

WASHINGTON COUNTY ROAD RUNNERS CLUB

ESTABLISHED 1974

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VISIT US ON THE WEB @WWW.WCRRRC.COM

NEWS AND NOTES

We are now coming into the final third of the racing season. There are still many races scheduled to qualify for the Short Distance Grand Prix. Check the calendar for upcoming races. And make sure that you check the race results to be sure the races you have run were counted. Any questions on the listings, make sure to get in touch with Grace to give any updates to races that were missed.

Anyone who has run the Great Race 5K and/or 10K this year, please turn your times into Grace if you want it counted for the Grand Prix.

UPCOMING RACES

As the weather starts to warm, so are the number of races to be run. Here is a sample of races we have found that might interest one and all. And remember that any club GP races will be marked with an *

10/10 – Riverview 5K – Pittsburgh
10/18 – LeCom Costume Caper 5K – Pittsburgh Strip District
10/18 – Auggies Run/Walk 5K – Wheeling WV
10/18 – Shades of Death 10 Miler – Avella, PA
10/18 – Lions Club 5K – Steubenville, OH
10/18 – Buffalo Creek Half Marathon – Cabot. PA
10/19 – GCXC Trick or Trot 5K – Murraysville, PA
10/19 – South Park 5K – South Park TWP, PA
10/25 – *Jack-O-Lantern Jog 5K – Canonsburg, PA
10/25 – Wilkins TWP 5K – Pittsburgh, PA
11/1 – North Ridge Nightmare – Allison Park

11/8 – Let's Play 5K – Wheeling, WV
11/8 – Prodigy Wellness 5K – New Martinsville, WV
11/8 – Run to Remember 5K – Schenley Oval – Pittsburgh, PA
11/9 – EQT 10Mile/10K – Pittsburgh, PA
11/9 – Operation Troop Veterans Day 5K – Allison Park, PA
11/16 – Settlers Park 50K/25K/8Mile – Oakdale, PA

Racing with WCRRC

We have had a plethora of club races for September. Here is just a sample of the results.

Labor Day 5K

The first of September brought out 220 runners to the annual Labor Day race in Washington, PA. The weatherman cooperated, giving the runners a nice morning to run through the park and street. Devin Junko was the first overall finisher in a good time of 16:28.

Our first male finisher in the run was Greg Mussitsch, who crossed the line in 20:12, and Ann McCormick was our first female finisher in 26:01. And in the walk category, Sister Kevin Berdis was our first female finisher in 46:04, with Bill McCormick and Blake Headen coming through in a dead heat of 52:02.

We also had the Little Great Race, Tunnels to Towers in Canonsburg, the Boston Harvest 5K and 10K, The Barnesville Pumpkin 5K and the Great Race 5K/10K. Congratulations to all who finished these races.

To report Grand Prix times, call Tom Trettel (724) 229-0201 or e-mail trettelt@comcast.net. Or Grace Goffi (724-554-0081) at gracegoffi@verizon.net. For newsletter information or to submit an article contact Bob Pikelis e-mail r.pikelis@comcast.net.

Thinking thoughtless thoughts thoughtfully

Mickey Hornack

* 2025 LRG from hip pocket notebook:

- streets were not bad. No cave ins during race
- Stillrs theme shirts n towels very nice. Should help get Stillrs a few wins...hmmmm
- nice crowd...tho easy to pick out our BàLàke in any crowd
- My 1 and only race of the year! I know "who cares!"

* Check me on this- left the local grocery store and fumbled for keys. I noticed 3 of 4 who drove past while I fumbled were munching out on some current purchase! Seeing people 1 hand on wheel one at mouth. Funny.

* FYI: spot of toothpaste is enuff, covering whole toothbrush is useless! From Mr. Ed

* The Mrs. reminded me of my good luck, only 10% of the world is left-handed and I married one.

* Things to get rid of in 2025

- Clothes you haven't worn in a year
- Broken gadgets collecting dust
- Kitchen gadgets you never use
- Old receipts n papers

Hold on now our house would be borderline empty!!

* Add grocery store; after fumbling keys I located them near sugar cookies. Make 4 of 5 with 1 hand on wheel n 1 in la boca!!

* Color commentators on High School, College n Pro football games describe what happened on previous play. But who understands them?

* Great Race 2025--great day!! For all who participated congrats!

* Our man Bo Pikelis went to Stillrs game in Ireland. That ain't the big deal while in local pub there he jammed on a guitar with a drum guy - stone cold audience call up on stage grab geetar n rock. Who freakin knew!

* Never eat fresh cut French fries + ketchup with a white shirt on.

* Is there algebra in real life?

* 🙌❤️ U. To all WCRRC

How to future-proof your knees

Our knees are arguably one of our most important joints, but also one of the most poorly looked after. Science tells us putting in some work now pays dividends later.

You might start to notice it as early as your thirties: the dull knee aches when the weather changes, the morning stiffness when you get out of bed. You might think twice about crouching down. They're all unwelcome signs that your knees are not quite the well-oiled joints they once were.

This will be especially true if you have a physical job or play a lot of sport. But it can be exacerbated by other things too. Weight gain, underlying autoimmune conditions and genetics can all accelerate the onset of knee problems.

But it's also not surprising that our knees take a battering. Research indicates that just by walking, the force on your knees is already equivalent to one and a half times your body weight.

Five minutes to stay young

From reading a page of a book every day to knee-strengthening exercises, this series looks at simple lifestyle changes you can make now that will have a big impact on how you age. The best part? They all take around five minutes.

After back pain, throbbing aches in the knees are the most commonly cited musculoskeletal ailment in older adults, impacting everything from mobility to quality of life.

"The knee is one of the most complex joints in the entire body," says Anikar Chhabra, an orthopaedic surgeon and chair of sports medicine at Mayo Clinic in

Phoenix, US. "It bears the full load of our body weight with every step we take."

There are assorted reasons for focusing on your knee health that can bring benefits both now and later in life, and a number of simple steps which we can all take to stay as mobile as possible for longer.

Our knees rely heavily on four surrounding muscle groups – the hamstrings, the gluteal muscles, the quadriceps muscles and the calf muscles. These support the knee and provide it with the stability and shock absorption capability that enables it to function. "When these muscles aren't interacting and working together, that's when you put more stress on the joint," says Chhabra. "That's what leads to pain."

Research has shown that strengthening these muscle groups through exercise can avoid degeneration of the cartilage in the knee which leads to osteoarthritis. This can either delay or prevent the need for knee replacement surgery. Some studies also indicate that keeping these muscles strong can decrease the load on the joint and reduce pain in people in the early stages of osteoarthritis.

Alexis Colvin, a professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, US, explains that exercise can also improve the health of the cartilage cells themselves.

"There's like a motor oil on the inside of our knees called synovial fluid," she says. "Exercise helps stimulate production of it, which decreases stiffness and inflammation, and helps with lubricating the cartilage surface."

Some exercises can also strengthen the knee bones themselves, reducing the risk of osteoporosis or bone thinning around the knee joint in later life. Knee strengthening can be particularly important for older

adults, says Chhabra, as improving the stability of the surrounding muscles can reduce the risk of falls. But knee exercises can have other surprising and often overlooked benefits such as improving proprioception – the subconscious awareness of where our body parts are in space. This "sixth sense" can help to improve our mobility and balance.

"Knee exercises help with this awareness," says Chhabra. "It's really getting your mind to connect to your knee which again will decrease risk of falls." Colvin says that it is never too early to begin working on strengthening your knees. While most research into the benefits of knee strengthening is done in older adults with existing osteoarthritis, studies carried out in adolescents who play a lot of sport have found that knee strengthening exercises, even at this young age, can play a big role in reducing risk of injury. For the rest of us, Colvin personally says she recommends beginning in your thirties.

"That's when you start to very slowly lose muscle mass and bone density so that would be a good time to focus on it, if you don't have strengthening as part of your regular exercise programme," she says.

So what kinds of exercises should we be doing? To keep the important muscle groups strong, Chhabra suggests spending 15 minutes a day, three to four times per week on various knee exercises listed below, all of which you can do at home without the need for any specialised equipment. He also recommends speaking to a physio or a strength coach first to ensure you are performing them correctly.

Here are five quick, home-based exercises which will all help. For all of these exercises, as a general rule, Colvin suggests starting with two sets of 10 reps, which means performing the exercise 10 times, resting, and then performing it another 10 times.

Step-ups

All this one requires is either a stair or a low step. Leading with your preferred foot, simply push up until both feet are on the step, and then back down again. When stepping up, alternate your lead foot each time. "It's low impact because it's just body weight," says Chhabra. "You're building both your hamstrings and most importantly the quadriceps muscles in your front thighs. The quadriceps are the key to the knee joint in some ways, because when they're weaker, the kneecap sits closer in, and you get more rubbing and pain." Weaker quadriceps also put more stress onto the joint where the kneecap glides over the thigh bone, causing pain and clicking.

Squats

Chhabra tells his patients that they should be doing squats every morning and every evening before they go to bed. "This works both the quads and the gluteal muscles, which are really critical to taking the stress off the knee joint," he says. "It also helps with proprioception. Repeated body weight squats are very beneficial."

For people who spend prolonged period of time sitting down, short bursts of 15 squats every 30 minutes have also been shown to encourage the body to produce the proteins needed to build muscle and strength.

Research shows that squatting can improve bone mineral density and reduce risk of falls in later life. While it's not known whether they actively prevent the onset of arthritis, they've been shown to help stabilise the knee, reduce pain and improve quality of life in arthritis patients.

Chhabra has more concerns about deep squats, where you sink past a 90-degree bend in your knees, although the research community is split on the issue. Some studies show that provided the correct

technique is used, there is no increased risk of injury. However, if done incorrectly, Chhabra says that they may worsen knee problems.

"This [can] put a lot of stress on the patellofemoral joint [the joint between the kneecap and the thigh bone] which causes more pain," says Chhabra.

Straight leg raises

This is another simple exercise for strengthening the quadricep muscle. Lying on your back, bend the knee of one leg with your foot flat, while keeping the other leg straight and raising it a few inches off the ground, holding for a few seconds, before slowly lowering.

Research has shown that straight leg raises can improve the strength of the knee muscles and protect the joint, as well as reducing risk of exercise-related injuries when done as a warm-up exercise.

"The key with this exercise is that you want to contract our quadriceps muscle first," says Colvin. "So while you're straightening and raising the leg, you're engaging the muscles that you're targeting."

Calf raises

Your calf muscle consists of two different muscles, the gastrocnemius and the soleus. Strengthening these is thought to be helpful in relieving stress from the part of the knee joint that's below the kneecap.

Calf raises are one of the best ways of strengthening these muscles, according to Chhabra. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward, and raise your heels slowly while keeping your knees extended, before holding for one second on the tips of your toes and then lowering again.

Calf raises help to improve the muscle balance around your knee so that they all work well together, he says.

"If one muscle is weak, you're going to have an imbalance which will put more strain on the knee."

Getting up from a chair

This one works the core muscles deep within in your abdomen, back and pelvis. While they might not appear to be directly related, Colvin says that this large muscle group plays a somewhat underrated role in maintaining knee health. "Your core muscles really go from your mid chest down to your knee," she says.

Simply sit in a chair and repeatedly stand up and sit back down again without holding onto anything.

"It's definitely harder than you expect," says Colvin.

"And you can also make it harder either by getting a lower chair or doing it one-legged."

If you're new to doing these kinds of exercises, Chhabra recommends booking an initial appointment with either a physio or a strength and conditioning coach to first practice each one with them, to ensure you're doing it correctly, and determine exactly how many sets and repetitions are appropriate for you.

"As you get stronger, you can certainly add weight, by doing some of these exercises wearing weighted vests, or holding weights if you have access to them, but that also depends on your age and your strength level," he says. "As we get older, body weight alone tends to be best. I also tell patients to monitor worsening pain.

Muscle soreness is normal, but worsening pain in the joints is not good, as that indicates something going on inside the knee that needs to be seen by a doctor."

Overall, taking the time to do knee strengthening exercises serves as a valuable investment in your long-term health. We might take our knees for granted, but they let us walk, skip, jump and run, until they fail. As Baz Luhrmann wisely advised in the song Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen): "Be kind to your knees. You'll miss them when they're gone."

5TH ANNUAL

SOUTH PARK 5K

OCT. 19TH 2025



#GETFITGIVEBACK

OVER \$500 IN PRIZES



Greater Pittsburgh
**community
food bank**



SOUTH_PARK5K

2025 GRAND PRIX UPDATE

The GP series is in the final stretch.
Please check your races/times and
report any discrepancies to Grace or
Tom ASAP.

LONG DISTANCE GP (10/3/25)

1. Sarah Donley	8	45:49
2. Roxanne Wray	1	48:31
3. Tom Carter	2	49:25
4. Carl Kondrach	7	49:43
5. Kelley Murdock	2	50:17
6. Steve Chabala	1	50:18
7. Rich Durbin	1	51:03
8. John Titus	2	51:41
9. Shane Brunazzi	1	1:06:44

GRAND PRIX (10/3/25)

1. Ann McCormick	7	31:58
2. Mike Romzy	5	35:12
3. Greg Mussitsch	4	38:28
4. Amy Ference	6	39:35
5. Rich Sandala	15	40:11
6. Rich Durbin	2	41:26
7. Bob Pikelis	2	41:49
8. Jaminique Milliren	1	42:00
9. Dave Dziemski	6	43:04
10. Donna Patrino	2	43:55
11. Kelley Murdock	7	44:06
12. Steve Chabala	6	44:52
13. Deb Calmbacher	2	44:59
14. George Dziemski	7	45:16
15. Carl Kondrach	3	46:15
16. Sarah Donley	5	47:15
17. Roxanne Wray	4	48:16
18. Gary Chabala	4	49:36
19. Gary Lorenzi	7	49:47
20. Shane Brunazzi	3	50:05
21. David Bess	1	50:27
22. Tom Carter	3	50:53
23. Ashlyn Brunazzi	2	51:32
24. Pat Calmbacher	4	51:50
25. Mary Krett	3	54:07

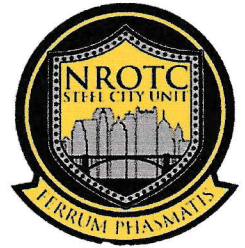
WALKING GRAND PRIX(10/3/25)

1. Sister Kevin Berdis	5	43:37
2. Carl Kondrach	2	51:13
3. Sarah Donley	4	1:01:39
4. Mickey Hornack	1	1:04:01
5. Kelley Murdock	4	1:04:10
6. Bill McCormick	7	1:09:20
7. Dave Byers	2	1:11:39
8. Blake Headen	7	1:23:26

RUNNING SHORTS

- At 77, Jeannie Rice completed all 7 Abbott World Marathon Majors beating every man in her age group by over 22 minutes.
- Just two weeks of drinking beetroot juice significantly lowered blood pressure.
- Apple has received approval for a new Apple watch that detects hypertension through heart rate sensor data, offering a cuff-free method of blood pressure monitoring.
- A new study suggests exercise may lower breast cancer recurrence by prompting muscles to release cancer fighting substances.
- The UK government will ban high caffeine energy drinks to under 16's citing risks to children's health.
- US fitness tracker sales surged 88% with smart rings accounting for 75% of new revenue.
- Boston Marathon will have a field of 24,362 runners in 2026, accepting 73% of the largest application ever. Nearly 9,000 runners were turned away.

5K RUN TO REMEMBER



LtCol Raible

Where:
Schenley Oval

When:
Saturday November 8

Cost:
\$29 per person

Time: 9am

Registration:



Steel City NROTC 3rd Annual

WCRRRC AT THE RACES

FOREVER YOUNG 5K

Shane Brunazzi 27:01

SCOTTDALE 5K

Rich Sandala 24:56(A-1)

SCOTTDALE 10K

Greg Mussitsch 47:16(A-1)

BOSTON HARVEST 10K

Greg Lorenzi 1:07:59(A-1)

BOSTON HARVEST 5K

Carl Kondrach 25:21(M-1)

Rich Sandala 25:30(A-1)

Kelley Murdock 25:37(OA-3)

Shane Brunazzi 26:58(A-1)

Dave Dzieminski 28:13(A-1)

Ashlyn Brunazzi 28:26(A-1)

George Dzieminski 28:58(A-1)

Amy Ference 31:22(A-1)

B. HARVEST 5K WALK

Sarah Donley 37:36(OA-1)

911 2K WALK

Carl Kondrach 23:06(OA-1)

TUNNEL TO TOWERS 5K

Mike Romzy 22:02(A-1)

KID'S CHANCE 5K

Pat Calmbacher 30:51(A-1)

Deb Calmbacher 36:44(A-1)

MONROEVILLE 5K

Rich Sandala 25:04(A-2)

J. FABIS HERO 5K

Greg Mussitsch 21:50(A-1)

Rich Sandala 25:47(A-2)

G. Dzieminski 29:40

Dave Dzieminski 30:09(A-1)

Amy Ference 31:49(A-1)

Gary Lorenzi 32:24

STEELERS 5K

Mike Romzy 21:00

Dave Dzieminski 27:08

Loris Connolly 34:05

RISE/SHINE 5K WALK

Sarah Donley 31:19(OA-1)

Cqrl Kondrach 31:20(OA-1)

Kelley Murdock 32:56(A-1)

Blake Headen 49:22(A-2)

LITTLE GREAT RACE 5K

Greg Mussitsch 21:22(A-1)

Rich Sandala 25:31(A-2)

Dave Dzieminski 27:13(A-1)

Ann McCormick 27:16(A-1)

G. Dzieminski 27:57

Amy Ference 29:46(A-3)

Gary Lorenzi 31:32

Loris Connolly 31:33

Pat Calmbacher 34:13

Mary Krett 46:33

LGR 5K WALK

Carl Kondrach 33:13(OA-1)

Kelley Murdock 36:59(OA-1)

S. Kevin Berdis 44:08

Kathy Starkey 47:43

Bill McCormick 47:45(A-2)

Mickey Hornack 47:53

Blake Headen 47:56(A-3)

CHEESE CHASE 5K

Kelley Murdock 25:41(A-1)

COPS/COOKIES 5K

Kelley Murdock 25:31

GREAT RACE 5K

Mike Romzy 20:06

Rich Sandala 24:23

GREAT RACE 10K

Dave Byers 1:04:06

Gary Lorenzi 1:05:26

PUMPKIN CHASE 5K

Pat Calmbacher 31:07(A-1)

Deb Calmbacher 34:05(A-3)

PUMPKIN CHASE 5K

WALK

Carl Kondrach 28:24(OA-2)

Sarah Donley 34:23(OA-3)

S. Kevin Berdis 44:15

Blake Headen 47:20

WAYNESBURG 5K

Kelley Murdock 36:36(OA-1)

PENGUINS 6.6K

Mike Romzy 29:27(A-2)

Rich Sandala 33:32

Kelley Murdock 35:22

BARKTOBER 5K

Kelley Murdock 26:03

BRYON MARTINI 5K

G. Dzieminski 28:04(A-2)

Amy Ference 29:21(A-3)

Loris Connolly 31:05

DOWNTOWN DASH 5K W

Blake Headen 57:55

WCRRC "One of the areas oldest and largest running clubs"
Established 1974

(Please check one)

New Member _____ Renewal _____

(Please print)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Date of Birth ____/____/____ Age ____ Sex ____

Email Address _____

Additional family members _____

Years Running or Walking? _____ Willing to help at club events? _____

Yearly Dues: \$15.00

Mail application and payment to: WCRRC
1427 Willowbrook Drive
Washington, PA 15301

All information given is for the club's records and will be kept confidential.

