

# Get your exercise regimen on track

**Andrea Bishop** talks to the experts about burning fat and getting fit.

**W**hen it comes to our exercise expectations, running ticks so many boxes.

Running Coach Melbourne owner Mark Howard has been involved in athletics for 19 years and is accredited with Athletics Australia as a "level 3" coach.

"Running enables you to get fit quickly, lose weight, compete in a variety of events and it's cheap," he says. "Melbourne has some of the best places to run including synthetic running tracks, the Tan (Royal Botanic Gardens) and Albert Park Lake."

Mr Howard recommends interval training for losing weight, improving fun run times or marathon stamina.

"You get good results when you start incorporating intervals and speed training on a track. It gets your heart rate up, puts your body under pressure and gives you that extra burst of energy at the end of a race. Generally, you need one or two days a week on



track work and one or two slow, long runs. Sprint work is also the most efficient way of burning fat."

A thorough warm up is essential before interval training. Mr Howard advises "a slow jog around the track, stretch all the main muscle groups, and then complete about four run-throughs before starting your intervals." Run-throughs are 60 to 70-metre runs at 50 per cent

speed, then at 60, 70 and 80 per cent. Intervals lengths vary from 100 to 500 metres depending on your level of fitness. Run at 70 to 80 per cent of your fastest speed, slow jog or walk for the next 100 to 500 metres then run again at 70 to 80 per cent. Repeat this four or five times. "Drink plenty of water before, during and after your session," he says.

Mr Howard believes that

technique is an essential component to running. "I advise seeing an Athletics Australia coach to get a visual evaluation and teach you how to run correctly."

Running can be enjoyed on so many levels. David Owen started long distance running at 12 years of age after a teacher noticed his potential.

He went on to compete at a

national level, before taking up triathlons and eventually becoming a professional duathlete. After racing in 15 Ironman competitions, he now runs a "recreational" 80 kilometres a week.

"Being a parent and a teacher can be fairly demanding. I find that running centres me, clears my mind and gives me a good start to the day," he says.

"I don't mind the cold mornings because although it's initially hard to get out, once you're there it activates all your senses.

"If I don't train I feel a bit guilty and now I'm older if I don't exercise regularly my weight increases quickly. I like to run to keep that in check and feel healthy.

"On holidays, I always try and fit in a run as it's a different way of interacting with what's around."

Mr Owen tries to maintain a base fitness level so he can simply step up the training when he decides to compete.

He trains alone on the hilly gravel roads near his home, but when he "gets serious" he seeks out groups to train with "to push me to that next level".