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Introduction



New England is a runner, jogger, walker paradise, with many tremendously enjoyable places to exercise on-foot. If you live in or visit urban New England, this book will help you find the most irresistible outdoor exercise routes. The goal is to remove all barriers to your spending more time outdoors and building fitness while enjoying the region.

The Fun-on-Foot model is a simple one. We (my charming wife and running mate, Nola, and I) are convinced that one of the easiest and most effective ways to keep fit and control weight is to run, jog, or walk in attractive, comfortable, and interesting environments. There are too many excuses for skipping exercise, which is frequently considered a

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chore, if not downright unpleasant. We believe exercise must be easy and enjoyable if we are to regularly get off our butts.

On-foot exercise—running, jogging, or walking—is an excellent way to keep fit, but doing it in a gym does not pass the ease and enjoyment test (not to mention the budget test) with many people. *Outdoor* on-foot exercise, on the other hand, can definitely be easy and enjoyable. However, one is often unsure of where to go and what will be encountered on the way. Many people hesitate to head out on foot in unfamiliar places because of a shortage of the right information and the absence of a warm fuzzy feeling. All too often, this leads to a convenient excuse for staying indoors or in-vehicle. One must know exactly where to go for that run, jog, or walk.

The information available from websites, local publications, or hotel concierges can help, but it is often out-of-date, rose-tinted, or otherwise unreliable.

We help you get out on-foot by leading you to the very best outdoor exercise places in any location. We always try to be objective. We have a well-defined model for assessing routes, and endeavor to apply a consistent standard everywhere.

This book covers the urban areas in the northeast corner of the United States—the New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. We start from the region’s metropolis, Boston, and then fan out through the most populous parts of the rest of the region.

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The Fun-on-Foot books do not generally distinguish between running, jogging, and walking as forms of exercise. While faster exercise builds fitness and burns calories more quickly, all forms are good. On any given outing, Nola and I always start out jogging. If either of our bodies starts to protest loudly enough along the way, we have been known to fall back to walking later. However, we always finish the route. We believe that is most important.

One thing that still surprises me is the number of people who are reluctant to try the routes described in our books saying, “I can’t walk four miles, and certainly not ten!” When pressed to try, they almost always retract those preconceptions. Almost anyone without severe

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disabilities can walk four miles without pain in under an hour-and-a-half and ten miles in three hours or so.

If you are prepared to do some walking but cannot or will not run or jog, this book is still for you. You might be surprised at how rapidly your distances and times improve.

When I say walking, I mean walking at a good pace—not strolling. One of the main impediments we on-foot exercisers face is the person who strolls along at a snail's pace, blocking the sidewalk or pedestrian trail and making no attempt to get his or her blood pumping.

While slow pedestrians are a pain, there is one other entity that really is our Public Enemy Number 1: the *automobile*. The more we can tame our urge to get into that metal box, the more walking, jogging, or running we shall inevitably do. Therefore, when traveling, I do not like renting a car to drive somewhere to run an out-and-back loop from the car park. Since we can often survive and save our precious funds by not renting a car when traveling, I try to exclude automobile dependence throughout our travels in the Fun-on-Foot books.

We generally restrict our route recommendations to the four-to-ten mile range, distances that are not too long for a half-day walk and long enough for a nice run for all but the serious distance runner.

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In this book, I try to briefly introduce cities or towns to people not familiar with them. However, I give most attention to describing a set of featured routes. Such routes ideally satisfy four attributes: (1) comfort; (2) attractions; (3) convenience; and (4) a destination.

Comfort, which is the most essential attribute, has several elements, all of which are fairly obvious but worth noting. First, there should be minimal safety concerns. There should be a reasonable expectation that there will not be a nasty surprise around the next corner.¹ The number of other people around should be in your comfort zone (not too many and not too few). Underfoot conditions should also be good and there should be a minimum of encounters with vehicular traffic.

¹ See the table of violent crime statistics for New England cities at the end of this chapter. This table shows that violent crime rates in most of New England are comparatively small, with the only cities exceeding 10 violent crimes per 1,000 inhabitants being: Boston, MA; Bridgeport, CT; Springfield, MA; and Hartford, CT. The figures are from the FBI compilation for 2005.

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By *attractions* I mean that the route should be environmentally pleasant and interesting. It helps enormously if a route has points of historic or cultural interest, scenic beauty, or people activities on the day. To be interesting, variety is also highly desirable. Any route can become boring with time, so it is good to have some elements to vary each time. Also, we like to avoid straight out-and-back routes. Repeating everything you saw in the first half of a route on the way back is somehow less satisfying than having something new to see all the way. Therefore, we try to create circular routes; if necessary, we fill in part of the loop by another form of transportation.

Convenience means ease of getting to the start of a route from a city's or town's center or the areas where visitors tend to stay. Similarly, getting back from the end of a route should be easy. Given our belief that the number one enemy of on-foot fitness is the automobile, we try to avoid the need for automobiles in getting to, from, or along our routes. If other forms of transportation are required to close a loop, we look mainly to public transit, so as to minimize costs, hassle, and automobile dependence.

Destination is an important factor to many people but not everyone. Serious runners frequently gain their on-foot satisfaction from successfully meeting their own time and distance goals, and are then content to get straight back to their home or hotel for a shower. However, a lot of people struggle to get out on-foot and to complete a route of sufficient distance. Having a clear destination in mind helps make a route motivating and also reduces the temptation to quit early. If you are mentally on a mission to go somewhere enjoyable, then odds are you will make it there. Therefore, we consider it valuable to have routes end up in places where there is something interesting to see or do afterwards, should one so choose.

Another aspect of a destination that helps many people is having a good food-beverage opportunity waiting at the end. Nola and I have found this works for us. When we first started pushing ourselves to run more, it became apparent that Nola was way more likely to start and complete an eight-mile weekend jog if there was a tasty brunch at the end. I was way more likely to do the same if there was a glass of cold beer at the end.

Is it a bad thing to encourage people to run, jog, or walk to a place where they end up eating and drinking? Won't the damage done by

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the food and drinks cancel out the good done by the exercise? I think the answer to both questions is, “Not necessarily.” You will probably eat anyway. Also, on-foot exercise burns considerable calories (see the table *Estimated Calories Burned in a 5- or 10-mile Route*)². Your calorie-count will end up in much better shape than if you were not exercising at all, giving more leeway for food consumption. Of course, moderation in quantity and wise choice of nutritious foods should always be followed.

Body Weight:	110 lb. (50 Kg.)	150 lb. (68 Kg.)	190 lb. (86 Kg.)
Walking 5 miles	380	500	650
Jogging 5 miles	392	530	674
Running 5 miles	432	567	708
Walking 10 miles	760	1,000	1,300
Jogging 10 miles	783	1,060	1,348
Running 10 miles	864	1,134	1,416

Estimated Calories Burned in a 5- or 10-mile Route

Assumed speeds: Walking 3.0 mph, Jogging 5.2 mph, Running 7.5 mph

Since we believe there is a correlation between the set of people who really relish a good meal or drink and the set of people who most need more exercise, we do not feel anyone should shy away from the food-and-drink motivation angle. A little extra indulgence in the food and drink department is a perfectly reasonable inducement to exercise, especially if you only allow yourself the indulgence if you do the exercise first.

Consequently, one theme you will find in this book is the idea of ending routes near good eating and drinking establishments, where you can wind down if you so choose. We tend to look for pub-restaurants—informal places that will happily accept people in running gear and a little untidy. The eating and drinking part is, of course, entirely

² Figures computed from data in: Maria Adams, MS, MPH, RD, “The Benefits and Risks of Walking Versus Running,” HealthGate <http://www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/110324.cfm>. Note, however, that calorie burn rate depends on many factors including, but not limited to, amount of skeletal muscle, running efficiency, speed, surface type, incline, resting metabolism, level of fitness, and outside temperature. (Thanks to Ayesha Rollinson for explaining this.) Therefore, consider the figures in the table as indicative only.

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optional. Furthermore, any establishments we mention are purely suggestions from our own experience, and are not intended as exclusive endorsements.

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New England has many outstanding places to run, jog and walk. There are many scenic routes, thanks to the extensive coastline, river systems, and forested areas (the latter having special appeal in fall). There are also many historic sites that can make an outdoor outing more interesting, especially considering New England's significance as the place of the Pilgrims' first settlement and where the American Revolution started.

The climate throughout the region is also very amenable to outdoor exercise. Our general benchmark for nice outdoor exercise weather is the temperature range 40-to-80 degrees, and New England city averages fall into that range for most of the year (sometimes falling out on the cold side in January and February and out on the warm side in July). Precipitation is limited to roughly one day in three, on average, which is not a major concern.

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It would not be practical to catalog all nice outdoor routes in New England. What we have done is focus on the major centers of population and the places that most attract visitors. In these places we have sought out the routes that meet our criteria best. In some centers, we found no routes that met our criteria adequately so we omitted those centers from coverage. We have not generally targeted rural areas, so this book makes no pretence to be a New England rural hiking guide.

You might question why we dedicate four chapters to Massachusetts and only one chapter each to the other five states. Given that roughly half the population of New England lives in Massachusetts, we felt this was actually quite reasonable.

We made a point of touring New England extensively and developing our ideas on foot. We tried and rejected many routes that did not meet all criteria. A few routes that we felt were just too good to miss we have flagged as *Fun on Foot Classic Routes*.

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Featured Centers

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Some readers will likely enjoy following the exact routes we suggest. However, that is certainly not essential and we expect many of you will take up some of the ideas we present and design your own enjoyable outings around them. In describing our featured routes, we try to provide helpful information for those readers who want to vary the routes with diversions, extensions, or shortcuts.

Since you may not want to carry this book around while out on foot, we have produced a collection of images of the maps of all routes featured, and made that available for download from our website <http://www.funonfoot.com> for a nominal charge. You can then print your own copy of any map you want, and carry it with you.

If we missed your favorite route, I apologize for that. Please email us your ideas and we shall note them for use in future revisions of this book.

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One question we often get is what about bikes? Why not cycle these routes? While cycling is a fine fitness activity, we just do not find it very practical when away from home. You are faced with such problems as obtaining a bike, leaving it somewhere safe when you want to go into a restaurant or shop, storing it in the evening, and getting it onto public transit (if that is even possible). Furthermore, we find that many attractive places that are ideal for running or walking do not permit cycling or are just not suitable for cycling. Therefore, while some of our routes use bicycle paths, we do not limit our routes to paths suitable for cycling and, as a consequence, can frequently offer on-footers a superior experience.

Inline skating is closer to on-foot exercise. Some but not all of our routes are suitable for inline skating. In each route description, we try to assess the extent to which inline skating will work.

On that note, let us conclude the lead-in and embark on our tour, focusing on urban on-foot routes with the comfort/attractions/convenience/destination formula as our guiding light. We shall start in Boston, the region's metropolis, and work outward through Massachusetts and then the other New England states.

Our main message: Get out on foot, get fit, see the best of New England, and—most importantly—have fun!

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City	Population in 2005	Violent Crimes per 1,000 Inhabitants
<i>Massachusetts</i>		
Boston	567,589	13.17
Cambridge	100,492	4.92
Concord	16,872	1.19
Edgartown	3,929	1.53
Gloucester	30,732	1.53
Lexington	30,335	0.40
Marblehead	20,315	0.10
Nahant	3,610	5.54
Nantucket	10,096	4.06
Newton	83,570	1.36
Provincetown	3,440	6.10
Quincy	89,661	3.78
Salem	41,796	2.34
Springfield	151,670	17.74
Swampscott	14,393	0.49
Waltham	59,068	1.30
Watertown	32,513	1.91
Worcester	175,479	7.92
<i>Connecticut</i>		
Bridgeport	140,177	10.76
Hartford	125,086	11.53
Stamford	120,456	2.95
<i>Maine</i>		
Augusta	18,691	2.19
Portland	64,111	4.16
South Portland	23,589	1.61
<i>New Hampshire</i>		
Concord	42,685	1.62
Lebanon	12,757	1.88
Manchester	110,188	2.80
Nashua	88,113	1.86
Portsmouth	20,953	1.53
<i>Rhode Island</i>		
Newport	25,773	4.27
Providence	177,392	6.80
<i>Vermont</i>		
South Burlington	16,504	1.21

Violent Crime Indexes for New England Cities in 2005

Source: FBI *Crime in the United States Report 2005*

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.....	Featured on-foot route
.....	Other on-foot routes
————	Street
— — — —	Major highway (No pedestrians)
	MBTA subway or commuter rail station
	Other public transit (Bus, rail, or subway)
	Public restroom
	Public restroom (Seasonal)
	Drinking water
	Drinking water (Seasonal)
	Casual eating/drinking establishment suitable for terminating an athletic route
	Point of interest
	Trail parking

Key to Map Symbols