

The 9 Weight-Training Exercises Runners Need to Get Stronger, Faster, and More Efficient

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Weight training can seem counterintuitive to runners. We get it: The more muscle you have, the heavier you are, and the more weight you have to carry around when running. True, but that doesn't mean you should swear off weight training all together.

In fact, runners need weight training even more than you may realize. "Strength work accomplishes three big goals for runners," says Jason Fitzgerald, USATF-certified running coach, founder of [Strength Running](#) in Denver, Colorado. "It prevents injuries by strengthening muscles and connective tissues; it helps you run faster by improving neuromuscular coordination and power; and it improves running economy by encouraging coordination and stride efficiency."

That all sounds ideal, but it doesn't make the weight room any less scary. To ease your fears, try changing your view on *why* you're weight training and what it can do for you. As a runner, you're training for *strength*, not to bulk up with massive muscle gains. And because of the

amount of miles you're putting in weekly, the chances that you'd achieve a large increase in muscle mass are pretty low.

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“The stimulus to put on muscle that won't be beneficial for running is much higher than people realize, and unless you're either lifting relatively heavy and frequently and/or eating a hyper caloric diet, you're unlikely to put on muscle,” says Joe Holder, USATF-certified running coach, Nike+ Run Club coach in New York City. “Just think about strength training one to two times a week, focusing on compound movement patterns, like a lunge or squat or hinge, and shoring up the areas that could lead to increased injury if they are weak, like the hips.”

And not all weight training is created equally. “Some strength workouts—like [CrossFit](#) WODs or circuit-based [fitness classes](#)—include too much of a metabolic or cardio component to be effective at prioritizing the main goals for runners—which are strength and power,” Fitzgerald says. Runners get enough cardio, so Fitzgerald recommends focusing on relatively heavy weight for a moderate number of repetitions with full recovery. And don't forget that your own body serves as weight. So if picking up a barbell or dumbbells is a big stretch for you, know that there are other ways to add resistance with weight.

We asked Holder and Fitzgerald to share some of their strength training moves that would be most beneficial for runners. Try these exercises below.

Related video: Essential moves for your core.