

## THE COOL DOWN

While the warm-up is your best friend for maximum performance and injury prevention, the cool-down is the biggest factor in speeding recovery and reducing muscle soreness.

The worst thing you can do after a hard run or a race is to stand still or sit down, especially after that sprint finish! Throughout the run, large volumes of blood have been shunted to your legs, and the action of your leg muscles has been helping to pump the blood back to your heart. If you just stop, the pump action stops as well, and blood pools in the veins in your legs. This allows the waste products generated by running to remain in your muscles for a long time. It is also a risk to your heart to stop moving suddenly after intense exertion.

To cool down, jog slowly for about 5-10 minutes, slow to a walk and then stretch. If you need to recover from a race first, lie down (preferably with your legs up), and then jog when you can. The aim is to get your heart rate back below about 60% of maximum, and your breathing back to normal.

Wearing compression clothing such as Skins for a few hours can also help recovery, especially after a very hard or long race.