



equilibrium lifestyle management

### Trail Safety Tips:

*Whether you are a first time trail runner or an experienced ultra marathoner, trail running safety should be a top priority before you hit the trails.*

- **Buddy Up.** Run with a buddy in new or remote trails and make sure to leave word of your route. This way, a search party will waste no time heading out to find you if you don't return on schedule.
- **Take the right gear with you.** This includes a whistle for communication, map of the area, water, a quick energy snack, basic first aid kit including any medication that you may need, and a cell phone (some remote trails do not have cellular service so check first!).
- **Be aware of your surroundings!** Learn some basic map reading and navigation skills before you venture off the beaten path. Having the ability to identify landmarks and navigate using terrain features can help you avoid wrong turns and decrease anxiety if you do go astray. Map reading skills will allow you to explore a new area with confidence that you will return to your car!

### Trail Training Tips:

Trail running requires additional balance, agility and co-ordination than your usual road run. This means you need to be alert and ready to react to the ever-changing path in front of you. Here are some tips and tricks to remember:

- **Form:** Don't forget about your running posture in the trails. Run tall, chest high, shoulders down and back, hips forward. Good postural alignment will help you run more efficiently. Relax those arms, keep the hands loose and enjoy the scenery!
- **Trail Technique:** Shorten your stride and increase turnover (how frequently your feet touch the ground) to improve your reaction time. On technical sections such as sand, loose dirt/gravel, water and rooty areas, shorten your stride even more to react quickly and avoid slipping.
- **Hills:** Think in thirds. 1<sup>st</sup> third shorten your stride length and increase turnover slightly, 2<sup>nd</sup> third maintain your pace, final third give a little push OVER the top and down the other side. Stand tall, drive back arms, keep your head up and look over top.



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- **Down hills:** On an easy grade lean forward slightly, lengthen your stride, and let gravity do the work. If it is too steep/technical or if you feel out of control shorten your stride slightly and increase the turnover.

*Sarah Seeds is a passionate trail runner and the owner of Equilibrium Lifestyle Management (ELM) a group fitness and personal training company in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Contact ELM for trail maps and information about trail running adventures on Vancouver Island.*

[www.elmhealth.com](http://www.elmhealth.com)

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