



# Run towards life

**RunnerGirlsIndia was started in 2007 exclusively for women. The objective is to inspire the Indian woman to run for fun and fitness, writes Jayanthi Madhukar**

The sigh of the lazy 'should I or should I not' does not seem to make a dent on them. For, these women, coming from all walks of life, are united by a common passion - running. Belonging to the RunnerGirlsIndia, their agenda is self explanatory. And running the talk is the founder of this energetic group Sabine Teitge.

When Sabine, a German national with an Indian spouse, resumed running about two years back, she was hopelessly out of form. Former aerobics instructor, she had not run for more than fifteen years. She started off with a run/walk programme and gradually increased her weekly mileage. In the past year she has run one half marathon (21 kms), three full marathons (42 kms) and one ultra-marathon (52 kms). And in her words, "thanks to the scarcity of women runners of my age here in India, I stood first in my age group at the last Mumbai Marathon."

RunnerGirlsIndia was started in the late 2007 exclusively for women. So far, it is the only such group in India for women. As the group's nifty looking website ([www.runnergirlsindia.com](http://www.runnergirlsindia.com)) says the objective is to inspire the Indian woman to run for fun and fitness. Sabine feels that generally the women here are basically too

body conscious to take up running wholeheartedly. Plus the fact that they may be teased on the road deters them. RGI offers a support network for runner girls and organises women-only-running events in a safe, friendly, fun and above all non-competitive environment.

The group meets fortnightly in Cubbon Park at 6.30 am for the GORs - girls-only-run. The hour and a half run is open to all women - no bars at all. Those willing to join can just show up at Cubbon Park on the assigned days after checking the schedule put up on RGI's website. The profile of the members ranges from 20-somethings to grandmas. This time is essentially looked at as "me time" by the 'girls' as they interact with each other. And what's more, they round off the run with a hearty breakfast at a nearby hotel.

"Aside from the well documented health benefits jogging or running imparts, there are also many psychological benefits. One that I feel is a huge benefit to women here in India is that running or jogging can build confidence like few individual sports can. This type of exercise provides a feeling of empowerment and freedom that comes with knowing that your legs and body are strong and capable" says Sabine.

For the RGI members, the choice between the gym and running outdoors is a no-brainer. How about a running session passing by most of Hampi's sights as Sabine did recently with the girls of RGI? Now that's a true win-win situation. Just bring along your spirit of fun and cheer.