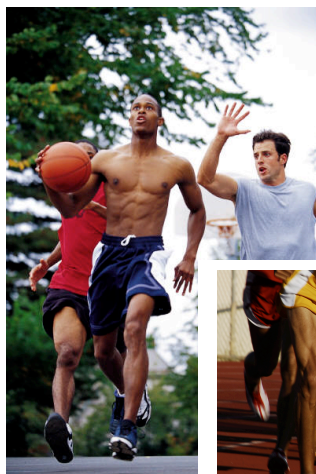
by Dr. Daniel Shaye, Chiropractic Physician



Running. Covering ground on 2 feet. It's a universal experience, one we runners all share... or do we?

When you and I think of running, we may think of lacing up our shoes and heading out for a half hour run, or even a race; but there are many faces of running. Here in the USA, running is a form of

recreation, a type of exercise, a path to health and/or personal joy. When I lived in Kenya, I saw running used as both a career path and a road to national pride; but I also saw it used as transportation--especially by kids traveling to and from school. In America, our transportation typically has wheels and a motor. This is not the case in the more rural areas of developing nations... and sometimes they don't even wear shoes (the legends are true).



Having diversified my athletic endeavors, I've discovered other faces of running. I wouldn't dream of lacing up my high-top basketball shoes for a 3-mile trail run; yet for basketball, they're a must. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined giving up a trail run for 1-3 hours of sprints up an down an 84-foot-long hardwood, indoor court... yet it's still my legs, running and bounding, that carry me. The experience has its differences from distance running, to be sure: No deer sightings, no spikes, no precipitation, and never a hill or bump. Even so, it's still a thrill and joy to experience my body, moving through space, my heart pumping and lungs expanding.

We runners are a diverse family. A sprinter or triple-jumper might in some ways have more in common with the basketball player than the 5000 meter specialist; yet can even the 5K runner compare him or

her-self with the marathoner? And what of the ultra runner's experience? I've never "been there," yet I understand that going 50 or 100+ miles is very, very different from the half hour or even 2 hour runs I've known.

Some of you might argue that we runners are all a family, sharing in a unique life that is separate and distinct from what basketball players or others might experience... yes? But again, I wonder if our family is bigger than we think. Some runners are driven by the watch, or the scale, or by competition. Some live running as a primal joy, a mental health exercise more than a physical one; and still others live a desire to move beyond desire, to be one with the experience. If such diverse people, doing such disparate things, can all call themselves "runners," might our family be even bigger than we at first conceive?

Whether we run, or racewalk; whether we bound and race, or shuffle along; whether our shoes cover our ankles, or exist not at all; and even whether we run for reasons as different as spikes and trainers; we runners of all stripes share a bond. A distance run, or playing 5-on-5 basketball, both require that our own two legs carry us--and no one else's. We can experience the forms of the run as our solo treasure, or build a community and social support network around the activity. Perhaps we can expand our family, even while we experience what is in so many ways an intensely personal experience.

I'll see you on the road... or trail... or track... or court... or wherever you choose to run.

Yours in running, health, & fitness,

-Dr. Daniel A. Shaye
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Do you have a question you'd like answered? Mail your questions c/o Performance Chiropractic, 1307 Jamestown Road, Ste. 103, Williamsburg, VA 23185; e-mail pchiro@performancechiropractic.com; or visit www.performancechiropractic.com