



# WALKING & JOGGING

*On the tracks of the Delaware Valley*

*By Ross L. Donolow*

Summer has arrived and it's time to get out, work-out, lose some weight, and get in shape. Walking and jogging are great cardio/aerobic workouts and are great for the mind. However, walking and jogging in traffic can be treacherous. The absolute best environment is on a safe track. Tracks in the summer are always open and have little use since schools are in recess. Also, a few tracks in the area have night-lights, which make an evening walk/jog desirable out of the heat. I personally have run on many of these tracks and have met interesting people. There is definitely a social element to track walking. Mix up your week by visiting a few tracks. Remember to walk in the outside lanes and not in lane one. This lane is reserved for faster runners who are training.

Tracks come in two surfaces: tartan and cinders. Tartan is the industry standard today for tracks and is made of a hard spongy material, which is easy on the feet. Tartan is usually brick or green colored. Cinders are small stones that are also easy to walk on but frequently develop puddles in rain and are not as spongy as tartan. All tracks today are 400 meters around which is ¼ mile. Track ratings are based on five stars. Note: I have listed a few of my favorite tracks, but there are many more. Contact the school at the track to see if they are open and have lights at night.

## **SUNKEN TREASURE - SWARTHMORE COLLEGE 500 COLLEGE AVE. SWARTHMORE, PA**

Nestled in the sprawling Swarthmore College campus is this absolute beauty of a track. Only minutes from the Springfield Mall, this track is 10 feet below sea level hidden from view from Route 320 (Sproul Rd.), hence the sunken effect. Swarthmore went all out in landscaping this gem complete with raised flowerbed walls and trees. The surface is tartan and easy to walk/jog. No lights here make this a day or early evening visit only. Bleachers along the side are great for the kids who want to wait this walk out instead of participating. This is a great place to walk after shopping at the mall. There is plenty of parking near the track. Rating: \* \* \* \*

## **NIGHT LIGHT - HAVERFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL 1801 DARBY RD HAVERTOWN, PA**

What was once a gravel surface disaster has now become one of the premier walking tracks in the area, especially for night owls. This six-lane new tartan track gets packed at night due to the stadium lights, which light up both sides of the track. This track is part of the high school, but you enter off of Darby Road. Parking is right next to track. A good night brings 30 - 40 walkers and joggers, and the lights stay

on until at least 10 pm. Haverford Township gets extra points for designing this schedule. There are large bleachers and playing fields for the kids to hang out and a huge sandbox long jump pit if they want to try their jumping skills. Rating: \* \* \* \* \*

**STROLL IN STYLE - CHICHESTER HIGH SCHOOL  
3333 CHICHESTER AVE. BOOTHWYN, PA.**

Now you're walking in style in this eight-lane tartan track only five minutes from the Chichester exit off I95. This track features ultra modern night lighting, specifically for the track. Lights are modern design seven feet high and are spaced every 25 yards giving excellent coverage for perfect night vision. Parking is available across the street in shopping center or at the school. A good crowd shows up most every night. Rating: \* \* \* \* \*

**CITY WALK - FRANKLIN FIELD,  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
33RD & SPRUCE STS. WEST PHILADELPHIA, PA**

So you work in the city and need a quick workout. Here is your workout haven located in the heart of Penn's campus. This hundred-year-old building houses one of the premier tracks in the area. This ten plus lane track is surrounded by the nostalgia and history of one hundred years of running greats and legends. Penn seems pretty lax on who can get in, but I would call ahead to make sure track is open. The entire stadium is lit at night so the effect is like daytime running with 40,000 seats around you. Penn says the track stays open until 8 pm, but this may be later during the summer. Parking is a little rough, but some good spots are on Walnut street, between 30th & 32nd streets and also behind the Levy Tennis Pavilion in the back. Rating: \* \* \* \* \*

**OLYMPIC DEVELOPMENT - HAVERFORD COLLEGE  
370 LANCASTER AVE. HAVERFORD, PA**

Located in the heart of Haverford College's campus is this absolute gem of a track. Surrounded by landscaped grounds, expansive fields and large trees, Haverford's tartan track is certainly a relaxing way to spend a walk or jog during the weekend. This track is also host to many Olympians in the area, so you never know who you will see. No lights here so a day walk or early evening will have to do. Bleachers on the track will keep kids out of the way. Pay a visit to the arboretum and duck pond too while you are there. Haverford also has a two-mile walking trail should you decide to change up your program. Either way this place is fantastic. There is plenty of parking alongside the track on the weekends. Rating: \* \* \* \* \*



*Ross L. Donolow is a Delaware Valley resident and has run track throughout his entire career starting in high school. He set school records in the high school 100 & 220-yard dashes and was the New England Small College Dash champion in 1976. Ross still trains and frequently visits many of the tracks in the area. Recently, Ross and a relay team of three other members competed in the Penn Relays at Penn's Franklin Field in the Masters 4 X 100 relay. The best teams from the nation were entered. His team finished 7th out of eleven teams but was the top team in the Delaware Valley. He can be reached at [rdonolow@phillyfitmagazine.com](mailto:rdonolow@phillyfitmagazine.com).*