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## Fast Enough?

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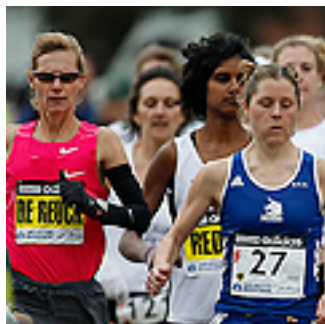
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## Fast Enough?

11.08.2013 | Health, Research, Faculty

Qualifying times for the Boston Marathon are too easy for younger women and too tough for older women, according to research from the University of Dayton.

Paul Vanderburgh, a University of Dayton administrator and professor of health and sport science, compared Boston Marathon qualifying times (BMQ) for men and women in 11 age groups with their respective world-record times.

"World records are the age-associated limits of human capability and are less affected by intensity, body composition and fitness level," Vanderburgh said. "As such, they make an excellent standard against which BMQ times should be based."

Using a standard of 50 percent slower than each age group's world record, Vanderburgh created a suggested list of BMQ times. The results showed current qualifying times were too lenient by 10 minutes for women age 18-54; too strict by 10 minutes for women age 55-69; and too strict by 35-95 minutes for women 70 and older. The current qualifying times for men were acceptably valid.

Applying these suggested qualifying times to finish times for the 2012 Chicago Marathon — a qualifying race for the Boston Marathon — Vanderburgh discovered almost half of the women who did qualify for Boston would not have made the cut.

For this reason, Vanderburgh said he believes the current BMQ times should be kept in place until more research can be done.

"If the standards suggested by the study were adopted — though fairer to all age groups — it would lead to nearly half as many women qualifying as men," he said. "We are working on a follow-up study with larger samples and a slightly different definition of world bests to examine how close we can get to valid standards and equal gender representation."

The study, "Validity of Boston Marathon Qualifying Times," is published in the *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*. In 2011, with graduate student Daniel March, Vanderburgh published another marathon study that showed women are better than men at marathon pacing, a strategy proven to improve marathon performance. That study also revealed older runners are better pacers than younger runners, and runners with faster finish times are better pacers than those who finish slower.

See below for chart showing 2012 BMQ times and Vanderburgh's suggested times.

Boston Marathon Qualifying Times for Women by age group (h:min)										
Age Group	18-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79
Current BMQ	3:35	3:40	3:45	3:55	4:00	4:10	4:25	4:40	4:55	5:10
Suggested BMQ	3:25	3:30	3:40	3:50	3:55	4:20	4:35	4:50	5:30	6:00
	More Strict					Less Strict				

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