

Honest Mud Run Training Tips & Tricks from Experienced Mud Runners

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If you're [preparing for your first mud run](#), then you'll definitely find the following tips from experienced mud runners helpful.

I mean, who knows what you can expect better than someone who's actually participated in a mud run ...or two or three or four?

That's right, most mud runners say after their first mud run they immediately wanted to do more of them — which is partly why mud runs are so popular these days.



Most newbies like how mud runs are a great way to stay active, without having to be so competitive.

Here are some little-known secrets that will help you prepare — and have more fun — at your very first mud run...

Race Day – What To Wear

“Wear **nothing with pockets**. Imagine all the mud getting into your pockets and dragging you down? Not pretty. — [Tara](#), And She Runs

“Consider wearing capris and/or compression socks. I kind of wish that I had worn **longer pants**. My knees and legs got scraped up when crawling through or over some of the obstacles. — [Christine](#), Love Life Surf



“Wear **running tights to protect your skin** from sharp corners and splinters and your knees from thorns, rocks, and thistles. For your upper body, wear a fast wicking, close fitting t-shirt or a yoga top. The last thing you want is for an article of clothing to get caught up in an obstacle or snagged on barbed wire. — [Kelly](#), Stack Fitness

“**Don't wear goggles or sunglasses**, Contact lenses can be a pain when mud gets in your eyes. It is a good idea to have rewetting drops and back up lenses. Rewetting drops work better than saline and you can get the preservative free kind that come in single dose packets. Your doc may have samples. — [Paul](#), Irvine Lake Mud Run

“Wear **tight [short] socks**. Again, not so tight they hurt, but tight enough that they won't fill with mud and sag, leaving one or both legs a few pounds heavier. Yes, I know this from experience. — [Tanna](#), Run Mud Run

“ *DO NOT WEAR COTTON! Make sure to wear something light. **Cotton will get heavy and stretch.** You might even lose your shorts in the mud – no one wants that. — [Beef](#), AskBeef*

“ ***Wear a unitard** no matter how much your loved ones tease you about hauling out your 90’s outfit. You will keep mud from running down your waist or pulling your pants down with caked-on mud weight. I threw my Zensah t-shirt over my tank top unitard for sun protection and so I would not have to hold my abs in all day in that tight uni! — [Kymberly](#), Fun And Fit*

“ *Nothing new on race day! This includes costumes. Yes, costumes are fun – but if you decide to wear one, you should “**train**” **at least a small handful of times while wearing it.** There’s nothing worse than getting out on the course and realizing that your costume is just not working for you.— [Jenny](#), Mud Running Mama*

“ ***Don’t wear a mask.** Costumes are great and fun and add another dimension to the race. But masks are not a goo idea. They are hot and sweaty and impair your vision. — [Nacho Libre](#), Active Races*

“ *The one **downside to wearing all black** is that you won’t stand out at all and might not get that many pictures taken of you by the professional photographer at the race. That may or may not matter to you but just thought I would throw that out. It might also be a lot harder for you to find yourself in the pictures. —[Kristina](#), Racing And Saving Mama*

“ *I highly recommend that you **don’t wear any form of boots or shoes with cleats.** During these races you will be required to slide and contort your body. Cleats can have a damaging effect on your knees if you shift weight improperly. — [MudRunAdmin](#), Mud Run Training HQ*



“ Consider wearing close grip **gardening gloves for slippery ropes** and muddy obstacles. — [Kelly](#), Stack Fitness

“ **Putting things in your pocket** has a tendency to pull on your pants in addition to the running action causing it to swing back and forth. Backpacks end up getting caught up in barb wire obstacles **and don't get me started on the fanny pack!** — [MudRunAdmin](#), Mud Run Training HQ

“ **Wear underwear or compression shorts** under your running pants/shirts. I know a lot of runners don't like to wear underwear on race day, but trust me, wear them for a mud run. — [Jenny](#), Mud Running Mama

“ Men – tie your pants. My husband had shorts on but didn't tie the drawstring tight. When he got out of the first mud pit, his pants stayed behind. So **tie those pants!** — [Tina](#), Life Without Pink

“ Opt for a **headband instead of a hat**. A headband will keep dirt and mud out of your eyes. If you elect to wear a hat, make it a formfitting beanie type rather than a baseball cap. — [Kelly](#), Stack Fitness

“ If you wear **any rings**, and they slip off even semi-easily, do not wear them on the run. Can you imagine losing your wedding ring in a 10' x 20' mud pit? Yeah. Plus,

if you have a fancy pants ring, it can be annoying to clean off later. Better safe than sorry. I have worn my ring in my runs, but I usually freak out halfway through and start obsessively checking to make sure it's still there. — [Tanna](#), Run Mud Run

“ **Leave your pace watch at home.** For those of you that use a Garmin or other pacing device, you probably could just leave it at home. For one thing you don't need to drench those devices in water or mud, but the real reason is that the pace is so all over the place. — [Joe](#), Running Advice

“ *I ran 2 mud runs in regular dark clothing that wouldn't show mud stains. However, I realized we were missing out on some of the fun. Our before and after pictures **weren't nearly as impressive with our dark clothing.** The most fun I have had is when I have dressed up. Last year, I ran in a wedding dress and never had so much fun. Last weekend, I ran as a bridesmaid while my friend donned the wedding dress (and actually got married). Those are the moments that make me so thankful to be a runner. I have seen Oompa Loompas, Teletubbies, Ghostbusters, men in skirts....you name it, all in the name of fun. — [Lisa](#), The Runiverse*

Race Day – What To Do



“ If you want to keep your shoes on when your feet get stuck in the mud, **lift with your toes, not your heels.** — [Kymberly](#), Fun And Fit

“ **Duck walk instead of crawl.** During the race, if you are small enough, go through tunnels etc. on your feet instead of your knees. Those obstacles are usually corrugated metal or they have gravel and they can be murder on your knees. — [Lisa](#), The Runiverse

“ **Pace yourself.** After going over obstacles or pulling yourself through mud, it tires you out. Plus, we ran up a ton of rocky hills and windy paths. Take your time and don't try to over-do it, unless of course you are trying to win, which is plain old crazy! — [Tina](#), Life Without Pink

“ Sometimes it's okay to sit back and **observe how others tackle an obstacle** before you just leap right in to it. — [Jenny](#), Mud Running Mama

“ All of the obstacles at Pretty Muddy gave you **the option of walking around, no questions asked.** Going up and over a net not your thing? You could just go around it, no big deal. It's also a safety thing. If you're injured, not prepared, scared, etc. don't do it. No one is there forcing you to do every single obstacle. If it doesn't feel right, don't force it. — [Steph](#), 321 Delish

“ *Travel wisely. It's safe to say that most mud runs are not taking place in your neighborhood. I had to drive an hour towards West Virginia and got completely lost. Leave early, **have a GPS with you, or print several different maps.** Most likely you'll be in an area where there's poor reception too. — [Grace](#), Lean Girls Club*

“ *Tie your shoes nice and tight. **Some people might tell you to use duct tape. Don't.** My first mud run provided duct tape at the starting line, so we assumed it was the best thing to do. All of us ended up ripping it off by the end of the race. It works well for a while and then the end starts peeling off and dragging or flopping about. Very annoying. Yes, sometimes mud can pull your shoe right off, but not often. — [Lisa](#), The Runiverse*



“ ***Don't run through the middle of the creeks or mud pits** where they can get deep; run along the shallowest sides (edges) of the water obstacles. There may be unexpected divots and holes in the creeks and in the mud pits; proceed with caution. — [Paul](#), Irvine Lake Mud Run*

“ *It's ok to **walk when you need to.** The running community is very supportive and not judgmental. The bravery is just showing up. You will not be the only one who walks. Be in it to finish! You don't have to win it! No one is thinking that this will be your fastest race ever. — [Nedra](#), Adventure Mom*

“ **Tie you hair back.** Kind of obvious but you don't want to have lots of hair dangling around your face and full of mud. — [Christine](#), Love Life Surf

“ **Skip the shower.** I know this sounds gross, but there is usually a very long line for COLD showers. Bring towels in your car and wait until you get home to take a nice long, hot shower. A great tip is to put a jug of water in your car. When you get done, it should have warmed up nicely and you can give yourself a little sponge bath—enough to get you by until you get home. An empty, rinsed out laundry detergent bottle works great. — [Lisa](#), The Runiverse

“ It would've been a little better if the weather was warmer, but it wasn't TOO cold. The **worst part was rinsing off with the ice cold water** in the rinsing tent afterwards. — [Katie](#), One Mile A Day

“ Don't duct tape your shoes, just double-tie your laces and **TUCK THEM IN**. You don't need to duct tape your shoes onto your feet, but you may if you want to look like the serious adventure runner! If you duct tape your shoes, people have the tendency to tape too hard and cut off the circulation, or limit the range of motion in your foot, causing injury. **By taping, you loose 50% or more of the traction** on the bottom of your shoes as well. — [Paul](#), Irvine Lake Mud Run

“ **You will feel like you're running with weights on your feet.** Your feet will be getting exfoliated from the mud, think of it as a foot massage. 3+ miles is still 3+ miles – be prepared for it. — [Carrie](#), Family Fitness Food

“ The race ground was entirely uneven. If we were to run between every obstacle, there were a few places where I am sure we could have twisted an ankle or something. I'm talking deep grooves in the mud, loose gravel, and running on an angle. I think the **ground between obstacles was more dangerous than the obstacles themselves!** — [Katie](#), One Mile A Day

“ Have fun! This is not an Olympic trial run. Keep in mind that **fun is the 1st priority.** — [Nedra](#), Adventure Mom

Race Day – What To Bring



“ *Bring a gallon or 2 of water. Even if the race does hose you off, it’s really convenient to **rinse off your feet when you get to your car.*** — [Jacqueline](#), Skinny Chic Blog

“ *If you are able to **park near the finish line**, the bag check may be unnecessary. If not, then look for a bag check (expect a fee). In that bag you will want a change of clothes.* — [Kymberly](#), Fun And Fit

“ *If at all possible, **bring a spectator/camera person.** You do not want to bring a camera with you into the mud, because once it’s muddy, the pictures will be crappy. You can bring one on an obstacle course if you have one of those heavy duty cameras that can get wet and dropped and stuff, but don’t try to bring a camera through a mud pit. Instead, have someone following you around NOT in the race, taking pictures. A runner who does not want to get muddy is great for this, because they can keep up when they need to. If you know someone with a super fancy camera, they are great, because people rarely question the authority of someone with a huge camera, so they can go places someone with a point and shoot might not be able to go.* — [Tanna](#), Run Mud Run

“ We did not have anyone there supporting us/waiting for us. So all of our goodies (towels, cold water, etc) were locked in the car which was a walk away from the finish line. It would have been lovely to **have someone standing there right after the race with LOTS of towels** to help rid us of the mud and lots of water to rehydrate. — [Ashley](#), Mid Thirties Girl

“ **Bring a water bottle** with you. Then ask whether the course offers water stations. Refill your bottle at the water stations. Keep the cap on tightly as you slog through mud and obstacles. If that water's browning, you'll be frowning. Rather be drowning your thirst with clean water! — [Kymberly](#), Fun And Fit

“ Pack a small first aid kit in your bag with your after-race supplies. Leave the medical tent for those with more serious injuries. Most cuts and scrapes just need to be cleaned off and **a few band-aids usually do the trick on boo-boo's**. My knees looked like chopped meat afterwards! — [Phil](#), The Regular Guy NYC

“ **Don't take your phone** or anything else that will get ruined in water or mud with you. Take a disposable camera to take pictures along the route, but don't be sad if you lose it. — [Aimee](#), Just Us 4 Carters

“ **I wouldn't do the final wave** [start time]. When I signed up, they had waves after ours, but I'm assuming no one signed up past 4pm, so ours was the last wave. Being in the last wave was both awesome and kinda weird. It felt a tad like a ghost town, and even though some of the workers still had decent energy- you could tell they were just waiting for us to finish so that they could tear down. — [Katie](#), One Mile A Day

“ Bring a large towel or sheet. You'll want to towel off either way, but most mud runs are in places that don't have dedicated changing areas. Being able to **wrap yourself in a huge towel or sheet, strip down, and put on fresh clothes** will improve your post-run frame of mind GREATLY. — [Tanna](#), Run Mud Run

“ **Wear sunscreen.** And make sure you get it everywhere, including your ears, your scalp, the tops of your hands, and the backs of your knees. You might spend a fair amount of time out there in the mud, and you want to make sure you don't have a purple burn on the back of your knee for the next 3 weeks. I speak from experience. — [Tanna](#), Run Mud Run

“ **Pack a bag.** After the race, you'll likely be hosed down and not have access to a shower. Fill it with: 2 towels (1 for you to immediately dry off with and 1 to lay on your car seat), a plastic bag for your shoes and other dirty items, extra clothes if you can change, a zip lock bag for your keys and cell phone, and a make up remover cloth. **The make up remover cloth will help you freshen up immediately afterwards** until you get to a shower. — [Grace](#), Lean Girls Club

“ **Bring baby wipes** to get as clean as possible, **q-tips for your ears and nose.** Comfy clothes to change into and **FLIP FLOPS.** You will not want to put your feet back into a pair of shoes. — [Aimee](#), Just Us 4 Carters

“ **Bring an ace bandage.** The course can cause some minor ankle and wrist injuries. If you already have some discomfort from training it might help to wrap these body parts for extra support. — [Phil](#), The Regular Guy NYC

“ **Don't bring “nice” clothes for post race.** We were planning on spending the day in the city after the race... So I brought my skinny jeans and cute tank. Oops. I was still relatively muddy after rinsing off. So I put on my skinny jeans and nice tank and got them covered in mud. — [Courtney](#), Journey Of A Dreamer

“ **Bring a ziplock or two to keep your muddy items separate** from your new t-shirts and other swag. — [Aimee](#), Just Us 4 Carters

Pre-Race Tips & Training



“ *First and foremost, consider the distance. All obstacles aside, can you run and/or walk the distance of the race safely at your fitness level? Ensure that you train for the distance of the race. This should be your No. 1 priority. If it’s a 5K distance, **plan for at least 5-8 weeks of training.*** — [Jen](#), SparkPeople

“ *I knew that I had to get a full body workout to be successful. During my runs I started to **jump over shrubs and run up and down the grass hills** in my neighborhood. I probably looked like a dork, but I didn’t care, because I was in training. I also would do push ups, sit ups and assisted pull ups 3 times a week. This helped a lot to develop my upper body and core strength for the race.* — [Nacho Libre](#), Active Races

“ *IF THE COURSE IS OPEN [ahead of time], go out and **try as many of the obstacles as you can.*** — [Joe](#), Running Advice And News

“ *You’ll want to **start some type of stretching.** These races require a good deal of flexibility (jumping over gaps anyone?). The more agile and nimble you can be, the better! Stretch after your workout for best results.* — [Jonathan](#), The Popular Man

“ *If your race includes a rock wall make sure you have tried climbing one at least once. If you’re like me, you probably think “people climb mountains, how hard could a 12” rock wall be?”. Let me tell you, it can be HARD if you don’t how to do it.*

Apparently the key is to **use your feet as well as your arms to get over the wall.** — [Beef](#), AskBeef



“*Train like you run. Check it out yourself: Get into what you want to wear on race day, go down to the river or lake or beach, dressed in your favorite football team sweats, tape up and run across/up and down the river. Feel the weight of the water in your clothes, the weight of the shoes, the traction of your shoes taped, the flexibility of your feet when taped. Then wear Spandex or nylon shorts try your shoes double-knotted and socks tucked. Huge difference! Before the event **try out your running gear under muddy race conditions.*** — [Paul](#), Irvine Lake Mud Run

“*People have an aversion to **being cold and dirty** but you have to get over it. The more you can simulate actual race conditions, the better prepared you're going to be.* — [Chris](#), In Good Health

“*Working on overall body strength and balance will set you up to complete your race successfully. **Try 2-3 strength-training days per week.*** — [Jen](#), SparkPeople

“*Going from a treadmill to a mud run is different. It's something else to have to watch for slippery roots, pointy rocks, streams and mud pits. So to prepare for an off road race I would suggest trying to **find a dirt path or trail.*** — [Kristina](#), Racing And Saving Mama

“ Working toward a goal may do more to improve your physique and mental health than you think. Experts recommend picking an event that will require physical training like a walk-a-thon or 5K. According to a recent study, runners reported that just completing the event or race gave them an increased sense of accomplishment. Newcomers and seasoned veterans alike agreed that they **felt more confident and more powerful in all areas of their lives after completing the race**. They felt stronger mentally and physically and more able to master problems at work and in relationships. — [Paul](#), Irvine Lake Mud Run

“ Resistance training, yoga, Pilates, and other exercises that **focus on lateral strength, ankle strength, and core conditioning** will pay large dividends on the course. — [Kelly](#), Stack Fitness

“ Although events like Tough Mudder are strenuous and require much more advanced training due to their distance alone, the typical mud run of a few miles is something that the average person can complete, often with minimal preparation. (Of course **completing a mud race is very different from competing in it**. The more you train and the fitter you are, the faster your race time will be and the more comfortable and fun the experience will be overall.) — [Jen](#), SparkPeople

“ Get in some training leading up to the event. Run, run, run. Lift weights to get your upper body strengthened. Even though it's just a 5K **you will need the arm and shoulder strength**. Wall climbing and cargo nets are a big part of this. — [Phil](#), The Regular Guy NYC

“ No matter what shape you're in, we're all capable of doing something like this – the 5K at least. I didn't require as much running preparation as I thought. A **5K is only 3.1 miles and you can stop as often as you want**. Do something fun with your weekend and sign up for a mud run! — [Emily](#), Manhattan Emily

Post-Race Lessons Learned



“ I won’t lie and say it’s easy, but **you don’t have to be a “serious” runner or a bodybuilder to make it through the obstacles.** — [Amanda](#), The Lady Okie

“ By the finish line less than 20 minutes later, I was wheezing and muddy, sprinting into the end in first-place so hard that the event announcer didn’t even notice. I had won the mud run, and nobody cared. They were too busy having fun. **After winning the mud run, I realized I’d gotten it all wrong — this was a “fun run” first and foremost;** the real winners were the men and women dressed up, laughing, rolling in mud, and having way more of a good time than me ... Define winning. I’ve run half, full and ultra marathons and some insane ultra races in which many people consider finishing a great goal. I ran the mud run to cross the finish line first and I did, but I wasn’t the winner. I think that was the guy who only did two of the three laps and wandered around the finish line looking like the creature from the lost lagoon in an inch-thick coat of mud.— [Sean](#), Gear Junkie

“ **You feel a great sense of accomplishment afterwards.** You committed to something and you did it to the best of your ability. It’s an addictive feeling. Warning: You will immediately want to do it again. — [Emily](#), Manhattan Emily

“ Don’t take yourself too seriously. These events are really meant to be done for fun. **I found it refreshing that there were no award ceremonies or even results posted** at my event. Take these events on as a physical challenge, but have fun and enjoy the day. Slipping through mud and climbing over walls is fun. Ask any 5-year-old. So don’t forget to have fun out there. — [Joe](#), Running Advice

“ What I’ve taken away from this experience – and I would do it again with the condition of taking it more seriously – is that, sure, there will be people in your life when you’re down, they’ll want to push you even further down. However, there are also those **people when you’re down, they’ll offer a hand, motivation and say, “You can do it, even if you don’t think you can; I think you can.”** That’s empowering. — [Brett](#), Ginger Musings

“ **The word “fun” doesn’t even do it justice.** Yes, I did unfortunately sprain my ankle because I tripped in the mud (which shouldn’t have happened), but it was honestly worth it. No pain, no gain! Right?! Hopefully it doesn’t scare anyone from doing something like this, because it’s the most fun I’ve had in awhile. — [Emily](#), Manhattan Emily

“ Fun runs draw a different crowd. There are still some serious competitors at these races but overall **a fun run brings in runners of all ages, shapes, sizes and athletic abilities.** This type of race draws people who want to share a unique and memorable experience together. — [Nedra](#), Adventure Mom

“ If anything, **it’s a great workout.** Ok, it’s not a marathon or even a half marathon (the 5K one at least), but between all of the crazy obstacles, hills and bumpy trails, you burn some serious calories. I actually think it’s harder than a regular 5K because it’s a lot of variation and stopping/starting. — [Emily](#), Manhattan Emily

“ Having run countless running events, I can now tell you that these races are a little more like a triathlon than a road race. I say that because in triathlons your mind can focus on “what’s coming next” and this makes the experience more dynamic and fun. But these events are also very unique in that they **challenge your body in physical ways that pure endurance sports don’t**. These are not “steady paced” efforts in which you put it in gear and leave it there. You are constantly speeding up, slowing down, stopping, dropping, climbing, pausing. And that’s what makes them fun. — [Joe](#), Running Advice

“ Trekking 3 miles through the woods, while going up, under, around, and over obstacles would not be the first thing that comes to mind when I think of the word fun. It’s a challenging, great workout and **a really good measuring stick for your fitness level**. It definitely put me in my place. — [Beef](#), AskBeef



Want lots more mud run training tips like these? Try visiting the following sites which have some great information.

<http://www.mudstacle.com/>

<http://www.obstacleracemagazine.com/>

<http://www.mudrunguide.com/>

<http://www.active.com/>