

Prime Fitness

The Women of Running 101

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Written by Gena Ansell-Lande

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Elaine Hartung is not your average competitive runner. In fact, she is a Certified Personal Trainer and has been training and coaching novice runners since 1999. In 2002 along with fellow trainer and friend John MacGillivray, they created the Women's Running 101 Program. Both are active members of the Jersey Shore Running Club, of which Running 101 is an offshoot. Elaine felt that women who wanted to begin running needed a place to start where they could get group support from other women. "I never participated in sports in school and was not given the opportunities that many young girls have today," she adds. "I felt this would be the perfect way for women in a similar situation to take up the sport."

Since its inception six years ago, the program has taken off with women from all over the county challenging themselves, reaching their goals and most of all improving their overall health. The primary objective of the program is to encourage more women to participate in running to improve their general physical and mental well-being. Elaine adds, "This is a program for women with little or no previous exposure to running who wish to embark on a practical and sustainable running program."



Running 101 is also beneficial to those looking to return to running after an extended layoff. A team of experienced coaches offers group running classes and individual training programs. She says the best part about the program is the camaraderie of the women who train because many have similar ability and experience. Many friendships and strong bonds are formed among the participants from the focused time spent together. The 12-week program meets weekly at locations in Holmdel and Marlboro.

Benefits of the program:

Learn the necessary conditioning for endurance running and the basic techniques for distance running
Improved fitness

Weight loss & muscle toning
Training for a 5K run

What You Get in Running 101

12 weekly exercise sessions. Includes warm-up & stretching, 30 minutes of cardio exercise, cool-down & stretching. The running portion will gradually increase so that the student will be able to run comfortably for 30 minutes.

Weekly topics of interest, guest speakers, or coaching tips, including form and breathing, stretching, selecting running shoes, clothing and gear, and nutrition and fluids.

Weekly training schedules & e-mail updates and motivation.

Healthy snacks served after each weekly workout.

A stylish, women's cut running top made of a high-performance, wicking material.

A full year's membership in the Jersey Shore Running Club (\$15 value).

Training for your first 5K run - the Saturday in the Park Women's 5K Run/Walk on Labor Day Weekend.

In addition, all proceeds from the Running 101 Program help fund women's charities throughout Monmouth and Ocean counties. Each class has about 25 students with ages ranging from their mid thirties to women in their seventies. Elaine encourages previous students to come back and serves as mentors to the new runners. One of these mentors is Kathie Sterzinar, age 49 from Middletown. She had no athletic background before starting the Running 101 program in 2005. She has since been running for three years and has run a total of four half marathons now. Elaine says, "Kathie is a consistent runner, she sets her sights on her goals and reaches them. It is not about the speed." There are also several mother-daughter teams in the program including Paulette and Nicole Stallone (age 44 and 19) from Manalapan.

The summer session of the Running 101 program culminates on Labor Day weekend at the Saturday in the Park Women's 5K held every year at Holmdel Park. By the way, you do not necessarily have to run this race; women can feel free to walk at their own pace. Last year over 500 women participated in the event that raises funds to promote awareness of organizations that provide essential services to women and their children in Monmouth and Ocean Counties. (Of the total number of participants, 25% were from Running 101.) Beneficiaries last year included Epiphany House of Asbury Park and Long Branch, Providence House of Catholic Charities in Ocean County, and Spring House, Eatontown. Since its inception, Saturday in the Park has raised over \$155,000 and has created greater public awareness of options and services available to women.

The women in Running 101 are not just "running to run". Other than the obvious health benefits they receive they are taking part in something much bigger and affecting change in critical areas which support programs dedicated to providing shelter, counseling, advocacy and education for women and their families in both Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

When not running, Elaine works in the computer software industry. She lives in Matawan and does between five and ten races per year.

This year's Saturday in the Park Women's 5K race will take place on Saturday August 30 at Holmdel Park. For more information visit the Jersey Shore Running Club at www.jsrc.org . For more information on the Women's Running 101 Program visit their website at www.geocities.com/jmacrunning.

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