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Mindful Running: Two Ways to Plan Your Route

Whether you enjoy a loose, spontaneous run, or a path with a fixed plan, here are mindfulness tips you can use a long the way.

BY [KELLE WALSH](#) | JUNE 16, 2017 | [DAILY PRACTICES](#)



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One of the great joys of running is the time and space it gives you to just be with yourself. There's nothing else to do, or really, to even think about. Of course, you can load running, like anything else, with all sorts of goals and other busyness. But to truly experience

1) JUST...RUN!

Truly give yourself over to the experience of running just for running's sake, with no other agenda. This will mean going whichever way your desire tells you to go, listening to your body to determine your speed and the distance you travel, and remaining alert and curious to all that's going on within and outside of you.

Try this:

See if you can take note of things as you run that perhaps you haven't noticed before. How many different kinds of trees are there? What about birdsong? Is the sidewalk more even in some spots and more cracked in others?

Tip: Make sure you have plenty of water, an extra layer of clothing, and maybe a \$10 bill tucked into your running shorts, just in case. Oh, and you might want a map or cell phone if you think you might wander beyond your ability to find your way home.

2) Plan Your Run

Set up some basic parameters—a preplanned route, a set amount of time—and within those, fully embrace the experience without the worry of having to make any other decisions. You won't need to wonder if you should turn left or right at the end of the road, for example, because your route is already decided. Instead, tune inward, to your breath, the warmth spreading through your muscles, how the energy travels up through your legs, hips, and back with each step. Let your inner experience of running come alive in Technicolor.

Try this:

Notice your predominate footstrike pattern. Do you lead with your right foot or your left? Follow this for a while with your awareness, then, do the opposite. Intentionally lead with the other foot, and see what happens.