

# Your Health

## Get Back On Your Feet—Tips For Running At Any Age

(NAPSA)—Running can seem like a daunting workout no matter your age. It takes an impressive amount of dedication to run long distances. However, 66-year-old Barbara McGirr did not let that deter her. Starting at the age of 62, McGirr set her sights on completing her first half marathon. After only six months of training and a lot of hard work, she achieved that goal.

Taking advantage of the free fitness membership she received through the SilverSneakers program offered by her Medicare plan, McGirr started her training by walking to build up endurance. From there she started running small increments and gradually increased over time to reach her ultimate goal. Now, even after retirement, McGirr continues to compete in 4K and 5K races.

Her inspiring fitness journey was recently recognized by SilverSneakers as she was named the national winner of the SilverSneakers Richard L. Swanson Inspiration Award, which honors older adults who improve their health through fitness. Running has greatly improved McGirr's quality of life, and she shares that it helps keep her body and mind in shape.

If you are interested in running and improving your health, SilverSneakers offers the following tips:

- **Talk with your doctor:** You're never too old to start running, but it's always good to check with your doctor before beginning a new exercise routine.
- **Get the proper gear:** Invest in a good pair of shoes. Consider getting fitted at an athletic store to keep your feet comfortable.
- **Start slow:** Start with brisk walks and then slowly transition to running. Running for one minute, then walking for one minute is a great way to build stamina.



**Sixty-six-year-old distance runner Barbara McGirr was the national winner of award honoring older adults who improve their health through fitness.**

- **Set manageable goals:** Take it easy at first and listen to your body. If running a longer distance is your goal, work up to it gradually—walking for a few weeks, then intervals of jogging and walking. Before you know it, you'll be running with ease.
- **Don't skip the cooldown:** Always cool down with a slow walk and lots of stretching to reduce recovery time.

SilverSneakers partners with more than 13,000 participating fitness locations and wellness centers, giving members access to the site's basic amenities, including weights, treadmills, pools, etc., as well as specialized SilverSneakers exercise classes led by certified SilverSneakers instructors. The program is offered at no additional charge through the nation's leading Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare Supplement carriers and group retiree plans.

For more information, to check eligibility or enroll, visit [www.silversneakers.com](http://www.silversneakers.com).