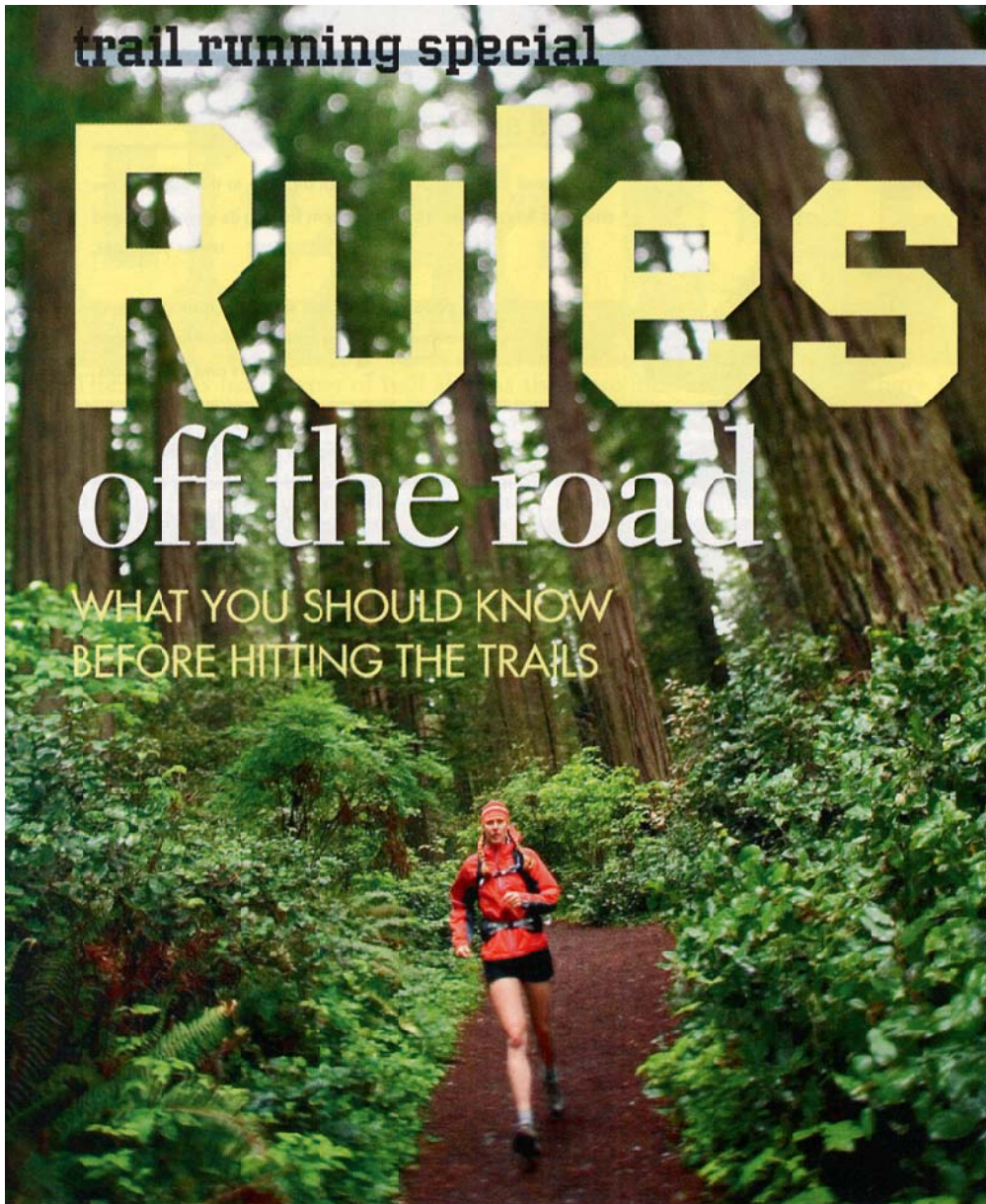


trail running special

# RULES off the road

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW  
BEFORE HITTING THE TRAILS



**E**ven experienced trail runners can get into trouble on unpredictable terrain, so a bit of forward planning is wise. Here are five top tips for staying safe off the road:



#### KEEP IN TOUCH

When trying out a new trail, go with someone who knows it – and take a map, compass, mobile phone and whistle. If you do go solo, give someone a map of your intended route.



#### THINK TIME NOT DISTANCE

Tough terrain and hills can double the time you need to cover a mile. So consider how long you want to be out. “Experienced trail runners cover about six miles an hour,” says Scott Jurek, an endurance running champion. “Runners who are less fit should target four.”



#### FUEL UP

Take food with you, even on short runs, in case you're in the woods longer than expected. “Energy bars and gels

are good because they're easy to carry and digest,” says Monique Ryan, author of *Sports Nutrition for Endurance Athletes* (£10.71, [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)) The carbohydrates will help you run and concentrate. Also, stay hydrated with small, frequent sips from a water bottle or hydration pack.



#### WATCH THE WEATHER

Temperatures can change and storms can roll in quickly, especially at higher elevations, so plan accordingly. Even in summer, Jurek always takes a winter hat and a lightweight, water-resistant jacket with him. Use sunscreen on exposed bits, but be careful not to apply too much; it can clog pores and cause you to overheat.



#### TRAIN YOUR FEET

Get used to running on easy paths, then move on to more gnarly trails. “Take short, quick steps so you can react,” Jurek says, adding that your stride rate should be about 90 per minute. Road shoes are OK for smooth trails, but trail shoes offer more traction and protect your feet from rocks and roots. **RW**

## A Run in the Woods

Ready to hit the trail? Here are some of the best upcoming trail events around the UK...

### A October 6

#### Puma Trailfox Coniston Trail Race

A hilly 15K single-loop trail through the lakes in Cumbria, with dramatic panoramic views of the Lakeland fells and Coniston Water.

[www.lakelandtrails.org](http://www.lakelandtrails.org)

### B October 14

#### Mendip Muddle

A 20K multi-terrain race with 420 lung-bursting metres of ascent, with Roman mines, underground rivers and an Iron-age fort dotted along the way.

[www.westonac.co.uk](http://www.westonac.co.uk)

### C November 24

#### Real Ale Ramble

Held in conjunction with the annual 10-day Mid Wales Beer Festival, the trail follows waymarked routes of 10, 15 or 25 miles, with real ales available to sample at the checkpoints.

[www.green-events.co.uk](http://www.green-events.co.uk)

### D November 26

#### Gatliff Marathon

A choice of 12.5-, 22- or 31.25-mile loops along footpaths through Kent, Surrey and West Sussex. You'll complete 2,400ft of climbing in total and mud is guaranteed. [www.copse.freeuk.com](http://www.copse.freeuk.com)

### E December 8

#### Rowbotham's Round Rotherham 50

Fifty-mile single-loop route undulating through fields and forests in the south Yorkshire countryside, featuring 2,500ft of ascent.

[www.hmarston.co.uk/rhac/trail](http://www.hmarston.co.uk/rhac/trail)

