

WOMEN'S RUNNING

Coming of
age in
Canada

by Ellen Agger

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When I was growing up in the sixties, I never dreamed that I would become involved in any sport. Sports were reserved for those fortunate enough to be born male or with a natural aptitude.

This has changed. Now it is not only possible for women to be engaged in sport and exercise, but there is now an activity which is attracting traditionally the most 'unlikely' candidates — women, the overweight, mothers and older people. This activity is running.

Its popularity is spreading rapidly throughout the country, with thousands of women taking it up for a variety of reasons. Participation in races is on the increase, women-only races are growing in popularity and in many centres one can see women running on the streets at almost any time of day or evening.

All this is relatively new. Although women have been running for years in Canada, their participation has mostly been in track or cross-country running, organized within the traditional track and field club system when they were school-aged. Until the last five years, they have been kept from running distances over one mile by social convention, psychological and physical barriers and even by economic pressures. This booklet will look at the past and present barriers to women's participation in running, how and why they are being overcome and what direction women's long distance running will take over the next few years.

Who is running?

Who are these women who are running now — on the streets, on tracks, in races and through recreational centres and clubs? Many recreational women runners and an increasing number of competitive runners seem to come from backgrounds devoid of previous athletic experience. Not only were school athletics geared towards those who showed an aptitude in sports, but there was an emphasis of team sports and developing athletic skills for competition. Many educators who are now attempting to concentrate on increasing the fitness level of all students are encouraging enjoyment of physical activity for its own sake and the development of an individual's potential in whatever athletic activity.

Those who were active in running programs in track and cross-country found that there were few opportunities to continue when they left school. Coaching was limited or not available at all for women distance runners and there were few facilities and clubs. Marriage often meant an end to competitive running careers, as family life or social expectations for married women excluded serious running.

Now, women who are sedentary in their lifestyles, over thirty or have children are beginning to take up running on a regular basis. Schools are offering fitness-oriented running programs for students and teachers, often started by mothers themselves. Mothers whose children are at school are making time to run. And social conditions which have prevented women from participating in great numbers are changing.

Joy Moon, an active mother of two, started a lunchtime running program at her local school. In the spring of 1978, 12 children began running for 45 minutes three times a week at Rosedale Public School in Toronto. By the fall of 1979, this had grown to include 65% of the students.

Why do they run? Because it's fun and we feel good, the students say. The teachers and lunch supervisors are happy about the program, too, as the students are more relaxed and attentive in the afternoon.

Similar programs are now being run in schools across the city.

Why Running?

In looking at the growth of women's running in the last few years, we must look at why running appeals to women. Is the appeal different for women than for men and is it different from other recently popular sports, such as cross-country skiing or tennis?

Running is one of the few sports or forms of exercise that doesn't require expensive clothing, special facilities and equipment or club membership. Nor is it restricted to any one season of the year. It appeals to women because of its flexibility (you can do it anytime or anywhere), its accessibility, its cheapness (shoes are the only major investment) and one's reliance on one's own discipline and needs.

Perhaps the greatest difference between why women run and why men run can be found in their different social situations. Although the above reasons for the appeal of running also apply to men, they take on a different meaning for women.

Before the birth of the feminist movement in the late sixties and early seventies, it was often believed that women were physically weak and could easily do damage to their reproductive systems if they engaged in strenuous physical activity. This belief kept women from engaging in activities such as long distance running.

In 1963, Abby Hoffman was running in the High Park Spring Road Races in Toronto. A woman at the end of the race told her she'd never be able to have babies if she continued to run and train on hard surfaces. If that were true, Abby said, she should patent running as the latest sure-fire method of birth control!

Along with these restrictive social attitudes were the demands placed on women such as the responsibility of the family's needs and the housework which meant that few women had the time to run, even if they had somehow developed the interest.

As the women's movement took shape, women made demands, both in an organized and an individual way, which helped free their time for activities such as running. These included government financial support, sharing of housework and childcare, control over their bodies, development of physical as well as psychological strength and the recognition of the need and time for personal growth and development.

For many women, the need to have time for themselves, away from family, housework and job pressures, and to do something just for themselves, often for the first time, has been met by running. Men, although often feeling similar needs, have other socially-sanctioned outlets, including vigorous physical activity, which make the taking up of a running program easier.

Many women have found running gives them time to be alone, often hard to come by if they are caring for young children, time not spent in competition with others and a sense of freedom and control over one area of their lives, which other sports and physical activities haven't provided. The accessible, inexpensive, self-directed and easy-to-learn nature of running means that those with varying schedules, children and little money can be active. It also provides a chance to discover and develop one's physical and related capacities, which is a new joy for many previously inactive women.

The many purely physical benefits for women who take up running programs — weight control, fitness, improved general health, tension-relief, an increased energy level — provide the initial motivation for many women. The psychological and emotional by-products are often not felt for some time, but often are the reasons that women continue to run over long periods of time.

Barriers to women's participation

While lack of time, social pressures and social expectations have kept women from engaging in long distance running programs over the years, many barriers have and still do exist that serve to deter many women from running.

Myths and prejudices about what is 'feminine' have abounded. Those women who were active were assumed to be 'unfeminine'. They were often accused of being too masculine or lesbian and the threat of being labelled and ostracized kept many women from engaging in any sport. Those who were in fact lesbian felt a sense of isolation and were forced to be secretive about their lives, often both to each others and to others.

Perhaps most notable was the basic lack of interest in participating in athletics that most girls and women have exhibited. While it has traditionally been considered a goal for men to develop their physical potential, this has not been an acceptable priority for women. Therefore, their time has been

spent pursuing other activities — until recently.

Sim Kim Dan, a Korean woman, astounded the world when she ran 800 metres in 1:58:08 in the early sixties. People in North America were so amazed that they said she must really be a man.

This attitude led to the development of the gender-identifying tests for international competitions. Since the late fifties, women athletes have been increasingly asked for more rigorous documentary proof of their gender. A doctor's letter stating that they were indeed female was eventually replaced by more sophisticated tests such as the Barr Sex Test, which determine whether a competitor is "sex chromatin positive and therefore eligible to compete in women's events". However, only women are subjected to such tests — implying that if women excel at sport they may really not be female at all.

Because most women come from non-athletic backgrounds, they often have fears that they simply can't run. To breathe heavily, to exert oneself and to sweat are new feelings for many. Myths about female fragility creep into many heads. One nurse thought that her heart was 'palpitating' when she first ran. She stopped running for two weeks until she learned that it was beating normally for an exercising heart! Lack of information has also led to unfounded fears of developing big, bulging muscles and becoming 'unattractive'. Further, women and consequently men are redefining what is attractive for women (i.e. health and strength vs. weakness and fragility) and what are 'acceptable' female activities (everything!).

Lack of resources have been a hindrance to women running. Running shoes designed for the narrower female foot were virtually unavailable in Canada until the last two years and then only in large cities. While inexpensive compared to equipment for other sports, good running shoes are not cheap, ranging up to \$75 a pair now. Literature directed at the woman running has only been on the market since about 1977. Facilities for women to meet together to run, such as recreation centres with running programs aimed at women, are still hard to find. Indoor training facilities, necessary in many parts of Canada due to our winter climate, are still

few and far between — with the social environment often unfriendly to women. And resources for women with running-related injuries are only available in the larger cities and often are staffed with doctors who know little about the specific needs of women runners.

Locker room facilities for both men and women are still woefully inadequate at the CNE indoor quarter-mile track, one of the few in Toronto. But until as recently as 1978, the women's locker room didn't even have showers.

One of the few indoor banked tracks in downtown Toronto, located at Hart House at the University of Toronto, only began allowing women to use the facilities in 1972. A dressing room for women was finally built in 1979.

It's hard to develop your interest and potential when the facilities aren't even there.

Another barrier is the problem of harassment from men. Any woman who has run on the streets has at one time or another, if not daily, been confronted with abusive or aggressive men who feel compelled to approach the woman runner. Most often the harassment comes in a verbal form. However, in most major cities in Canada women runners have been attacked or raped when out running. The danger of being attacked is greater in urban areas, particularly in more isolated areas such as parks and ravines. Like all women, running women everywhere face constant decisions about where and when to run safely, how to avoid problems and what to do when attacked or verbally assaulted.

Some women's running groups have begun to make contact with local rape crisis centres in order to bring into the open the potential problems women runners face. Other ways of dealing with this problem have included group or partner running, running with men friends, taking self-defence courses and organized and spontaneous group discussions on the fears and/or realities women face.

Conflict over making running a priority in their lives is another problem that many women must deal with. When faced with fixing dinner, when what they really want to do is go for a run, they have to rearrange their priorities and make their needs known. As Judith Stolow Kazdan remarked in her article on running

and the housewife¹, "This has not been accomplished without a mixture of conflict and regret...[But] finally, a housewife gains in importance, to herself and to others, when she becomes a runner."

Encouraging women to be active

So things are changing for women who want to run. We've looked at some of the reasons why women are running, barriers that prevent greater participation, some historical and some current and how these barriers are beginning to break down. What other factors have influenced so many women to start running?

Although Canada has had few well-known female track stars, a couple have stood out in the seventies who have become for many young girls and women models of what women can achieve in the domain of sports. One of these, and probably one of the best known, is Abby Hoffman. Besides participating in four Olympics (1964-76), she has been active for years promoting opportunities for women in sports and physical activity and increased government financial support for women's athletics and fitness programs. She has been a childhood idol for many young women: "If Abby can do it, maybe I can, too."



Another well-known woman track and field athlete is Diane Jones Konihowski. She was the winner of the 1978 Commonwealth Games pentathlon gold medal and was ranked number one in the world in 1978, after ranking sixth in the 1976 Olympics.

The 1976 Montreal Olympics and the 1978

1. Kazdan, Judith Stolow. "Running and the Housewife", *Canadian Runner*, June 1979, p.19.

Edmonton Commonwealth Games also played a part in encouraging both men and women to take a keener interest in sports and physical activity. While they were geared to the development of the elite athlete and not towards mass participation, they nevertheless generated much interest in physical activity among Canadians. Constant media coverage of these events highlighted the women athletes, too, although to a lesser extent than the male athletes.

We have also seen governmental support (financial and otherwise) of exercise in the last few years that has shifted from the previously narrowly-defined interest in Olympic and elite sports only. Programs like Participaction (a private agency which is partly government-funded) have run widespread fitness campaigns, aimed at getting the individual involved in a higher level of physical activity. Provincial governments have also financed participation-oriented programs, for example the Wintario lottery grants to fitness and sports groups in the community. Ontario has also begun a Fitness Ontario Leadership Program, which trains fitness leaders from across the province in the basics of how to conduct well-balanced and safe fitness classes. Specific governmental involvement in promoting running has mostly been by isolated city-level governments, for example the City of Ottawa, which sponsors fun runs for family involvement.

Most spending priorities in health are still geared to illness and ill-health which often result from lack of physical exercise, rather than promoting fitness and good nutritional programs as preventative care. Much work needs to be done in this area, with the development of programs to promote more aerobic activities, including running.

Racing — no longer for the elite

The immense growth of racing opportunities for both men and women exploded in 1976 and 1977 in Canada. Races, which had previously been geared towards highly-competitive, fast runners (mostly male), became oriented also to the fitness or recreational runner. Many new mass participation races began to be organized, as well, during this time. They have drawn fields of up to 6000 at a time and are made up of all kinds of people from near beginners to world-class competitors.

They serve to provide a goal for many individual running programs. They provide a challenge to the

individual to finish a longer distance, to better her/his own personal best time and to compete against others.

For women, they have played a particularly significant role. Racing, as well as allowing a socially-sanctioned place for competition, previously thought unsuitable for women, increases the visibility of women runners. It provides a place to meet other women, encourages women to continue running and educates the public about the numbers and capabilities of women now running.

Races drew only the occasional women runner in the sixties and not even large numbers of men. Now they are drawing up to 30% or more female entrants. The Toronto Star Trek, for example, a 20 km. race held in 1979, was 13% women runners. The Toronto Diet Pepsi Fun Run, 10 km., had 2097 finishers, of whom 20% were women in 1979.

We are seeing greater numbers of women in the 10 km. distances than in the 20 km. or marathon races because of the difficulties many women have in finding much time to train. This is also due to the fact that most women have taken up running only in the last few years, are still fairly new to it and therefore they tend to run the shorter distances.

Moreover, the race organizers themselves have introduced or perpetuated barriers for women. In 1979, there were still races across the country which had, for example, an open women's distance of 5 km. and an open men's of 20 km., such as the White Oaks Classic in Oakville, Ontario. While not usually forbidding women to run the longer distance, they are certainly not encouraging them to do so. There have been some races which won't allow women in them at all. At the 1978 Boxing Day 10-mile race in Hamilton, Ontario women weren't allowed to enter. This kind of overt discrimination is becoming rare as women runners protest it and race organizers become aware of the numbers of women who want to enter their races.

Then there is the question of the control of racing by the official track and field governing bodies, such as the Canadian Track and Field Association (CTFA). This has been much more of an issue in the U.S. where the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) prohibited women from entering races above first a half mile (until 1963), then five miles (until 1968), then ten miles (until 1971) and finally the marathon, which was opened up to women in 1972. There were CTFA rules in Canada which, although not prohibiting women from running the races, ensured that the women's times would not be recorded.

These rules have been relaxed gradually since about 1965. The influx of mass participation races more recently has encouraged a more open policy to women.

Another new phenomenon is the numbers of women over 30 who have taken up racing. There are no clear age-categories yet established and recognized across Canada, but more and more races are having categories for women over 30 or 35, instead of only one category where women of all ages must compete. Also, some races have categories for every five years. This inconsistency makes it hard for women to compete consistently, as they may be competing against women of different ages in every race.

In order to standardize how the 'masters' category is defined for women, the Canadian Masters International Track Team has set age 35 and over. To promote running and racing for women of these ages, they held the first women masters road race on September 22, 1979 in Toronto. Thirty-eight women participated in the 5 km. race. In November of that year, 22 women competed in the 10 km. women-only race in the U.S.-Canada Masters Cross-Country Meet in Toronto. While these numbers of participants are relatively small, such races herald an important step in the development and promotion of women masters running in Canada.

The gap between women's and men's racing times has also been steadily closing. While women were formerly thought to be significantly slower than men and capable of running only short distances, women racers in recent years have been proving this unfounded. For example, the men's marathon record dropped only four minutes in the last fifteen years, while the women's dropped a total of fifty-five minutes. The men's 3 km. time has dropped seven and a half seconds, while the women's dropped 25.6 seconds. The women's world marathon record is now 2:27:33. The men's is 2:08:33.

Why are women getting faster so quickly? Why is the gap closing between women and men? This is partly due to the increase in opportunities for women to run and to develop their potential. There are more races women can enter, including women-only races. Training methods have improved and there is a greater wealth of information about running and training available to women in the last few years. Changes in social and mental attitudes by women themselves have meant more women are running and running better than ever before. The result of this is that women runners are being taken more seriously.

Marathon running for women

The marathon, a race of 26 miles and 385 yards, is one of the most gruelling challenges for the distance runner. It has become popular in Canada since the mid-seventies for both the competitive distance runner and the serious recreational runner seeking a further goal or challenge for her or his running.

Until 1971, few records were kept of women's participation in this event. There were isolated instances such as when Maureen Wilton, a 13-year old runner from the North York Track Club in Toronto, set a women's world marathon record of 3:15:22 in 1967. But a check of magazines such as *Athletica*, the Canadian Track and Field Magazine, shows that women's times for the marathon have only been recorded regularly since 1975.

While the marathon is growing in Canada, it has not begun to reach the same level of popularity as in the U.S. In 1978, 3,678 Canadians ran marathons in Canada and the U.S. 1 Of these, 234 or 7% were women — hardly optimal but reflecting a level of participation, interest and seriousness toward their running that is certainly new and promising.

The numbers of marathons and therefore total numbers of women in them are growing as well. Twenty-six were held in Canada in 1978 and 31 in 1979. Of those in 1978, 16 had fewer than 100 participants (many of these with no women entrants at all), 3 each with 100-175, 395-570 and 1530-2075. In 1979 there were almost 3000 participants in the National Capital Marathon in Ottawa, one of the largest and fastest growing in the country.

Besides the growth in numbers of marathons and participants, women's times in Canada have gotten better over the last five years. The 1974 Canadian women's record was 3:03:16, run by Maria Brzezinska (25th in the world). The first sub-three hour time was run by Joanne Heale (nee McKinty) at the Oktoberfest Marathon in Kitchener, Ontario in 1975 (2:57:40). The list of sub-three hour women grew to include 17 by 1980, with seven of those under 2:50. The Canadian women's marathon record now stands at 2:35:09 set by Gayle Olinek, at

1. Eleanor Thomas, *1979 Canadian Marathon Annual*. (Ottawa, Ontario: E. Thomas, Canadian Marathon Annual, 1979). These figures were compiled from lists of all finishers of Canadian marathons in 1978. Results of U.S. races were sent to the Marathon Annual by the individual runner.

All-time Best World Women Marathoners

Grete Waitz (Nor.)	2:27:33	'79
Joan Benoit (U.S.)	2:31:23	'80
Christa Vahlensieck (W.G.)	2:34:48	'77
Gayle Olinek (Can.)	2:35:09	'80
Chantal Langlace (Fr.)	2:35:16	'77
Julie Brown (U.S.)	2:36:24	'78
Joyce Smith (G.B.)	2:36:27	'79
Lorraine Moller (N.Z.)	2:37:37	'79
Kim Merritt (U.S.)	2:37:57	'77
Manuela Angenvoorth (W.G.)	2:38:10	'77

All-time Best Canadian Women Marathoners

Gayle Olinek	2:35:09	'80	New Orleans
Jacqueline Gareau	2:39:04	'79	N.Y. City
Gail MacKean	2:44:53	'79	Vancouver
Cindy Haney	2:45:13	'79	Vancouver
Hélène Rochefort	2:46:30	'79	Montreal
Chris Lavallee	2:47:38	'78	Ottawa
Pat Donaghey	2:49:47	'79	Toronto
Joanne Heale	2:51:00	'79	Ottawa
Veronica Poryckyj	2:54:13	'79	Bermuda
Linda Currie	2:55:31	'79	Calgary

(lists compiled as of February 1980)

the Mardi Gras Marathon in New Orleans in 1980. The current women's world record is held by Grete Waitz of Norway, who ran 2:27:33 in the 1979 New York City Marathon.

The situation in Canada for women's marathoning reflects what is happening all over the world. The interest is growing, the times are dropping rapidly and women are organizing to get a women's marathon included in the Olympics.

Companies such as Avon are organizing women's races to provide not only racing opportunities but visible proof of international interest and talent. The Avon International Women's Marathon drew almost 200 women from 9 countries to Atlanta, Georgia in 1978. This grew to 263 women from 24 countries and six continents in 1979 when it was held in Waldneil, West Germany, home of Dr. Ernst van Aaken, one of the earliest supporters of women's distance running. Kathy Switzer, the first woman to run officially in the famed Boston Marathon, is spear-heading an Avon-supported campaign to pressure the International Olympic Committee into including longer women's distance events in upcoming Olympics.

Canadians are also supporting the call for longer Olympic distances for women, with the CTFA and other organizations and individuals sending letters and telegrams to the International Amateur Athletic Federation and the IOC.

Further developments in women's running

One of the significant developments in women's running in the last few years is the appearance of the women-only races. While these existed as early as 1961 in such races as those organized by the Toronto Olympic Club (1½ miles for women), Toronto High Park Spring Road Races (1964) and Springbank International Road Races (from 1971), they were small, shorter distances than the men's (e.g. 4½ miles for women, 10 miles for men) and held in conjunction with the men's races.

In 1977, the first large Canadian women's race, with 246 finishers, was held in Vancouver, B.C., the Women's International 10 km. It was followed in 1978 by the Bonne Bell 10 km. Race for Women, held in Toronto and Vancouver. These were the first Canadian races in an already successful circuit of races sponsored by Bonne Bell (a cosmetics company) in the U.S. The Toronto race drew a record number of women — 1800 turned up, most of

whom had either never entered a race before or had never run that distance. Five hundred women participated in Vancouver. Participation, health and fun as well as competition for those interested were stressed.

In 1979, the circuit was expanded to include women's races in Vancouver, Halifax, Winnipeg, Calgary and Toronto. Again, large numbers of women participated.

While there are women who feel that all races should be open to men and women, many feel that there are benefits from holding women-only races at this time. Limiting them to women, they feel, has allowed better competition among the lead runners (they can see who they are racing against), offers a supportive women-oriented atmosphere and provides a goal for many women who might otherwise shy away from faster, male-dominated races.

There has been some concern among women runners about the exploitation of women by the commercial sponsors of these races. Running gimmicks, fancy running clothes and make-up that is supposed to be 'good' for you have been designed for the female runner. One can see ads on television that have an attractive woman running in the background to sell particular products. The major companies, to date, that have sponsored races aimed at women are cosmetics companies, selling beauty through running.

Because of the concern that profit motives not dominate women's racing, other groups have begun to become involved with the promotion of women's running and racing. The YW and YMCA's and groups such as the Women Teachers of Etobicoke in Ontario have begun to organize women's races. 1980 will see more women's races in many Canadian cities, organized by a variety of groups.



Another new development that is really just beginning in Canada and the U.S. is the formation of women's running clubs. These provide a meeting place for women to run together, to socialize, to get support and encouragement and to promote women's running.

The first such club in Canada was founded in May 1978, called Toronto Women Running. It grew in just over one year to over 200 members. While primarily a recreationally-oriented club, compared with older track clubs geared to competitive runners, TWR has given a voice to the concerns of many women runners in the southern Ontario area as well as providing a place where its members can develop their interest in running in a supportive atmosphere. A key element in clubs like this is bringing together



different levels of runners for mutual support and learning. Many of the women who joined TWR knew no other women in their neighbourhoods who ran.

Since its formation, TWR organizers have been in touch with a sister organization in Cleveland, Ohio — Cleveland Women Running. Through this and other contacts, they became the Canadian organizers for the First National Women's Running Conference, at which the North American Network of Women Runners was founded in May 1979 in Cleveland. At this conference, women from across the U.S. and some Canadians made contact with each other, discussed their concerns and set up an ongoing network to promote women's running in different ways. Task forces were set up to inform and take action on issues such as organizing for a women's marathon in the Olympics, safety for women runners and dealing with the increasing exploitation of women's running. Caucuses were also set up where women in similar situations could identify the particular problems they faced as runners, such as masters, employed, Black and lesbian women.

In order to build this network of communication and action in Canada, TWR began corresponding with women runners in other parts of the country. The Fitness Workshop, publishers of this booklet, also have distributed another booklet on how to start a women's running club. Because of this contact, clubs have now formed in Vancouver (Vancouver Women Running), Québec (YWCA de Québec), Montreal (YWCA-Club de course pour femmes de Montreal/YWCA Montreal Women's Running Club) and Burlington, Ontario (Burlington Women Runners). More clubs are expected to be formed by the spring of 1980 in cities from Halifax to Calgary. The new interest is clearly exploding all over the country.

Another trend can be traced through the growth of women's racing. The late seventies stressed the mass participation, anyone-can-do-it approach to running, which involved new and large numbers of people. Many of those women who started running for recreation or fitness have now become interested in racing. These women are beginning to pose questions that need to be answered. Now that it is becoming socially acceptable for women to run for fun and fitness, what happens when we want to develop our competitive spirit? They are hearing the message that as long as women run slowly, it's o.k. for them to run. Will fast competitive running remain primarily a male domain?

Where is women's running going?

In summing up the seventies, the media listed the 'jogging craze' as one of the 'narcissistic' tendencies of the decade. Retailers and manufacturers of running clothes, accessories and equipment are talking about running already reaching its peak of popularity. Is this true for women or has their participation only begun? Will mass participation continue to increase or will running become an elite sport once again?

In order to build the opportunities for more women, and men, to run, more is needed than individual efforts. Changes in the home, along with the changing social and economic status of women, will make it easier for women to become involved in all kinds of fitness programs.

Employees at Ontario Hydro in Toronto have been organizing to get on-the-job fitness facilities. Their attempts began in the winter of 1978 when they circulated a petition calling for the provision of showers, lockers and other facilities.

The petition fell on deaf ears, but out of that grew a campaign to show the corporation that its employees were serious about becoming fit. Now over 200 people, 35 of whom are women, are involved in running programs, mostly during their lunch hours. Runners from Ontario Hydro have participated in large numbers of local races, with twelve five-person relay teams in the Metro Toronto Police Games, thirty finishers in the National Capitol Marathon and many helping out at the Big Brothers' Big Run for Little Brothers this past year.

Marty Gavin, the driving force behind the call for facilities, says that while it has been an uphill battle, some gains have been made. A fitness motivation program with twelve-week sessions was started in the fall. There are now a couple of showers, although they are in danger of losing these in the near future.

The people who work at Ontario Hydro hope to show that it will be worthwhile for Hydro to make fitness a priority. Not only is exercise beneficial for those involved, but fitness programs also save the company and taxpayers actual dollars and cents through reduced absenteeism, fewer lost sick days and fewer stress-related diseases such as heart attacks.



Business is beginning to be aware of the necessity of investing in the health and fitness of their employees in order to ensure productive and satisfied workers. Large companies are increasingly providing facilities for their employees to participate in running and fitness programs at work or are sponsoring out-of-building programs for them. Although this has mostly been for the executive level employees, to date, other levels of workers, including more women in such jobs as secretarial and office work, are beginning to benefit as well.

Government support for community fitness projects, races and workshops is on the increase, and if continued, will help increase women's participation.

Competitive running will also continue to grow rapidly if current trends towards recognizing the interest and talents of many women continue. Longer distance races for women in the Olympics will hopefully be included in the Games in the near future thanks to pressure on the International Olympic Committee by lobbying groups and by the widespread interest shown by women in running competitively. More opportunities to race at a local level are allowing women to develop their physical and mental potentials to a greater degree than ever before. These need to be accompanied by coaching for those interested.

Clubs for women are blossoming all over the country and seem to be a way of the future for organizing women runners in a community in order for them to get together for mutual benefits.

Women-only races are also increasing in number and in distance, providing further incentive for many women. Perhaps as other races open up to women and as social conditions change, greater percentages of women will participate in mixed races and the need for those for women only will decline. Since they have been organized mostly by corporations up to this point, it remains to be seen who will pick up the work of organizing races for women when the financial interest of those companies fades. Hopefully, governments at all levels will provide greater support, as will community-based recreation centres.

Finally, perhaps the most accurate indication as to the future of women's running can be seen in the changes of women's own expectations — of their talents and capabilities, of what they can achieve, for opportunities to run. In becoming physically active, many for the first time in their lives, women are tasting a power which makes them want more. Developing programs, clubs and opportunities for those women who would like to run for their own fitness and pleasure and those who run for competition will be the challenge in the next few years. When no woman is laughed at or harassed when running on the streets, when every woman has the time and opportunity to develop her own physical potential and when coaching, racing, and scholarships are readily available, then women's running will have come of age.

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Women's Running Clubs in Canada

Ontario:

Toronto Women Running — 723 Bloor St. W., Apt. 1, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1L5

YWCA Women Runners Club — 2532 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario M4P 2H7

Burlington Women Runners — c/o Burlington YMCA, 500 Drury Lane, Burlington, Ontario L7R 2X2

Etobicoke Olympium Fitness Club — 590 Rathburn Road, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 3T3

British Columbia:

Vancouver Women Running — YWCA, 580 Burrard St., Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2K9

Quebec:

YWCA de Québec — 855 Ave. Holland, Québec, P.Q. G1S 3S5

YWCA Club de Course Pour Femmes de Montréal/YWCA Montreal Women's Running Club, 1355 O. Dorchester W., Montreal, P.Q. H3G 1T3

Contact people interested in forming women's running clubs in their area:

Ontario:

Karen Gooden — c/o YWCA, 56 Queen St., Box 310, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 5G7

Suzanne Poirier — 3403 McCarthy Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 9G6

Manitoba:

Ann Sutton — c/o Manitoba Runners Association, Box 53, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2G1

Alberta:

Margaret Blank — 6510 Ranchview Dr. N.W., Calgary, Alberta T3G 1A1

Saskatchewan:

Rick Cuttall — c/o Saskatchewan Track & Field Association, 2205 Victoria Ave., Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0S4