

Joplin RoadRunners Newsletter

Spring 2026



Hello Joplin Roadrunners,

As I write this, I officially come to you one year into my role as President of our Joplin Roadrunner Chapter—and I'm honored to also be stepping into the role of overseeing our newsletter. It feels fitting to begin this message by recognizing that 2025 and 2026 are truly transition years for our organization, as Henri and Titi begin handing over the reins after years of dedicated leadership.

I want to express my deepest and sincerest gratitude to both of them. Their vision, commitment, and countless hours of service—alongside the support of our incredible board—have helped grow the Joplin Roadrunners into a thriving, vibrant organization of more than 100 members. Under their leadership, we've increased the number of running events we host and participate in, expanded our reach, and built a reputation that stretches throughout the four-state area.

Even more important than the numbers is the impact they've made on the running community itself—welcoming runners of all levels, fostering camaraderie, and strengthening the culture of running in our region. That legacy is something we are incredibly proud of.

As we step into this new era, I'll admit I do so with a mix of excitement, fear, and yes—just a bit of trepidation. We have some very big shoes to fill. Thoughts that often run through my head include: *Will I do as good a job as Henri? Will the awards and shirts ever be as cool as when Titi designed them?*

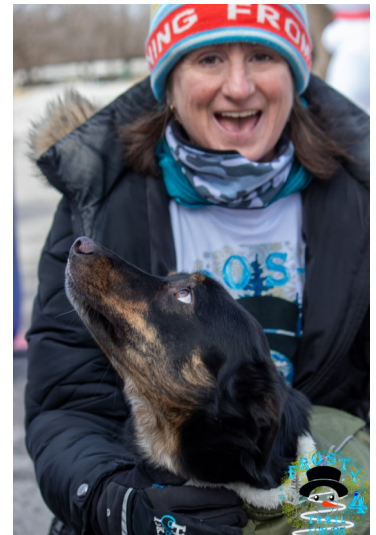
What reassures me most is knowing that this organization isn't built on one or two people—it's built on all of us. Our success has always come from the energy, passion, and dedication of our members, volunteers, and leaders working together.

I embrace this role with a renewed spirit, a deep respect for those who came before me, and a genuine excitement for where we're headed next. Thank you for trusting me, for supporting our board, and for continuing to show up—mile after mile—for the Joplin Roadrunners.

Here's to honoring our past, embracing change, and running confidently into the future—together.

With gratitude,

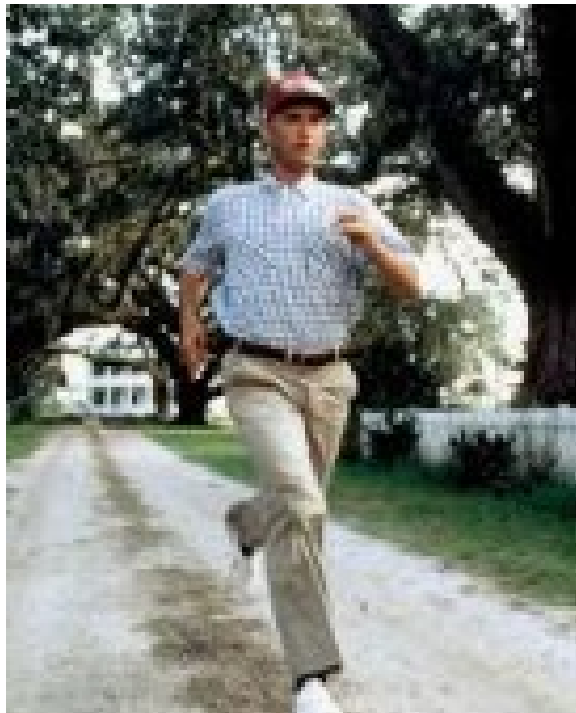
Lori Thompson
President, Joplin Roadrunners



Brian Spencer-

"Runner" noun: Someone who gets up at 5:30am to drive two hours to get to a Race two hours before the race starts, because you signed up late and want to be first in line at packet pickup to see if there are any extra shirts. There was not. So you sit and wait 2 hours with the "Heat rising" for the race to start. Run for 30 minutes, try to catch your breath and see how you did, not in the top three, so you get back in the car for the two hour ride back. Just to catch up at work for missing half a day. Guess what, you forgot a towel to set on, so definitely not a comfortable ride back.

You get to work by 5:45, hurry home to see the running day. You fall asleep, when you wake up, movie till the Nine on. Well you find a Google Rom-Com. later, you missed 2:30am. Well off to asleep. Next thing shinning a light in the Sun and it's be late to work, so



One o'clock, work to Catch the news, just to weather for the next miss the weather, so you channel surf for a o'clock weather comes new channel, so you Who knew, so 3 movies the news again since it's bed, wasn't hard to fall you know someone your eyes, turns out it's 7:45 and you're going to you jump in the shower,

get ready to get out, open the curtain and there's something between you and the Door. It's the bathroom scale, and you're running late already. Well, you take a chance and step on, here goes nothing, so you open your eyes . You lost 1/2pound! It's going to be a great day! A few minutes later your out the door and get in the car and then you see it , the Big Nickel with a article circled. A auction that you wanted to go to next Sunday. Did you catch that? Sunday!. You're not late for work, you're a day early!!! Now I can go for a Run That's 24 hours in the life of a "Runner"

That's all I have to say about that.

Forrest



I am new to the Roadrunners and signed up for Run With the Wind as my longest race; it didn't disappoint! The route took me through some rolling hills and county roads and I really enjoyed the challenge of a long, solo run. I got learn more about my own pacing and how different road running is from trail running- night and day! I felt confident until around mile 13 when I came across a lady who called out "Two more miles!" and my body turned on me immediately. But I finished and loved every minute of it! Thanks JRR for putting it on!

Karl Kezckemethy

How Sally Mae Became My Coach: Lori Thompson

We welcomed our dog, Sally Mae, into our lives in April of 2023. She's an Australian Cattle Dog and Border Collie mix, which is a fancy way of saying *relentless energy with legs*. From day one, it was clear she would require a superior amount of exercise to keep her from bouncing off the walls, off the furniture, and possibly off the ceiling.

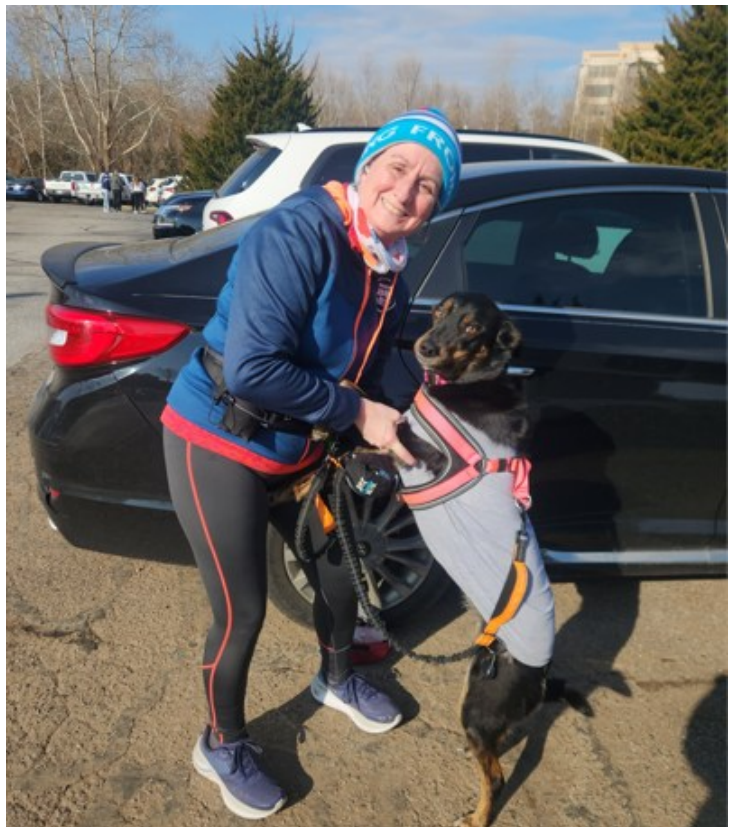
I patiently waited until she turned one before officially training her to run with me. Once we started, she was hooked immediately—and by “hooked,” I mean *obsessed*. Sally May doesn't just like running; she believes it is her life's purpose.

If you've ever been to one of our Saturday group runs, you already know this. Upon arrival, Sally May insists on greeting every single runner. Hugs? Yes. Kisses? Also yes. Consent? Optional. Only once she is satisfied that everyone has been properly welcomed does she move on to her next role: letting us all know it's time to start running. Loudly. Persistently. Clearly, we were running late by her standards.

Despite her deep love of chasing rabbits and squirrels, once we are actually running, it's all business. Sally May becomes laser focused, locked in, and fully committed to the pace. Some people claim it's unfair that I run with her because she “pulls me along” and improves my speed. While that may be partially true, I prefer to think of it as resistance training... and motivation training... and also *please-don't-let-go-of-the-leash training*. She may be fast, but I still have to keep up with her.

She has become my constant companion, running partner, protector, and very enthusiastic pace setter. Honestly, I can't even remember what running was like before her. On days when I don't feel like lacing up, I just remember that *she* feels like running—and all I have to do is grab my shoes. The moment she sees them, she knows exactly what's happening.

I'm incredibly lucky to have Sally Mae by my side. She keeps me moving, keeps me smiling, and reminds me that sometimes the best running partner has four legs, a wagging tail, and absolutely zero chill.



Kevin Harrold

There are so many challenges in running. Maybe faster times, farther distances, new destinations, or a million other things. I remember when I wanted to run a whole 5K without walking.

In 2025, I was still very new and inexperienced to running. I didn't know how to grow, or where the process should go next. The 5 and 10K's were pretty much the extent of my running journey. I only started running to get some exercise, so I was totally content to run the shorter distances. The next race to come along was the February Run With the Wind.

A 25K was way more than I ever wanted to do, or even thought I could try. So, I decided to volunteer. I figured I could hold signs and pass out waters until a race more in my wheelhouse came along. I really expected to have those same feelings manning the water station. But that's not what happened at all.

At first, I was happy to see the familiar faces. People that I had met at group runs or other races came down the road, and I would root them on, hoping my applause would give them a little boost. It was fun. And the runners kept coming. I was still totally happy for them, and encouraging, but I started to beat myself up a little. There was some envy. I really started appreciating every one of those runners that were willing to get out there and push themselves to do something I was too scared to try.

Before volunteering at that race, I never had the desire to do a really long run. During the race, I started seeing what people are capable of doing. After the race I started wondering if I could ever do something like that. Maybe I could pull off something more than 4 or 5 miles.

Because of that day, handing out water cups at the 8-mile station, lots of people unknowingly inspired me to keep pushing myself, and keep trying. By the end of 2025, I did my first half marathon, then at this year's Run With the Wind, I participated in the longest leg of the relay. Next month will be my 2nd half marathon. Eventually I will run the full Run with the Wind 25K. And then after that, who knows? But I now have several ideas of where I would like to grow.

I would encourage everyone to volunteer for a race. If you're injured, burned out, or just aren't sure what to try next- volunteer. It might be just the thing you need to start your next running chapter. It definitely changed me. I don't know where I would be now if it wasn't for the race that I didn't even run.



JRR Virtual Running Corner

Greetings and Happy Spring to everyone at Joplin Road Runners from your virtual running members in Texas! Yes, Spring is here, and with that comes the opportunity for all of us to set and meet meaningful goals as runners. Virtual run events help participants to keep and stay motivated to run, while maintaining accountability to ourselves and to the event we've signed up for.

This year started out a busy one! Over three hundred virtual runners, Dottie included, ran the BadwaterVR Virtual Challenge. 267 miles, the total distance for Badwater 135, Cape Fear and Salton Sea Races were to be run or walked indoors or outdoors over the month of January. There was a multi-sport division as well, for cyclists, swimmers and other sports such as cross-country skiers and rowers. All participants really planned out their strategies for completing the event. Participants entered from all over the world: retired, working, students and parents! There was camaraderie and joyful celebration on our Bad-

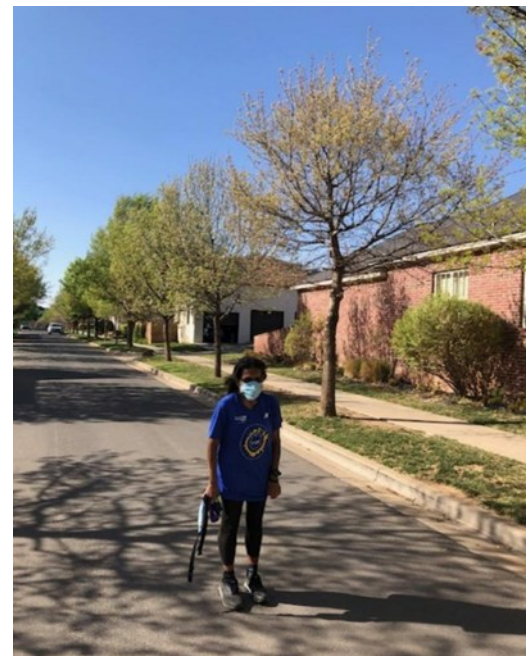
waterVR Strava Club page as runners and multi-sport participants completed their events! Those participants who were not able to finish were also cheered on and congratulated for their hard work/efforts.

So, what happens after such an event? It's a lot like when one completes a live long-distance running event. Many of us asked ourselves, "What's next?" We are fortunate to find that virtual run events and challenges are still going strong! There continue to be virtual single-event races and challenges. The difference between these is that a virtual running event is run in a single effort, the day selected to run within a time frame designated by the Race Director (RD). A challenge involves runners completing a distance-based, time-based or theme-based event within a designated window (days, weeks or months, even over the entire year!). BadwaterVR was an example of a distance-based event. Dottie is currently running an event from New Jersey with different mileages to choose from, that runs over about two months. Some challenges are based on the overall pace maintained, making them also time-based events. Theme-based virtual events are fun! Examples include events held with county fairs, charity events and holidays like Christmas, Easter or Solstice events. JRR sponsors great theme-based events for St. Paddy's, and in the Fall and Springtime, which we love running with y'all! Other virtual running challenges involve running across one or several States. Several virtual running friends have run or biked across Alaska this year, this was a virtual ultra event! We are in awe of these virtual runners. Of course, it's always great to cheer each other on throughout!

We are mulling over a few virtual running challenges that take place over the summer. These include one from the Swiss Alps from May-August, and one from California over the month of June. We all keep each other informed of any runs or challenges coming up. These events keep us running over the warm summer months while minimizing exposure to heat, storms, etc. In addition, several of us are planning to run a monthly half-marathon virtual event. A great way to keep running and training for Fall!

Looking forward to running great JRR races virtually with everyone!

Your JRR Virtual Runners,
Dottie Duncan and Rocky Holly
Lubbock, Texas



Running While Aging (by Henri Coeme)

It's unescapable.

We grow old or die young. In runner's terms: all runners age. So, what are the specific challenges or questions we face while running and growing older? Here are a few of the questions you posed in anticipation of my talk at the recent JRR Club meeting.

There were
your
Questions!

- How do I regain my former abilities?
- Dietary adjustments and physical activities that impact health at older age?
- Difference in training between aging women and men?
- Example of mobility exercises for aging individuals?
- Preventing injuries as we age?
- How to not let your thoughts convince you that age will (or should) limit you?
- How to balance rest/strength training/recovery/running?
- How to change your training as you age?

Let's start by saying that we are all unique individuals, yes even in our running. I would even add that our uniqueness is very prominent while we run: our posture, gait, speed, our running history, our race achievements. So, any tips, advice, example, any book we read, personal running story we hear, all need to be read and understood with the following disclaimer: what works for me may not work for you, and vice versa.

As a result, be cautious when applying any advice to your own running routine. Examine it, doubt it, question it, if deemed valuable give it a fair chance. If it improves your running experience, adopt it for a while, but don't be reluctant to revisit it regularly.

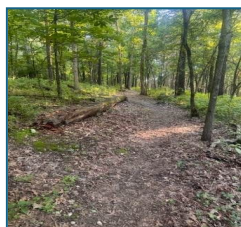
Our uniqueness doesn't just come from our individual humanity, habits and behavior, it also comes from the goals we set ourselves. Those goals will determine if we even want to apply any advice to our running habits.

If I gave you tips to break the 6-minute mile, but your goal is just to jog 3 times a week to stay healthy and maybe lose a little weight, my running advice would be completely irrelevant for you.

That said, let me try to identify a few relevant points that can contribute to or be relevant for our aging running body and describe them very briefly without re-writing all books on running; just highlighting what is specifically relevant to an older runner.



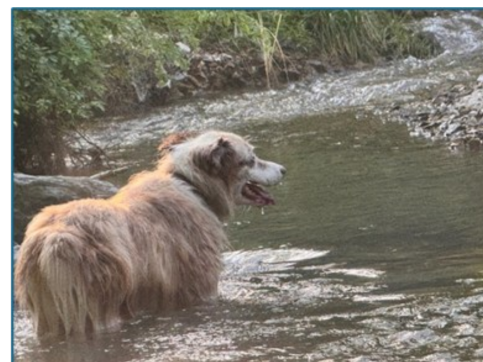
1. Running Variety



Don't stick to the same road, the same speed, the same routine day after day. Variety in running doesn't just add to the joy of running; it adds to our overall running ability. Don't let country roads, city roads or even nature trails scare you. Embrace the open spaces but also the hills and scenic places.

Also there is no need to run continuously.

When I run with my dogs, almost daily, we stop often to drink from the creek (they, not me). But they also teach me to take it one mile at a time adding to my joy of running. Now, when I go out for long road or trail runs, I make sure I mix it with short breaks; to have a drink, smell the roses, take a selfie to tell my wife I am enjoying myself (and not lost).



2. Running technique

Researchers observed at a marathon finish line that each runner arriving can be uniquely identified, among thousands of others, by their gait. A whole industry exists to sell us all kind of gizmos trying to “correct” our gait. But why would we accept the premise that there’s anything wrong with it? Babies are born and start walking without a manual or expert instructions. Trust your gait and be skeptical of anything a well-meaning salesperson could be trying to convince you of.



If your running technique needs help, work on full-body physical

development instead of purchasing expensive shoe inserts (as I once did).

Embrace cross-training, swimming, biking, yoga and trail running (as it uses different muscle groups and body positions). Also losing weight will change a person’s gait as well as reduce the impact of our foot on the road.

3. Diet

Probably the most talked-about and most overlooked component. Personally, I have lived with (and ran with) European diet, American diet, vegetarian wholefood diet, all-I-can-eat diet and I-don’t-care-what-I-eat diet. I have run marathons with all of these. However, I must admit that a steady diet of wholesome vegetables, fruits, quality protein and fats com-



combined with minimal intake of refined sugar and sugary drinks and reduced intake of grains (both refined and whole) have created the best fuel for my running career, even at my late age. It has kept my weight constant and low, my annual medical checkups non-eventful, my medicine cabinet empty (i.e. non-existent) and my health insurance low.

4. Equipment

Needless to say that a pair of good running shoes will do miracles. But what is “good”?

I started running on white “gym”-shoes that looked more like slippers than today’s shoes. It wasn’t until Bill Bowerman “borrowed” his wife’s waffle iron to form the first Nike-shoe for Steve Prefontaine that we even understood the concept of “road-grip”. Look at what happened since the day Bill bought his wife a new waffle iron. A whole industry grew, offering an unfathomable variety of footwear.

Embrace the choice but mind the excess. Some shoe constructions may prove more harmful than helpful. Foot, knee and hip injuries have not diminished with this growing footwear market, to the contrary. Sports injuries and Rehab centers have grown alongside a growing shoe market.

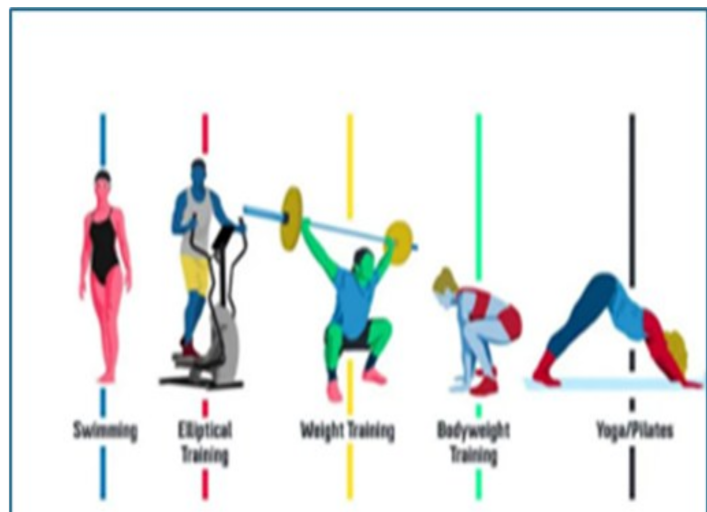
Mind any footwear that constricts, distorts or modifies your current gait. Instead (as stated in point #2), let your improved body guide your gait and the appropriate shoe collection that makes you comfortable, steady and safe.



5. Cross-training exercises

As I wrote earlier under #2, embrace cross-training as part of your weekly training. Create a rest day (or two) dedicated only to a few exercises different from running. I tried swimming once a week, until the water stuck in my ears for days after the swim became a bit too uncomfortable to live with. I then moved to rowing, practicing until my and a friend could row the Missouri river from KC to St.Louis. Don’t be that person (my wife will tell you I will start something but never know how to stop). Instead, use a variety of cross-training exercises placing a stress on different parts of your body other than the legs.

I even consider trail-running a cross training, since it is slower, involved many more muscle groups than road running, and uniquely focuses the mind (if not, the forest floor will embrace you).

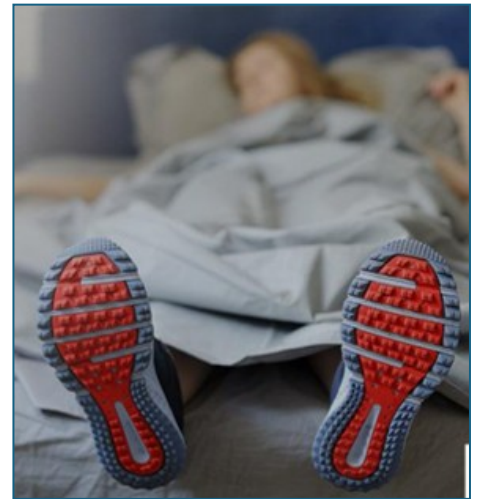


6. Sleep & Recovery

Sleep is not just part of a training schedule, it “is” training. Without sufficient rest, the body doesn’t get sufficient chance to rebuild itself stronger.

The older, the more sleep is needed since recovery time increases dramatically with age. Especially races over half a marathon place a great toll on our aging bodies. Slow down on those long runs, take a regular break and use the week(s) after the long race as a healing time before jumping back into a heavy running schedule for a next race.

We all know stories about older people who run many marathons. I will not follow their example. Instead, I prefer focusing on just a few long races per year and building the rest of the running season around and in anticipation of those key races. Following those I always pencil in several weeks of slower running/walking and recovery.



7. Measuring Running dynamics

With age also comes the need for a better understanding of our ever-changing limits and capabilities. Nothing better suited to measure this than a controlled fitness test identifying a few key barriers and targets of our running dynamics.

Body-metrics can include a wide variety of tests (body-composition analysis, muscle-fat analysis, visceral fat level, etc), but I found the most revealing to be the VO₂max test and the Effective Fat Burn test. Combination of these two tests help identify key target speeds in our running: aerobic baseline, aerobic threshold and anaerobic threshold.

The aerobic baseline is the pace at which running is effortless while at the same time contributing to endurance improvement, and with a fastest recovery time. The following formula is gaining increasing notoriety:

$$180 - \text{age} \pm 5 = \text{baseline heart rate pace}$$

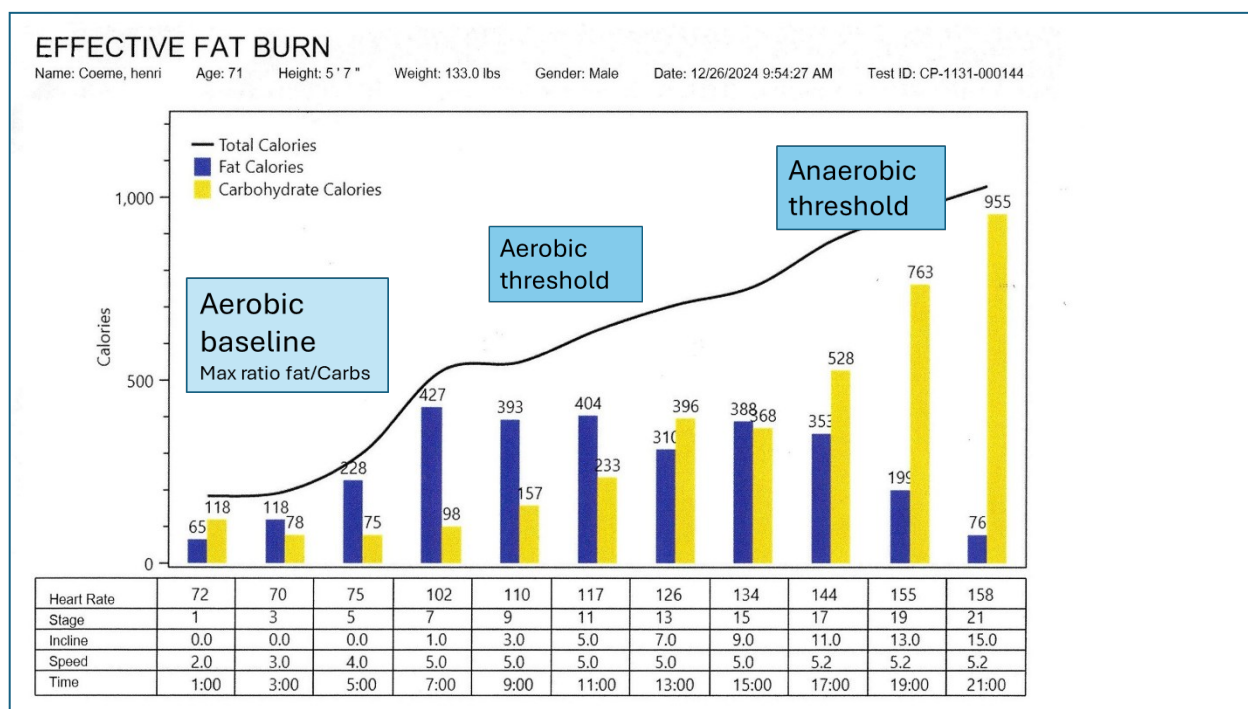
Note that the aerobic baseline is not an absolute speed or minutes/mile, but a heart rate level. As such, it evolves with our growing age and creates a target even at an advanced age.

The +/-5 refers to the addition or reduction of the final bpm total with

+5 indicating a very well-trained individual

-5 indicating a recovering individual (from illness or from a recent very taxing race)

+0 referring to the occasions 2-3/week runner



Use this base pace as a target for 80% or more of your runs and avoid a majority of pains and

8. Measure running performance

It is easy to be discouraged by ever declining race times while aging. No more PR's, no more local records, just ever slower and slower, sigh!

For some, this is no disincentive; for other more competitive runners (like me), this is too much to handle. But there is help!

Age-group awards can help incentivize older runners but are no remedy for declining finishing times.

Embrace age-grading: a playing-field leveling mechanism that handicaps all finish times for age and gender, simply by comparing your speed to the speed of the best recorded time for your age and gender. This leads to a handicap factor which can be applied to your time (resulting in an age-graded time); or to a speed-percentage (giving you an age-graded performance percentage).

For any distance, age-graded times can help you compare any of your current finishing times at that distance to any of your past performances, throughout your entire running career.

For any distance, age-graded performance percentages translate your speed into a percentage of world-record speed for any age and gender. This allows you to compare your finishing times with anyone else's in that race, regardless of age or gender.

I have posted a full explanation and examples at <https://ioplinoadrunners.com/meeting-notes>.

As a practical application, I am also posting some current MO records by including all age-graded performance percentages at <https://ioplinoadrunners.com/mo-state-records-1>

Calculate your own age-graded times and performance% with every race. If you can maintain an age-appropriate training schedule, your age-graded times and performance% should remain the same regardless your ever-advancing age.

9. Record your effort

The daily record of your training effort is your absolute best source of information. Through the years, you can review the effect of your training on your results, your recovery time after races or after injuries, compare races with similar races in the past years, etc.

More importantly, writing down goals, race results and daily running entries keeps you focused on your goals and creates a degree of personal responsibility to yourself.

Don't just rely on online recording of your efforts. Those online records are hard to compare and review over time. Get a manual diary and record your activities each day, including a summary overview page, injury page, race result page etc.

I have kept daily manual diaries since I started running, in addition to recent online diaries on Connect and Strava. I also keep a record of all races, including date, time, age-adjusted time,



10. Attitude & Visualization

Never accept there is such a time as “too old to run”. But there is “age-appropriate” running and training. Use the tips in the previous points to guide you with this.

Visualization is important at any age: set a goal for a race or a training session and “see” yourself completing it within your goal. Visualize yourself crossing the finish line of the first 5K; while crossing visualize looking at the clock and reading your goal time. This never gets old.

Social Running

Everyone runs better with like-minded friends of somewhat equal strength. Relating race stories, running adventures, injury or illness recoveries is not just a way of sharing joyful triumphs and sad defeats, but also part of the continuous learning experience of running. Keep in mind what I wrote in the first lines: every experience is unique. So, use your personal filter before applying any suggestion or lesson your running buddies you they learned.

Social running is also safe. In our world today, that's not always a superficial luxury.

No need to make every run a social run. But once a week should be a minimum. It also makes running more fun, whether it is a long or a hard interval practice.



tell

run

12. Contribute

Your running community constantly provides you with benefits: from organized races, social group runs, daily online advice, personal conversation with runner-friends. Contribute to that running community yourself as well. It gives you a stake in your favorite pastime and creates ever better friendships with other runners.

Nothing gives me personally more joy than to realize that my favorite pastime also generates benefits for others: whether charity checks to local non-profits, or simple with articles for you such as this one.



Board Updates— Meetings Jan 6th, Feb 3rd, Mar 3rd 2026

Upcoming Apr 7th, May 5th, June 2nd

Equipment

It seems like we just got it, but were already outgrown the trailer we bought! We are on the look out for a longer and wider one with a door and side window. If you have one or see one out and about, please get in contact with Tom McCay!

Club Gear

Don't forget to order or pick up your club t-shirt if you haven't already. This year we are including wind/rain gear in place of your club provided t-shirt for an additional \$15. Check out our club gear on our website!

Upcoming Races!!

Stay tuned for information on our upcoming races this fall/winter. Prediction Run, Souls 4 Paws 5k, Pumpkin Run and Hit The Road Jack, Runfest! Definate dates will be posted to our Social Media sites and email.

RRCA State Championships

Don't forget this year we will be holding RRCA State Championships in concurrence with our 43rd annual Pumpkin Run and Hit The Road Jack.



The 10 miler will be during the Pumpkin Run and the 50K will be during the Hit The Road Jack!! RRCA will provide championship medals as well a promotion across Missouri affiliates and running clubs.

General Board Meetings

Don't forget all board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each Month! We welcome anyone who would like to come sit in and observe how the magic happens!

GROUP AND SOCIAL RUN PHOTOS

Lot's of options for group running!!!





Freeman Fitness Fair



From our Website
www.JoplinRoadRunners.com

Be sure and check out our club gear! Includes tank tops, t-shirts, sweatshirt, jackets and more! All custom printed with our JRR logo.

Jackets can be ordered by club members at our discounted wholesale price. They can also be selected instead of your annual JRR membership shirt (receive \$10 off our website listed wholesale price).

<https://joplinroadrunners.com-running-gear>

Don't delay, order today!!

