

Ready to run

Resources available for Bellin Run participants

By Janelle Fisher
City Pages Editor

There's less than a month to go before the Bellin Run 10K and 5K and training is well underway for many who plan to participate.

If you plan to participate and haven't started training yet, have no fear! Bellin has several resources available to help you get ready to run.

Local runners and walkers have had the opportunity to participate in free training runs and walks put on by Bellin since the end of March.

Nate Vandervest, a running coach with Bellin, said those training runs are a resource Bellin has offered for many years and a great way to build confidence ahead of the big event.

"We've been offering training runs now for probably I think this year would be our 14th year," he said. "We started back in 2010 offering training runs. They've been really well attended and what we get is a wide range of people. Now, we call them training runs but they're for runners, walkers, all ability levels. What's really been fun to see with the training runs is how people grow in the 11 weeks leading up [to the 10K]. We've had people come in that literally said 'hi, I shouldn't be here' and I'm like 'you're fine, let's just go for a one-mile walk today.' And by the time they get to week 10, they went from they weren't sure that they could complete a 10K to now they have a timed goal of running. It's really, really neat to see that progression."



▲ Bellin offers regular training runs and walks in the weeks leading up to the big event to aid participants in their training process. Submitted photos

Whether you're training in a group or on your own, Vandervest said the most important thing you can do when training is make sure you're doing it on a regular basis.

"The first thing in training is consistency," he said. "As long as you can get out the door a handful of times a week, you'll continue to progress and likely hit the goal that you had set... When it comes to the training piece, being able to just get out the door and designate some time to yourself to better your health and fitness becomes the key component."

Health and fitness, Vandervest said, has always been at the forefront of the Bellin Run.

"The first things that come to mind are the cardiovascular benefits of this," he said. "The Bellin Run was started as the Bellin Heart Run way back 47 years ago. That's actually how it got started — to fundraise to build a heart center onto the hospital. The cardiovascular piece goes into just the whole healthy living aspect of it. There's the physiological piece of the endorphins and the hormones that can release due to the movement and the activity. There's the joint aspect of it. We need movement to lubricate our joints and running is a great way of doing it. All your joints and lower body are in play, and not to mention shoulders and upper body too with the arm swing... Obviously people are using it as a way to burn calories and to help with weight loss. If they can take a few pounds off, that in effect helps with joints as well... We want [people] to be healthy. We want them to be moving, and if signing up for a 5K or a 10K is the catalyst to get them into activity, then let's do it. We're all for that."

Vandervest said that even though someone might be able to show up on race day and run a 5K or a 10K with no training, it's still better to put the time into properly preparing for a big run and prevent possible injuries.

"Our body is an amazing machine and it can do a lot of things that we probably don't think it should do, or could do," he said. "So you could show up on race day and you could run a 5K or 10K, but there's no guarantee that that's going to feel good. There's no guarantee you're going to feel good after, and there's just a higher risk of an injury occurring if you're not ready for that type of activity... The people that do the training and do it properly, usually are

healthier and reduce their chances of injuries along the way, not only in the training phase, but also when they get to the race day."


Training before the big race helps prevent injuries, but sometimes injuries occur anyway — sometimes even during training.

If injuries do occur, Vandervest said Bellin's walk-in injury clinic is there to help.

"One thing we have in place at Bellin to help runners is we have the walk-in injury clinic at our Titledown facility," he said. "That gets used a bunch. It's free. It's for anybody. You can just walk in off the street and say 'hey, my big toe hurts. What am I supposed to do about this?' And they will help you out. They're athletic trainers. Nine out of ten people that come in, it's 'do this stretch, ice it for a couple days and you'll be better.' But for that one person that there's something fairly major going on, that could make a world of difference in speeding up their care and getting them recovered quicker, so our runners use that all the time."

Vandervest said that in addition to the walk-in clinic, Bellin also offers a number of other services to runners.

"When it comes to resources, Bellin probably has the most resources out of any place in the region," he said. "We have a phenomenal staff when it comes to doctors, physical therapists and athletic trainers that can help people with a diagnosis of an injury or what's going on. To get them through rehab and feeling better, we have strength coaches and personal trainers that can help on the strength and flexibility end of it. And then one of our main pieces is our running assessment. We have a running assessment that is completely state of the art. For people that really want to dive deep into how to perform better or how to minimize any risk of injury, that's an excellent place to start."

You can find additional details on all these services and more at bellinrun.com/training. 



▲ At its Titledown facility, Bellin offers a walk-in injury clinic where runners can be assessed and get on the road to recovery before a minor injury becomes something bigger.

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▲ For runners who want to learn how to perform better or minimize their risk of injury, Bellin offers state-of-the-art running assessments.