

Good evening. My name is John Christmas. Thank you for inviting me to the Meeting tonight. I am honored to be back with my friends from the Running Club from a few years ago. ***Here is a little about me:***

RRRC Board Member- 2002- 2012

Toy Run 5K Race Director

Ashland ½ Marathon Co- Race Director

Byrd Park Group Co-Founder and Group Leader

RRCA Certified Adult Distance Running Coach

**For 2026, I would like your consideration for the Board of Directors, Race Director and Group Run (Rucking/Weight Vest Leader. Also, work my way up to being a Vice/ President of the RRRC too. **

I am here tonight to start the discussion of incorporating Rucking/Weight Vest wearing into the Richmond Road Runners Club (RRRC). We can integrate it into existing events by creating dedicated Rucking/Weight Vest sessions. Also, the inclusion of Rucking/Weight Vest can benefit runners by improving strength and endurance with lower impact, offering a new social dimension, and providing a useful cross-training option.

Event integration

- **Add a "Rucker/Weight Vest" category to races:** For any races the club organizes, from a 5K to a half marathon, add a special rucking division. This allows current members to try a new challenge and attracts a different type of participant.
- **Host a charity event, "Ruck 'n' Run/Weight Vest ":** Organize an event where participants can either run or ruck/weight vest. This expands your reach to different fitness communities and can be tied to a charitable cause, such as collecting non-perishable goods in rucksacks for a local food bank.
- **Organize a "Ruck/Weight Vest the City" tour:** Design a scenic urban route that takes participants past landmarks. Rucking at a moderate pace (15–20 minutes per mile) is more social than running, allowing for conversation while exploring.

- **Hold a special event for veterans:** Organize a ruck march around a meaningful date, such as Veterans Day or Memorial Day, to honor military service members. Many rucking events already have military roots.

Club activities and training

- **Introduce a weekly "Ruck-Walk/Weight Vest ":** Add a low-intensity, low-impact rucking session once or twice a week. This can be a recovery workout for runners after a hard run or a way to stay active during an injury.
- **Offer Rucking/Weight Vest technique workshops:** Educate members on the fundamentals of proper rucking, including weight selection, good posture, and pack fit. This helps prevent injury and makes the activity more accessible.
- **Post weekly Rucking/Weight Vest challenges:** Engage members by posting challenges on the club's social media. Challenge them to ruck a certain distance or explore a new route, then have them post their results and photos.
- **Integrate Rucking/Weight Vest into cross-training:** Explain the specific benefits of rucking for runners, such as improved leg and core strength, better posture, and mental resilience. Position rucking as a complement to running, not a replacement.

Getting started

1. **Survey your club's interest.** Send out an email or social media poll to gauge interest and gather feedback.
2. **Plan your first Rucking/Weight Vest event.** Choose a local park with different terrain options, set a route of 2–3 miles, and pick a moderate starting weight of 10–25 pounds.
3. **Use existing resources.** Leverage free tools like mapmyrun.com to plan and share routes with participants.
4. **Promote the event.** Use your club's regular communication channels to announce the new Rucking/Weight Vest option. Emphasize that all fitness levels are welcome and that basic gear is enough to get started.
5. **Build a social tradition.** After your inaugural Ruck/Weight Vest, continue the social aspect by going out for coffee or a meal. Building these relationships strengthens the club's sense of community.

Thank you,

John Christmas

