

# Do This Before You Run!

*Warm up lunges by Bob Wallace, former champion marathoner, life-long runner, and experienced coach of both novice and seasoned runners.*

Running has a terrible reputation for causing injuries. Here's a short, simple warm up that every runner should do before they take a step down the road, track or trail. It's guaranteed to wake up some dormant muscles and activate the core to lessen your chance of getting injured.

The warm up is a series of lunges, developed by Dr. Gary Gray of the Gray Institute, that addresses the three planes of motion and it can be done in 3 to 5 minutes.

- 1. The front lunge** – start standing up straight, chest out and legs slightly apart. Step your right foot forward the distance of about half your height. Bend the knee so it is directly above its ankle. Keep your upper body straight and your core engaged. Your left leg should be bent at 90° with its knee barely above the ground. Step back and repeat leading with the left leg. You should swing your opposite arm as you would while running. Do 5 lunges on each side. Easy!
- 2. Front lunge with a twist** – do a front lunge with your right foot forward, while in this position keep your hips stable (facing forward) and twist your upper body to the right. Step back to the starting position. You only twist over the forward leg. So when your left leg is in front, twist to your left. Do 5 lunges on each side.
- 3. Side lunge** – beginning in the same starting position as the 2 previous lunges, step your right leg to the right, again about half the distance of your height, bend the right leg, keeping the knee above its ankle. The left leg remains straight. The keys to a proper side lunge is to keep the upper body upright, (don't lean forward), engage your core and keep your arms lifted in front of you to keep the chest open. Your feet should always be pointing directly forward. Step back to the starting position and lunge to the left. Do 5 lunges in each direction.



Front Lunge

Front Lunge with Twist

Side Lunge

45° Lunge

Back Lunge

- 4. The 45° lunge** – From the starting position of all the lunges, step your right foot to the side and back at about 45° and bend the right leg so the knee is above its ankle. The left leg is straight with the left foot pointing directly ahead. Come back to center and move to the left. Keep the upper body tall and the core engaged. Do 5 lunges in each direction.
- 5. The back lunge** – this one may test your balance a bit. From the standard starting position step your right leg back, trying to bring the foot to your butt on its way to the ground. Step back the same distance as the front lunge swinging your opposite arm in a running motion to help your balance. At the bottom of the lunge both legs should be bent at about 90°. Your left knee should be directly above the left ankle. Return to the starting position and step back with the left leg. Do 5 lunges on each leg.

Now you've done 50 lunges, your heart rate is slightly elevated, you've engaged your core, and activated your glutes, hamstrings and hip flexors. You're ready to take off (slowly to start) on your run.

It's important that you work within your own range of motion when you do this routine.

Do it before every run!