

## Running out of Summer

No one likes to "run out" of a good thing, unless of course we are running into the arms of something better. The ushering in of the Fall season means our Summer is running out and even as adults we are hard-wired to think that this means relaxation is no longer an option. We are now required to gear up for our normal regimen of stress, schedules and the usual juggling of day-to-day obligations. Wouldn't it be nice to run out of this feeling? We can't, but we can counter-act it. So what I'm suggesting is that we continue running...well into Fall...and gain all of its wonderful benefits!

Whether you are an avid runner or you feel as though there is a bed of nails under each step you take, running can and will provide endless benefits for your body and mind. No matter what the season, or what you are up to, (the shortest and least complicated run or your second marathon), the experience of running can put you in a state of mind in which you are fully immersed in what you are doing. This is what pioneer runner, William Glasser, called "positive addiction." Positive addiction is where you perform a repetitive activity, without self-criticism or judgment, that has a beneficial effect on your mind and body.

Other mental benefits of running include overall stress relief, confidence building and a sense of euphoria (known as a "runner's high" from the brain's release of endorphins). Running has been suggested to treat clinical depression, addictions, fatigue and life's biggest tensions. As with many things, the mental benefits of running are present only when they are allowed in. When negative thoughts shout the loudest, that's when that bed of nails seems endless.

Thankfully, the physical benefits of running happen no matter what. As you become more aerobically fit, your heart will pump more blood and oxygen with each beat (better known as stroke volume) and in response, your muscles extract and consume more oxygen. Running improves your aerobic fitness by increasing the activity of enzymes and hormones that stimulate the muscles and the heart to work more efficiently. It has even been suggested that the pounding of weight-bearing activities like walking (hills) and running may cause more fat burning than a seated exercise like biking, or an activity like swimming where there is no pounding at all.

So, whether you are outside enjoying the changing leaves and crisp air or on your treadmill with your iPod...keep running...because Winter is just around the corner.