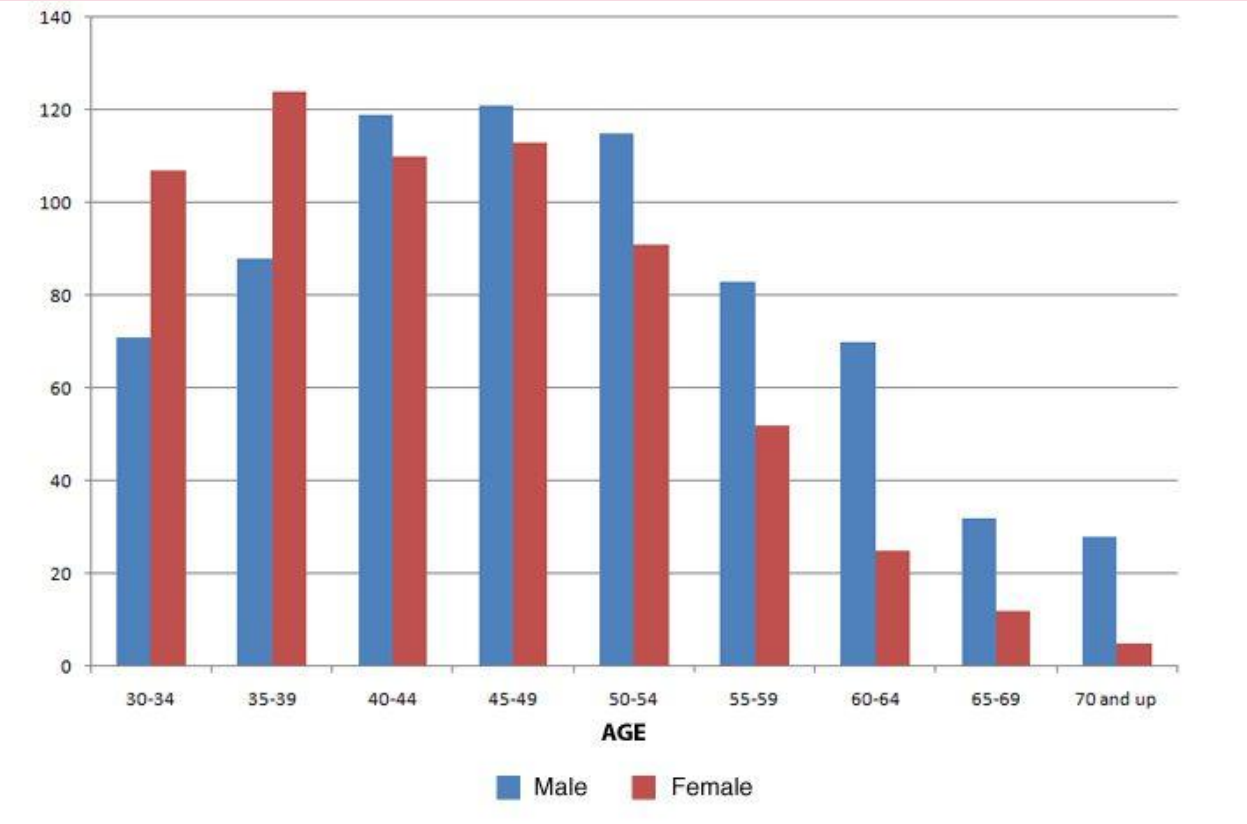
RUN FOR LIFE.COM
"I'M A RUNNER!"

FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN

Women represent the fastest growing segment of our sport. Especially women in their 30s and 40s are running in ever increasing numbers. Regardless of their race performances they are largely "Serious Runners".

It was not long ago distance running was dominated by males…. Not so any more. A typical 15k to 1/2 marathon might show sex breakdowns like this:



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Do women give up running as they age? No. Our current crop of women in their 60s and 70s never got started. Times were different 40 and 50 years ago. Young women didn't run. In fact they didn't participate in most sports. It wasn't that they didn't want to, rather they never had the chance. Organized sports were for boys.

The future of running is bright for many reasons……not the least of which is its popularity among young women. It does my heart very good when I see a young woman pushing her child while running. Does anyone doubt that youngster will one day follow their mother's lead to a healthy life style?

Needless to say there are countries, cultures and religions where running by women is not acceptable, at least in ways that are typical of many of the world's cultures. This subject is beyond the scope of our website but suffice it to say we hope one day all women of the world can enjoy the benefits of lifelong running.

What you will find in this Article:

1. Read "Why I Run" contributed by Karen Miles.

2. Read "Running for the Long-term" contributed by Terry Mahr.

3. Read "Musings by Lori", a section that contains the fast moving, fun and hopefully motivational subjects.

4. Read the "Bios" of our contributors.

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Why I Run

I run because…..because I can. I don't need a rink, a court or a pool. Other than race fees and several running outfits, my biggest expense is my running shoes!

On getting older…..I'm older…..lots older than when I started racing in 1979. I've slowed considerably. I don't like it. Who would? But I deal with it. It makes me stronger mentally.

On injuries…..I've trained through too many injuries to mention. I've resorted to power walking numerous times. I bike, swim and work out. I cross train. But running is my drive, my desire, my freedom! I'm still no faster; I still get injured; But I continue to run.

On speed work…..I don't do speed work anymore, not on a track anyway. No more 200s or 400s or mile repeats. I will do fartlek or bridge repeats if I'm training for a marathon, but that's it. That's enough at this point.

More on training…..Training is like doing homework…..continuous! Racing is the test! In 2009 I failed a "test"…..a DNF at the Space Coast marathon…..at the 16 mile mark…..an old hamstring injury. MY FIRST DNF EVER! It would have been my 35th marathon since '79. Oh well…..I still keep trying.

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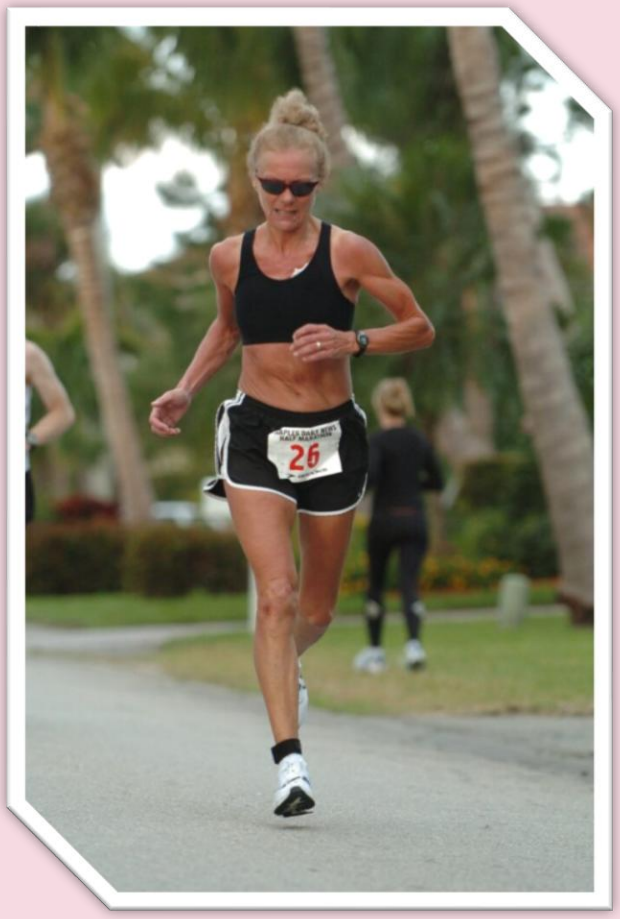
More on the marathon…..Recently, I've been trying to run one marathon every year. I know…..not much when considering what others do! Heck, back in the early 1980's I ran 5 marathons in one year, four under 3 hours and one 3:01. Who knew it wasn't a good idea back then?

Is it a passion or an obsession? It's definitely a love/ hate affair! I do know that I don't function well when I can't run…..(just ask my husband…..God bless him). Running completes me…..It's my discipline…..It makes me the person that I am…..and I like that person!!!! (And I hope others do, too.) I run because I can…..it's in me…..and on top of that…..IT'S PART OF MY NAME: Karen **MILES**.

That's why I run.

Karen Miles



Running for the Long-term

Today I plan to do my longer run for the week. It's 7 am and already 80 degrees with high humidity. The thought momentarily goes through my head: "Why am I doing this?" I've chosen the coolest day of the week but it's still going to be hard going.

I get in the car and drive to the starting point. I lock the car and start running. Miracle of miracles! All doubts have dissipated and I am actually looking forward to the run. The running instinct still kicks in….although now tempered with age.

When I began my running regime- a lifetime ago- little did I know I would be in it for the long haul. I initially took it up as a form of exercise. It was novel and hard….oh, so hard! I persevered until I could actually run three miles without stopping. At that point, I was hooked. I could do it.

A co-worker (good runner) took me under his wing. I trained with him, listened to him and soon built up endurance and speed. I followed him blindly without question, doing workouts and running routes I wouldn't even contemplate today.

When I won my first 5k I knew I had the confidence to pursue competitive racing. It all culminated in my master years when I ran all my PRs and I went on to a successful competitive career.

Those days are behind me now. Twenty years on, the spirit is willing but the flesh is getting weaker. Age has a lot to answer for!

But running isn't all about racing. I am happy in the knowledge that I can still get out each day and run. It's a lifetime commitment now. It keeps me fit, energetic and can be social activity. There is a unique camaraderie among runners which makes running and racing fun. I enjoy the company of fellow runners but also enjoy the occasional lone run where I can take in the scenery and think about everything or nothing. I especially enjoy running in new places. Running is an excellent vehicle to discover things you would never see as a tourist.

I always encourage people to try running. It isn't easy and it's not a form of sport for everyone. But if you succeed you will reap the benefits long term. All you need to invest in is a good pair of shoes. You will meet fellow runners who will encourage you. Run with a group of people and train with them. Use them as a support group.

After you have been running a while you will have many stories to share. We all have stories. I have had cans thrown at me; cars drive at me; and come back from a lunchtime run covered with a dubious liquid which thankfully turned out to be taco sauce….which some younger people had seen fit to eject from their car. And we've all been chased by dogs

whose owners habitually say: "Don't worry. He doesn't bite." A fellow runner had an answer for that….he punched the dog in the nose if it got too close….Worked every time.

My worst dog story was when I reached Mile 9 in a half marathon I always like to run. A man was biking with a loose dog alongside all the runners. (Imagine that!) Suddenly I saw the dog's head come between my legs and I was a goner. I tried to save myself but to no avail. I ripped my new shoes; left an inordinate amount of skin on the road; and if that biker had any doubt about his stupidity, he certainly didn't by the time I had gathered back my breath. I completed the race but not in the time I was on target for at Mile 9. However, I lived to tell the tale.

I still laugh at the thought of another fellow runner who literally disappeared while running single file behind me one day. It took me a few seconds to realize he wasn't talking anymore and when I looked back he was nowhere in sight. I lowered my gaze to discover he had fallen down a manhole! The only thing saving him was his elbows which he had automatically put out as he fell. He, too, lived to tell the tale.

Oh yes….I survived the heat today and completed my run without incident. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?…..but for me, I'm sure of one thing: "It will include running".

Terry Mahr

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Musings on all sorts of things by Lori.

(Lori is not a real person. This section will capture the short stories which hopefully will be interesting to other women. Please pass along those that you feel may qualify. You can use the "Contact Us" at the end of the web site to do so.)

> What to think about when we run: "Oh what a beautiful morning, oh what a beautiful day, I've got that beautiful feeling everything's going my way"….from the musical "Oklahoma". Isn't that such a nice way to begin the day? Lori.

> A recent issue of the magazine "Cooking Light" had an interesting article on fitness based on the experiences of a 56 year old female runner. Her top 5 motivators are: **1/ Set small goals. 2/ Get educated about the sport. 3/ Find support. 4/ Diversify your training. 5/ Keep a workout log.** How's that for keeping it simple? Lori.

> On how to fit running into my busy life. I try to run about 1 hour most days. I have a full time job; 2 full time kids and (thankfully just) 1 full time husband. Here's my approach: 24 hours minus 8 for sleep leaves 16 hours. Running gets 1 of those 16 and everything else 15. 1 out of 16 is about 6% of the waking hours for my wellness…physical and mental. That should be fair to everyone. Lori.

> It's time to run….it's raining. No reason to wimp out now….I'll be wet from the inside out soon anyway. I lace up the shoes and go out the door. Soon I meet another runner….both of us are soaked. I say: "only for the hardcore, today". **She replies**: "sure is". Lori.

> A few years ago I was running in a 10k race. The wind was screaming directly in our faces. As I was going up a long hill I could "feel" someone directly behind me. It was annoying. I turned around to look and there he was…..a 6′ 2″ 180 pound (2 m, 82 kg) guy with his *** tucked in behind this 5′ 2″ (1.5 m) frame. Now I ask…..is that fair?…..is that being a real man?…..I don't think so. Lori.

> I hate to run with (most) men. They hit the pavement like a 2 ton horse. I want to feel light and quick not heavy and slow. Lori.

> Boys can be sloppy about their pre-race routine. There's always a bush not so far away. We girls can't or at least it's much more inconvenient. Lori recommends: Develop a routine. Find out what works. And stick to it religiously. Lori.

> I see many people running with strollers, dogs and ipods. There must be dos and don'ts but I can't offer any suggestions…..I've never run with any of them. Lori.

> The other day I was taking my usual run and I passed a house under foreclosure! Hey, that's a new roof on that house. Look at the beautiful trees. Wow, I sure hope they find their way out of this mess. Lori.

> Running and animals go together. We're both enjoying or at least living outside. I've had a squirrel almost fall on my head; a wild pig cross my trail; wolves eying me for a possible meal (not very tasty, I suppose); numerous bears large and small; deer, deer and more deer; grouse and wild turkey and of course that real threat…..dogs. On one early morning run in Florida I nearly stepped on a 15 foot (5 m) alligator (again not very tasty, I suppose). The real threat for runners…..drivers with cell phones! Lori.

> From time to time I'm asked if it's fun to run or why they never see people smiling while running? The word "fun" doesn't describe why we run. Well, maybe satisfaction? I guess only those who run can really understand why we do it. Lori.

> While I was running this morning, I passed two walkers…..one said: "Good job". I've heard that many times before…..but today, it caused me to think…..where did that expression come from? That's exactly what I said to my 1 year old son during his first toilet training…..when he had a successful bowel movement! Lori.

> This morning I ran in a 10 mile (16 km) race…..over 1000 runners. I don't care about race times…..it's all about health and enjoyment of being with great friends. I lost my age group by 7 seconds…..damn…..maybe I do care about race times…..a lousy 7 seconds. Lori.

> I've noticed a growing number of "women only" races. As one who endured men only sports for years and years, I do wonder if gender specific races are good for our sport. Then

again whatever gets the most people out there pounding the pavement; getting their heart rates up; and experiencing the benefits of running, how can I not be for that? Lori.

> Recently I read about arguably the best US born female marathoner of all time's preparation for the Chicago Marathon. I enjoyed one section where it was pointed out she never cut the corners when on a training run. She wanted to run the full distance…….Hmm……I wonder if Bill Rogers and all the great international long distance runners cut corners? Lori.

> Sometimes I see other women running and they appear not to know what to do with their hands and arms. A coach once told me "Thumbs up and move them up and down, not sideways". Most coaches would add that we should keep the elbows and forearms at about 90 degrees and RELAX, RELAX, RELAX. Lori.

> I've read recently where the big marathons are giving elite women a 30 minutes head start……How about 30 seconds at every stop light…..even better….30 seconds at every airport line? Or how about any head start when competing for a better paying job? Lori.

> Yesterday I ran with a large group from our local running club. One of the girls had new shorts that had a "fanny pocket" for a cell phone. Can't we ever escape? Lori.

> While out for today's morning run, I saw a car with this printed on the bumper: "Wag More…Bark Less". What a great message. Lori. (ed. To help with the translations, please understand this refers to a dog's behavior and how that applies to people)

> During this morning's run, I don't know why but this thought suddenly came to me. A woman's breasts provide the sustenance for our newborns, as it has from the beginning of mankind. Indeed in the animal kingdom, all female animals feed their new offspring giving them the strength to survive the early days of their lives. How then did it happen our breasts could become killers through cancers? Wow, I guess it's one of those things we'll never understand. Lori.

"Bios"

Karen Miles

Karen has been running since 1978 and is 57 years old in 2010. She has run and completed 34 marathons and many, many races at other distances. She qualified and ran the first Women's Olympic Marathon Trials in 1984 with a time of 2:49:19.

Karen is a retired elementary teacher of 28 years who grew up in Littleton, NH and has lived in SW FL since 1981. She is well known and even more respected by all of us in SW FL.

Lifetime PRs:

5k Gasparilla, Tampa 1989: 17:05
8k Run in the Sun, Jacksonville 1989: 28:28
10k Red Lobster, Orlando 1989: 35:04
15k River Run, Jacksonville 1989: 55:04
13.1 Florida Citrus, Orlando 1984: 1:19:50
26.2 Virginia Beach Marathon 1984: 2:48:53

Grand Masters PRs (over 50):
5k Edison, Ft. Myers 2005: 19:05\
10k City of Palms 2004: 39:53
13.1 Naples 2005: 1:28:48
26.2 Yuengling, VA Beach: 3:17:47

Terry Mahr

Terry was born in England and moved to Oregon, Ohio in 1976.

Master PRs on certified courses:

Mile 4:57
5k 17:12
8k 28:39
10k 35:45
10 miles 59:05
13.1 1:19:16
26.2 2:48:50

Top Run Ohio Female Master Runner: 1990-1998
Top Run Ohio Female Grandmaster Runner: 1999-2010
Ranked #1 Running Times Female 50-54: 1999, 2000
Ranked #1 Running Times Female 55-59: 2003, 2004, 2005
Ranked #2 Running Times Female 60-64: 2009

Terry began running in 1982 at the age of 34. “In England, I walked a mile each way to the station for my commute into London; walked to the office; walked to the shops; and walked to mail a letter. Everything was predicated on walking but when I moved to the U. S., I began using a car to do everything.”

Today, at most races her age graded times are among the best of all runners including elites and professionals.