

What's Here

How Trail Running is Different from Road Running.....	1
Concerns	2
The Great Outdoors.....	2
Trail Etiquette	2
Trail Preservation and Maintenance	2
Safety	2
Going Out by Yourself.....	3
Black Bears and Cougars	3

How Trail Running is Different from Road Running

Trail running has its own special character that is unlike road running. Here's some differences:

Strength	Trail running helps develop strength, not speed.
Pace	It is slower than road running due to obstacles but you get breaks while climbing. The difference can be 30-100% longer depending on the trail.
Gentler surface	Less pounding than the road; you will be able to be out there longer because the surface is gentler.
Rhythm	There is no steady rhythm due to terrain.
Power walking	Power walking/hiking is important for getting up hills that are not runnable. Power walking conserves energy.
Unpredictability	Trails are unpredictable compared to roads; weather is part of that unpredictability.
Community	The trail community is a smaller group of people. Trail runners, even strangers, watch out for each other and offer support when needed.
Biophilia	Many trail runners share a "longing to be one with nature", or biophilia. Don't be surprised if you hear yourself "wuhooing" as you run along.
Races	Trail races have fewer registrations because the trails cannot handle large groups of people at the same time. Distances are always approximate because it's difficult to measure exactly; races range in distance with shorter ones at 5-10 km, mid distance at 15-30 km and ultras at 50+km.
Fun with mud	Trail runners run through puddles, get muddy and they don't care. It's all part of the fun of being on a trail.

Trail surfaces include smooth pine covered paths, gravel roads, jeep roads, bark mulch trails, gnarly root-covered trails, scree, and rocky roads. Many trails will have a combination of these surfaces. When training for a race, it is essential that you find out what surfaces you will encounter and practice on similar terrain.

"Trail races celebrate the wild side of running...strength, agility, and toughness reign here, rather than pure speed. Entry forms brag about the difficulties of the course, and finishers proudly emerge from the woods mud splattered, scraped, torn, and bleeding (bleeding is not mandatory but certainly not discouraged). Times and distances mean far less in this world than on the roads, and runners rarely settle into a steady pace or rhythm." Jonathan Beverly In Breakthrough Running.

Concerns

New trail runners usually have some concerns about trails. Here are some typical concerns:

Twisted ankle	To prevent twisted ankles, do strengthening exercises and learn to run light on your feet. Ankle braces are available.
Lost	Run with others, learn to use a map, follow the markers (there's lots of them). Carry water and food.
Animals	Respect that you are in their homeland. Find out which animals may be on the trail and learn how to respond. For example, if you are concerned about bears, run with others (bears do not attack large groups of people). When running trails in the interior of BC, in rattler country, wear gaiters to protect your lower leg.

The Great Outdoors

Trail Etiquette

There are some conventions that you need to observe when you run trails. Here they are:

Stay on trail	Always stay on the trail to help preserve the environment. On alpine trails, avoid stepping on fragile alpine plants.
Bathroom	Bury the evidence in a hole. Select a place well away from streams and water sources.
Garbage	Take the garbage out. Whatever you carry in, carry out. Pick up after slob. Never leave a trace that you were there.
Passing	To pass someone, call out "track" or "passing on the left".
Right of way	Give right of way to hikers, bikers and equestrians. Uphill runners give way to downhill runners. Step to the right to let runners pass.
Trouble	Always help a runner in trouble, even in a race.

Trail Preservation and Maintenance

To preserve trails, they need to be maintained. You can do your part for that maintenance.

Switchbacks	Never cut through a switchback to create a shortcut. The switchback was designed to prevent erosion. In a race, this would be considered cheating.
Work parties	Volunteer to help with work parties that are organized to rebuild trails. Bridges and walkways often require repair.
Blow downs	After a storm, you can help by removing branches from the trail. Always select a place that is well away from a water source.
Dog walks	Clean up after your dog.
Choices	Run some trails that are not widely used.

Safety

- Stay together in groups. Carry a map.
- Always carry water/food if needed.
- Carry first aid items such as bandaids, Wet Ones with antiseptic cleaner, survival blanket.
- If you get lost, go back to last known point.
- If allergic, carry a kit. There are insect strips for bites.
- Cell phones may not work so don't rely on them. NO headsets.

- Be ready for changing weather; can always layer your clothing.
- Know your environment and possible hazards.
- Avoid trails on extremely windy days. If the wind picks up while you are out there, and you hear cracking overhead, get close to a large trunk because a falling branch will likely be diverted by overhanging branches.
- In lightning, do NOT go under a tree. Find a low point such as a ditch or shrub.

Going Out by Yourself

- Let someone know where you are going.
- Put a note on your car dash explaining which trail you will take; don't change your plan.
- Do not go out late in the day. Carry a GPS unit if it will help.
- If you get totally lost, hunker down for the night. Search and Rescue recommend that you do NOT follow a creek because "the slick surface and steep edges have the potential to cause serious injury while the noise from the moving water can literally drown out calls for help... the only time you should move is when you are in imminent danger."

Black Bears and Cougars

You are venturing into animal territory; respect that it is their home. **Make noise** so they are not surprised by you.

First response for bears: JUST BACK AWAY. Do not run. Give the bear right of way. Most bears will not attack you.

Second response if bear gets aggressive: you should get aggressive, act big, make noise, throw rocks in its general direction.

Respond to cougars in the same way.

For grizzly bears, take extra caution. Submission may work better than aggression. In grizzly territory (like Pemberton, Whistler), watch for trees to climb if you had to.

If attacked, defend yourself with whatever you have on hand. Do not give up: a woman in Siberia beat on a bear's snout until it let her go.