

Decide on the basics: meeting time and place, and the kind of run you want to do.

The following describes a basic process to organize a group run. It is possible to have a different meeting point each week, but this depends on already having a regular core group who will keep track.

<b>Pick a regular meeting time and place. The usual frequency is weekly.</b>	<i>Let's meet Saturday, at Turning Basin Park, 8 AM, plan to run at 8:15 AM. There are portapotties there. Bring your own drink if you want it.</i>  (It should be reasonably convenient for the organizer. Easy parking, proximity to restrooms, and access to drinking water are good features.)
<b>Be sure it's legal!</b>	Private property – ask owner or manager. We can get insurance certificates, proof of 501c3 nonprofit status. YMCA and Princeton Running Co. were easy. Public parks – If regular group size more than 20 or having an impact on other users, check in with town or county recreation.
<b>What kind of run do you want to do?</b>	<i>I plan to run an out and back of 8 miles along the canal. It's possible to turn around at any point, or add on by continuing along the canal or going into the nature preserve. My pace 8 to 9 minutes per mile, and I hope to have another run leader at about a 10 minute per mile pace. Anyone is welcome to join me, and if you'd like to lead a different pace group, that would be wonderful.</i>

**Getting people to come – group run organizer**

As the **organizer**, announce your plan to the email list and ask people to sign up to be run leaders. One club has called this role “**ambassador**.” At the beginning, you would probably select yourself as ambassador pretty often. It may take two months to get a regular following, and persistent promotion by a core group after that to get a critical mass that will just keep going with only an occasional push.

**Organizer arranges for at least two ambassadors** to show up every week by signing up. Get this set for four weeks from the beginning. Plan on filling in this sign-up about a month ahead after the initial weeks. Major holidays would be an obvious exception. There will be days when it is just not convenient for the organizer to be an ambassador, and eventually, the organizer may want to move on completely. Even after the run is established, it would be a good idea to continue having ambassadors especially to welcome newcomers and in the low seasons.

**Posting to the club web site:** once you have established clear intention to promote a group run and have the first few weeks of ambassadors covered, ask for the run time to be posted to the club web site. Send email to any officer or [info@princetonac.org](mailto:info@princetonac.org)

**Announce your run to the email list [princetonac@yahoo.com](mailto:princetonac@yahoo.com)** and invite other people who may not be on the list. Two weeks notice for the first run, and then about three days in advance is good, not later than noon on the weekday preceding the day of the run.

**Repeat the announcement every week** until there is reliable turnout of at least eight people. Decreasing frequency after that is fine, for example monthly. It is fine to advertise the run other places, too. Some publications have lead times. It is sometimes hard to turn off publicity immediately.

### **What to actually do – group run ambassadors**

**Ambassadors are not coaches.** Ambassadors should keep the focus on their own plans for the run and invite others to join. Avoid prescribing training for other people. If there is sufficient interest, it is possible to organize a coached workout. That is not the same as an informal group run.

**Minors should be accompanied by parents,** if present at all. Participation by ages 11 to 17 will be rare – age group activities are usually a better fit. It is OK to bar minors altogether. It is possible to organize a run for kids, which is a higher level of responsibility than for an informal group run.

**Arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the actual start time,** e.g., 8 AM if the run is to start at 8:15 AM.

**Ambassadors introduce themselves to newcomers** and try to match up people with similar paces and distances. Ambassadors should represent Princeton A. C. positively.

**Keep a sign-in log for the day's run.** The sign-in log is for everyone, every time. It should be forwarded to a club officer at least monthly. Emailing a digital photo is a pretty quick way to do it. First timers should sign our liability waiver and include full name, home town, and email address.

Remind people that **roads are not closed to traffic,** it's not a contest of speed, and be safe. Do not allow personal audio devices; our insurance requires us to discourage them.

**Bring along some membership forms.** If a person has come to their third group run, that person should be encouraged to become a member of the club. It is not necessary for ambassadors to receive completed forms – it is easiest to do the online membership form.

The main exceptions to soliciting people for membership: the run is based at a health club; then membership in either Princeton A. C. or the health club would be satisfactory; or the person is in the area for a definite limited time, e.g. six weeks. Princeton University undergraduates should be advised of the existence of a student running club in preference to soliciting them for membership.

### **Flourishes**

Meeting up for brunch or beers is a nice thing. This could be on the first meeting of the month, or every time as group preferences indicate. Have people record their times on a standard course the first meeting of the month and do a prediction run or some other faux-competitive activity.

Maybe a person wants to lead a stretching session. Inviting people to follow is fine. Avoid prescribing a regimen that people must follow to be part of the group.