

# Run Leader Handbook



**ST. HELENS**  
= *Striders* =

# Thank you!

The time and energy you generously donate to the club doesn't go unnoticed. Without you, we wouldn't be able to do the things we do!

This guide has been created by the Coaches, to provide some guidance to Run Leaders, ensuring that we continue to provide consistent and safe running for all of our members.

The content is designed to be a general, helpful guide. There are also some key 'rules' that Run Leaders are required to follow to ensure all sessions are delivered to the correct standard and to ensure member safety. You will see these marked as follows:

**M**

Run Leaders **must** follow these points at all times.

**S**

Run Leaders **should** follow these points where it is appropriate and/or reasonably possible.

We're super grateful for all you do for the club, and hope you find this guide helpful.

*The Committee*

# Becoming a Run Leader

When new Run Leaders (RLs) are required, the Committee and/or Coaches will invite members to express their interest. From those interested, the Committee, with the advice of the Coaches, will choose which members will be put forward for training, taking into consideration which groups require RLs, the available budget and skills/experience of individuals.

## **Eligibility**

The following eligibility criteria will apply for all potential RLs:

- Must be fully paid-up, first claim members of the club.
- Must have been a member for at least 12 months, or have relevant previous experience.
- Must be capable to leading a large group, be confident dealing with issues as they arise and undertake risk assessments.

## **Commitment**

Anyone wishing to become a Run Leader should be able to commit to lead for at least 18 months, and should generally be available to lead 2 session per month if needed. Run Leaders are also asked to attend meetings around twice a year. Obviously, we understand that things come up so are happy if you can't commit every single month.

To maintain the status of RL, the rules and guidance outlined within this handbook must be followed at all times.

# Run Leader Training

If chosen to become a RL, members will be invited to book their training on the England Athletics website. The club will refund the cost once receipts have been provided.

Run Leading is a very practical task, and involves a significant amount of face-to-face interaction. We encourage in-person training courses rather than online training where available.

Our existing RLs and Coaches will be on hand to support all trainee RLs throughout their training. Trainee RLs are encouraged to co-lead sessions with existing RLs and Coaches during their training.

Once all training and additional requirements (such as the DBS check and safeguarding) are complete, the member's England Athletics profile will show the role of 'Run Leader'. From this point, the RL is insured to lead sessions.

Prior to leading a session on their own, newly qualified run leaders should lead at least one session alongside a coach, or an experienced run leader as selected by the Group Coach.

**M**

**In order to lead a session, RLs must hold the 'Leader in Running Fitness' qualification, issued England Athletics.**

**S**

**Trainee RLs should attend in-person training.**

**S**

**Newly qualified RLs should lead a session with a Coach/Experienced RL**

# Inactivity

We understand that things can change. So, if you are unable to lead for a while, then we'll be there to support you. If you need to miss the odd month or two, then things can carry on as normal. However, we'll provide extra support if you've been inactive for longer periods of time.

If you've not led a session for 6 months, you'll be classed as 'inactive'. This doesn't mean you aren't an RL anymore, simply that you aren't currently active and won't be included on plans for now.

If an inactive RL wishes to start leading again, they should contact their Group Coach, who will get them back on the plans. Their first session back will be alongside a Coach, or an experienced RL (as chosen by the Group Coach) to support them in their return to leading.

In order to limit access to member information to those that it is strictly necessary for, inactive RLs will be removed from Group Chats. As soon as they are active again, they will be re-added.

Group Coaches are on hand to answer any queries and support RLs with any concerns.

**M**

**Inactive RLs must be removed from Group Chats to protect personal data**

**M**

**RLs returning from a period of inactivity must lead alongside a Coach or Experienced RL before leading a session alone.**

# Risk Assessments

During training, you learnt how to conduct a risk assessment. It is critical that you continuously assess risks before and during your sessions, in line with your training.

A risk assessment should consider anything that could cause any form of injury, harm, damage to property, distress etc. As a guide, you should as a minimum, consider:

- The traffic on the route you are using,
- The surface and condition of the route,
- The number of participants, their experience, capability and any injuries/illnesses they have,
- The weather conditions,
- Any interactions with other users of the routes (e.g. public parks).

You aren't required to fill out a form for each session, but you must make sure you:

- **IDENTIFY** all potential risks,
- **ASSESS** whether you need to take any action,
- **MINIMISE** the risk by taking appropriate action.

You can contact your Group Coach for help and advice, if needed.



**RLs must take all reasonable steps to minimise all risks, including, but not limited to, adjusting and/or cancelling sessions where needed.**

# Incidents and Emergencies

Sometimes things go wrong, even with risk assessments and corrective actions. So it is important you are prepared to deal with an incident or emergency, should one arise.

You should ensure there is a way of contacting emergency services in the event of an issue. For example, carry your mobile, or make sure someone within the group is carrying theirs. If no one has a mobile phone, stay near residential areas to ensure you can seek help if needed.

It is a good idea to download the '**what three words**' application to your phone, which allows anyone to pinpoint your location easily in the event of an emergency.

You should know where all runners are throughout the session. The easiest way to manage this is to count everyone when you begin, and then periodically recount. If anyone is missing, you should try to locate them and ensure they are safe.

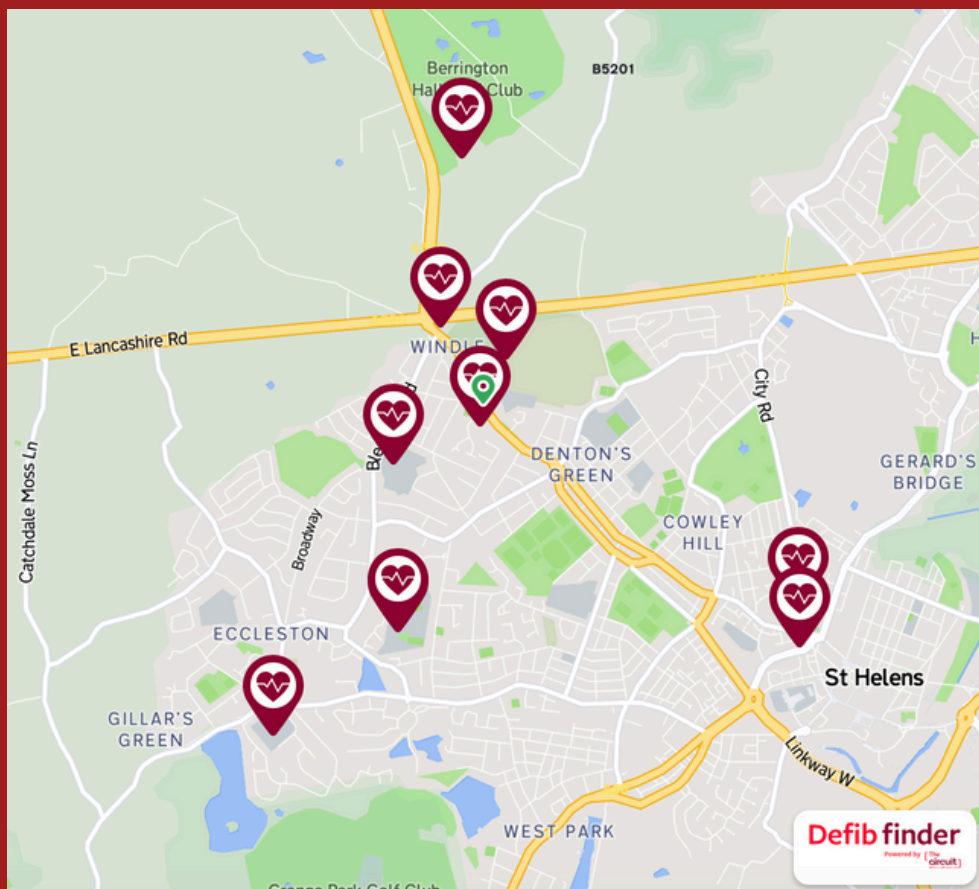
If something does happen, remember:

- You should remain calm and **contact emergency services**
- Check airways and pulse, and if needed administer CPR or put them in the recovery position
- Make sure others aren't crowding the injured runner



# Incidents and Emergencies

In the unlikely event that you need to administer CPR or use a defibrillator, the emergency services operator will talk you through what to do. However, it is a good idea to get familiar with the locations of defibrillators and know what to expect.



We encourage you to complete the free online CPR course offered by the British Heart Foundation. [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#) to take the course.

**S**

RLs should carry a mobile phone during sessions.

**M**

RLs must ensure that all participants are accounted for during sessions.

**M**

All accidents and incidents must be reported to the club by completing the incident form found pinned to the top of the Run Leader Facebook group.



# Preparing for a Session

Our Coaches write the sessions that appear on the training plans. As RL, your role is to deliver these sessions and you are responsible for ensuring the safety and enjoyment of members. All sessions follow the same basic 3-point structure: A **warm-up**, the **main session** and a **cool down**.

## **Before the session:**

- Review the session you're leading and make sure you've understood. Reach out to your Coach if you have any questions.
- Plan how you'll use your route, including how you'll ensure everyone can stay together, where you'll do rests, any muster points etc.
- Whilst the Coaches have written the session, you do not have to follow it exactly. You are able to adjust the session to make sure it works on the night. For example, you can change the location or format of the recoveries.
- On the morning of the session, put a post up in the Facebook group to let everyone know what the session is and when/where to meet you. If special kit is needed, mention that (e.g. trail shoes). In winter, make sure you tell everyone to wear hi-viz and/or lights.
- Be aware of any new runners who will be joining by keeping an eye on the 'Run Leaders Group' on Facebook. You'll usually be tagged in a post to let you know.

# Leading a Session

## Introduction and Warm-Up:

- Make sure you introduce yourself to any new runners, and give everyone a brief overview of the session so they know what to expect.
- Count how many people there are.
- Check whether anyone has any injuries or any other issues that may affect their running.
- Before running the main part of a session, runners need to be warmed up in order to avoid injury and maximise training benefits. This could be an easy jog, some drills or both, and will usually be at least ten minutes.
- Sometimes, the Coach will include drills or exercises that need to be included within the warm-up for a session. It is important that you include these. If you have any questions, reach out to your Coach.

## The Main Session

- After the warm-up is finished, count your runners and check in to make sure everyone is still ok. Provide a full set of instructions for the session. This should include:
  - Safety information including any risks, e.g. road crossings, kerbs, surface issues etc.
  - The length of any efforts, rests etc.
  - The locations of any muster, break or rest points
- During the session, pay attention to how everyone is performing and feeling. If there are any concerns or issues, you should adjust the session accordingly. For example, if people struggle to recover, increase the rest.

# Leading a Session

## The Main Session cont...

- Remember that when you are run leading, your primary focus must be on the runners and not on your own workout. This means that, you may need to adjust your own session. For example, you may need to run at the back with slower runners that are struggling.
- Remember to recount the number of people throughout. If anyone is missing, make sure you identify where they are. If they have voluntarily left, that's fine, but if they are unaccounted for, you must make sure you take steps to find them.

## Cool-Down

- After running, our heart rates are elevated and our muscles are fatigued. To maximise recovery and minimise injury risk, you need to include a cool down at the end of every session.
- You should do some low-intensity exercise for at least 5 minutes, preferably 10. This could be a slow jog or even walking.
- The final section should be a series of simple stretches, which must always be completed unless it is unsafe to do so. For example, if it is torrential rain, then skip the stretches and ask runners to complete them at home.

**M**

**RLs must ensure participants are warmed up before a session.**

**M**

**RLs must conduct a cool down, including stretches, except where it is unsafe to do so.**

# Simple Stretch Sequence

## Keep it Simple!

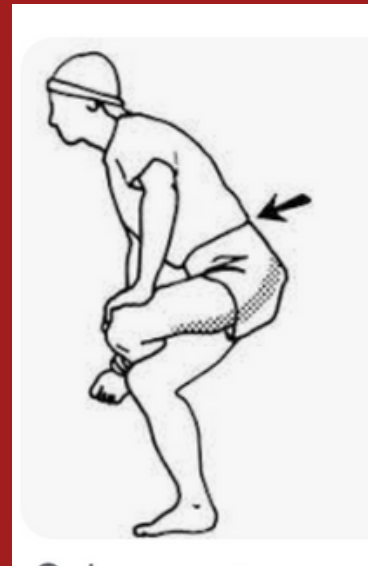
Remembering which stretches to do can be a nightmare! The easiest way to tackle this, is to start from the top of the body and work down.



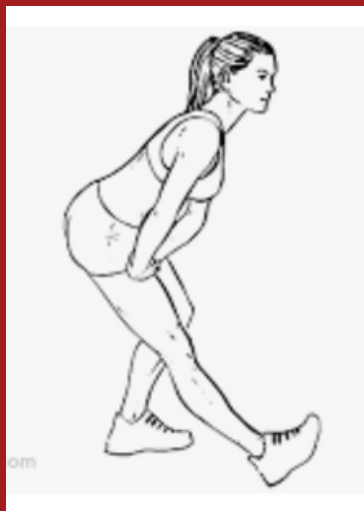
**Shoulders**



**Quads**



**Glutes**



**Hamstrings**



**Calves**

# Session Types

## **Muster**

A Muster Run should be ran at an easy pace, and when a specific 'muster point' is agreed, runners turn back and run the back of the pack. This ensures everyone stays together and allows everyone to run at their own pace.

## **Tempo**

A Tempo Session involves sustained running at a 'comfortably hard' pace. The effort should make sure you can't chat, but can answer with one or two words.

## **Intervals**

Interval sessions can vary, but ultimately they are relatively short bursts of running at faster speeds, with rests or active recoveries between the efforts.

## **Hills**

Short hill sessions, or hill sprints, should be ran at top speed, with a full recovery before the next effort. Longer hills should be ran at a hard but controlled pace.

## **Kenyan Hills**

This session is excellent for building endurance. On a hilly loop, you should run the up and the down at a tempo effort and use the flat for recovery, so there isn't a break between loops.

# Session Types

## **Fartlek-File**

Previously known as Indian File, this session is a favourite. Runners run at an easy pace in single-file, the back runner then sprints to the front of the line and becomes the leader, once they have tucked in, the next back runner sprints and so on.

## **Fartlek**

Fartlek sessions involves differing speed and intensities and are usually ran continuously. Some sessions will have prescribed formats and others can be entirely random for the RL to choose.

## **Time Trial**

A time trial is an opportunity for runners to practise race pace over a specific distance. Essentially, you run as fast as you can for the prescribed distance or time.

## **Steady Run**

A steady run involves running at 'purposeful pace' for a sustained period of time. The pace is active, and definitely not 'easy', you should aim for somewhere between your usual easy pace and tempo pace.

# Social Striders Runs

## **What are Social Strider runs?**

Social Strider sessions are an alternative session for people that don't want to follow the 'performance' focussed training sessions on the main plan. These sessions should be relaxed, fun and focussed on the social aspect of running.

Even though these aren't 'training sessions' you will still need to complete all the usual risk assessments and health and safety protocols.

## **Format**

Social Strider runs follow the same format as other sessions, starting with a warm-up, a run in the middle and finishing with a cool down and stretches, as follows:

### *Warm-up*

The warm-up should be completed at the meeting point, and should consist of some heart-rate raising exercises followed by some dynamic stretches. Ideas for these are on the next page.

### *Run*

The run is a social, easy run, which should be completed at the 'easy pace' of the slowest runner in the group. The leader must keep the group together at all times, allowing walk breaks as often as is needed. The run should last about 30 minutes.

### *Cool-Down*

The last part of the sessions should be made up of some walking to let the heart rate decrease, followed by the usual stretches.

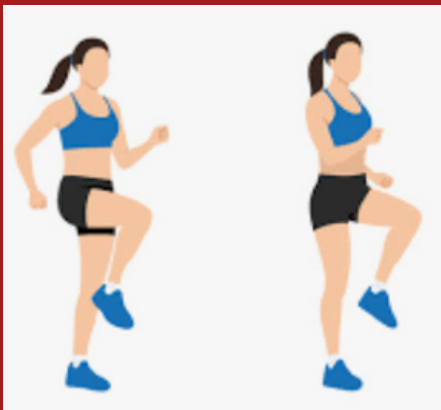


# Social Striders Runs

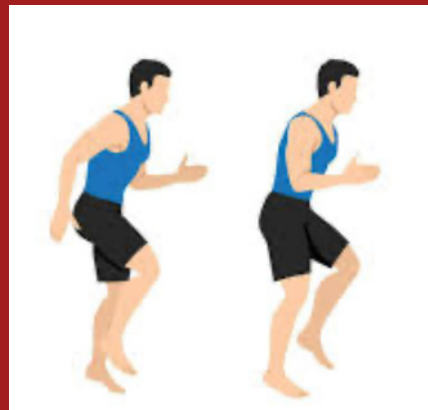
## Warm-Ups

Your warm-up should consist of two parts, some heart rate raising exercises and some dynamic stretches. You can do any you like, but here are some ideas to get you started. Try to do at least three different exercises in section.

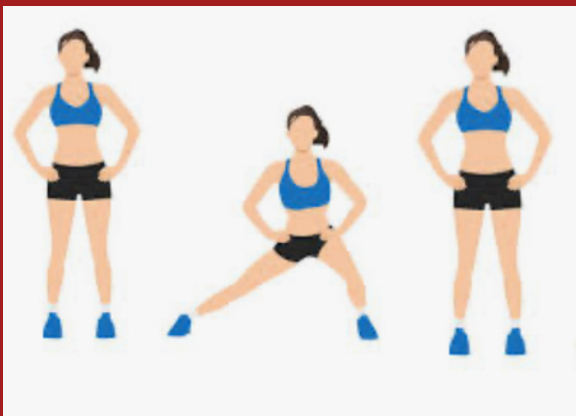
## Heart-rate increasing exercises



Marching on the spot



Running on the spot



Side Steps



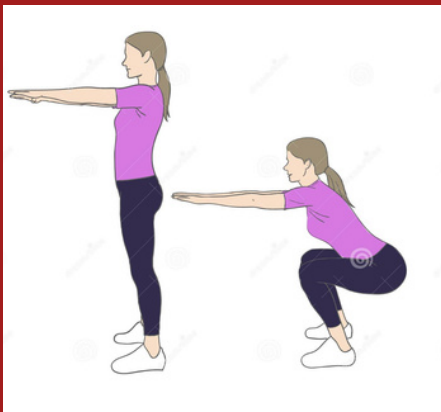
Double leg hops

# Social Striders Runs

## Warm-Ups

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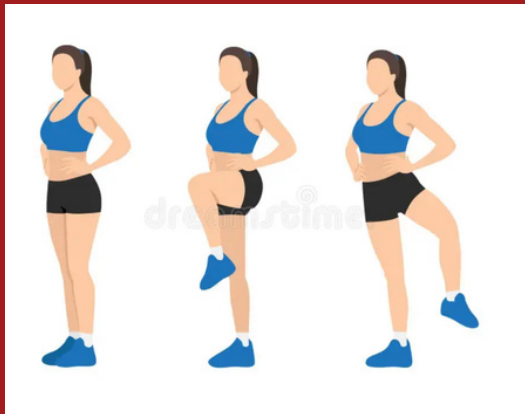
## Dynamic Stretches



Squats



Reach up high and lean to the side



Hip Openers



Arm Circles