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## In a Running Rut?

*Creative Ideas to Rejuvenate your Running Routine*



by Coach Susan Farago

Every runner has a favorite running route or workout routine. But what happens when we get stuck doing the same thing over and over? We may get bored, our fitness may plateau, or we might even lose our running zest and enthusiasm. The best way to rejuvenate your running routine is to try something new. Here are some ideas to consider:

### 1. Try a new route.

Adding a new route to your repertoire will not only keep things fresh but can also help build strength and fitness. Use a mapping program like [Mapquest](#) or [Gmaps](#) to create new routes near your house or work that you can try. Or use routes that others have already discovered,

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many already posted on [www.mapmyrun.com](http://www.mapmyrun.com) (there's even an iPhone app for mapmyrun.com).

## 2. Mix up running formats.

Running doesn't have to mean just pounding the pavement. Build run-oriented strength while adding novelty to your workouts by trying other running formats. Incorporate stair climbing to build lower body strength. Use a stair master\* at the health club or find a set of stairs in a parking ramp or office building. Aqua running is another great way to strengthen hamstrings and hip flexors without the pounding and you can do this in one of the many free Austin public pools. A third option is using an elliptical machine which also helps reduce impact and you can even run "backwards" to help mix up muscle usage.

\*I recommend using the stair machine that has the rotating steps because you can't cheat your form as you can with other stair machines.

## 3. Hit the trails.

Austin has over 100 miles of greenbelt trails so there is plenty of room to explore! Trail running builds running skills including quicker foot turnover and increased lateral stability and support which makes it a great accompaniment to road running. Most trails are shaded so temperatures can be 10-15 degrees cooler than on the road. Plus you can't beat the scenery! You'll have to carry water as there are no drinking fountains on the trail and you may have to invest in a pair of tougher, trail-specific running shoes. But it's worth it! Not sure where to start? Odds are there's a trailhead near you. ([Find it here!](#)) Additional trail resources and maps can be found on the [Hill Country Trail Runners website](#) . And if you're looking to join a group, check out the [Texas Iron Trail Running Program](#).

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## 4. Attack the track.

Track workouts are a great way to increase speed and work on running economy. Focused workouts allow you to work on pacing for shorter distance speed or longer distance tempo. Most tracks, including Austin High School track across from the stretching rock under the Mopac bridge, are available for public use early in the morning or after 5:30pm. There are a ton of track workouts posted on-line if you need help getting started. [Here's one of my favorite resources.](#)

## 5. Sign up for an event.

Running events are a great way to add spice to your running routine

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and there is always something going on in Austin. A great place to keep up with the running community is the [Austin Runners Club](#). RunTex also keeps track of upcoming running events on their [calendar](#). And if you are looking for events with a twist, check out the [Cougar Country Classic 5k](#) on July 26!.

Novelty helps keep your running fresh and fun. So get out there and try something new!!

Susan Farago is a coach for Austin-based [Texas Iron Multisport](#) and she can be reached [via e-mail](#). © 2009.

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