# Step-by-step Strava instructions for beginners.

Strava takes many of the interaction-fostering features found in social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter, and pairs it with activity tracking technology. Like its peers, Strava is a free digital service accessible through both mobile applications and the web, and for serious users, it offers various advanced features for a monthly fee. If you're getting the most out of Strava, you'll be uploading runs or workouts regularly, following other athletes, giving them kudos and comments, joining clubs and challenges, and maybe even creating your own routes.

How to Start Using Strava

With Strava, you'll use some combination of three devices: a smartphone, computer, or a fitness tracker, the most common form of which is a GPS watch. For smartphone use, you'll need to have the free Strava app installed. Simply open your device's app store (the App Store for iPhones and Google Play for Android devices), search for Strava, and download the app. On your computer, it's even easier: Open your web browser and head to strava.com. A fitness tracker involves a slightly more complicated setup process, but it is a smoother and more comprehensive tool in the long run. Keep reading for more detailed instructions on how to connect it to your Strava account.

Create your account
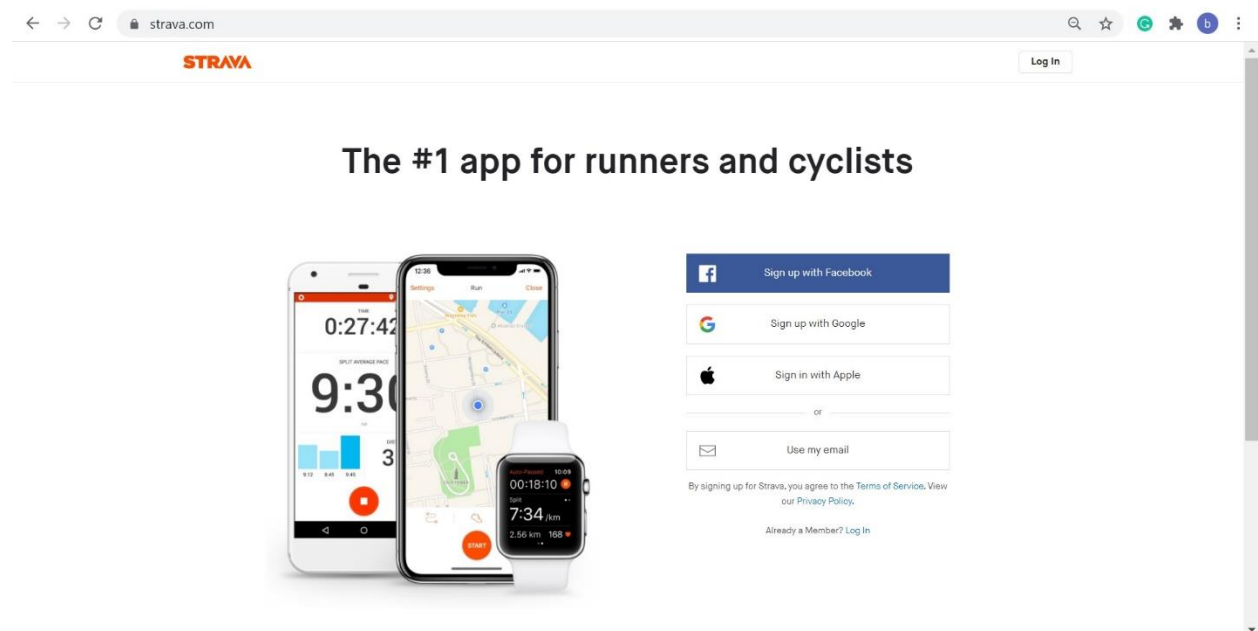
So you've reached the default screen, pictured above, on your phone or computer. If you'd rather not create an entirely new password you'll have to store or remember, you can use your Facebook or Google account info. If you'd rather keep things separate, perhaps for privacy or security reasons, you can start the account creation process fresh with your email.
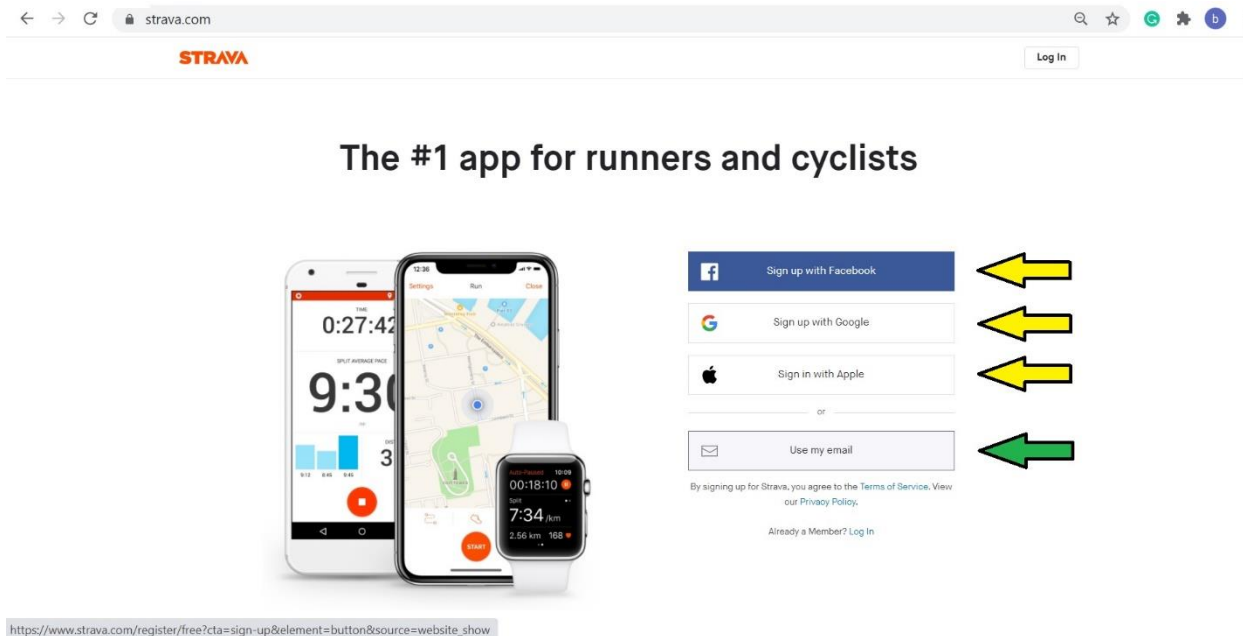
Follow the instructions—you'll have to confirm your email or log in through the Facebook or Google platforms—and you're in.

Next, you'll need to create your Strava account, where your workout data and public-facing profile will live.
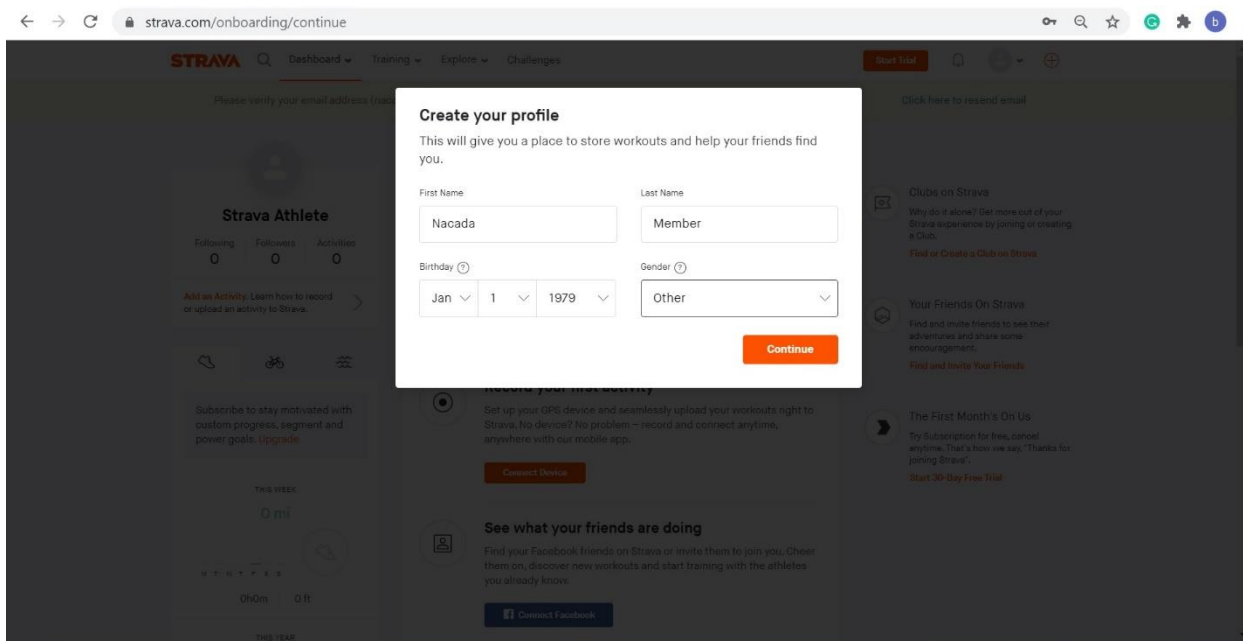

As a new user, Strava will prompt you to immediately fill out some basic information for your profile: upload a photo, confirm your name, and provide your birthday and gender. These last two data points are mostly so Strava can put you on categorized leaderboards, but they're not mandatory.

Remember, your profile and your account are two separate things, as with all similar online services. Your account encompasses everything on Strava related to you as an individual, while your profile is simply the information (name, photo, location, etc.) that other users will see on the platform.

Customize your settings

To do that on desktop, hover over your profile picture in the top corner, then click Settings. On mobile, tap your profile then click the gear icon in the top corner.
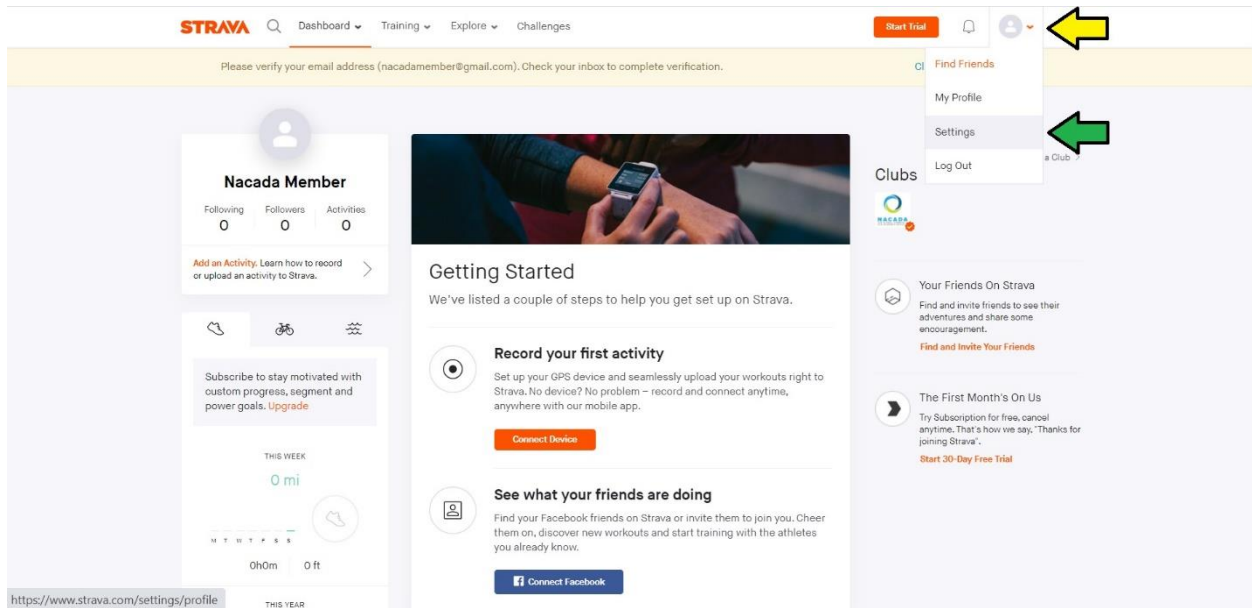
To further customize your profile, thoroughly browse all the settings options. Set what notifications you want, or add what shoes you wear. Privacy and connected services and devices are covered in more detail below.
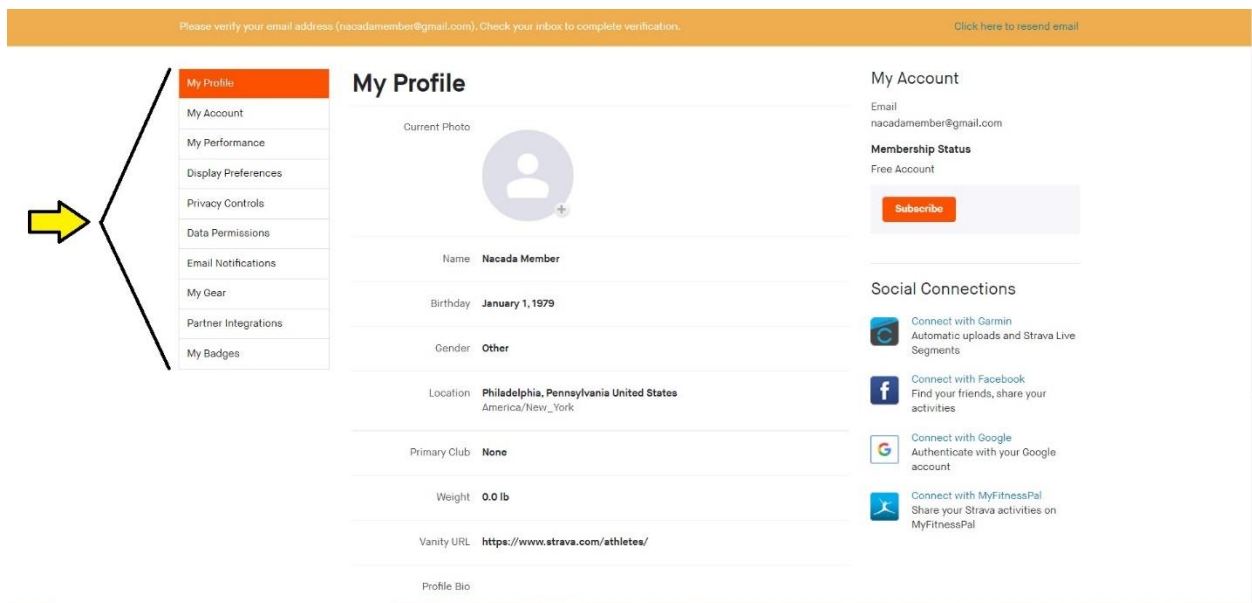
## Establishing your privacy strava privacy controls

Within the myriad of customization options Strava offers, pay particular attention to Data Permissions and Privacy Controls, both subsections under Settings. In Data Permissions, you can decide whether to allow Strava to see personal health data your other devices might have. In Privacy Controls, you can:

• Decide who can see what from your account
• Set Privacy Zones, which create randomized dead zones that hide sensitive locations from the map of your run
• Opt out of including your run data in Strava's aggregated heatmaps, which have caused controversy in the past
• Make your training log, where Strava keeps track of all your activities in detail, public or private
• Allow Strava to promote your activity to other people (one of their strategies to increase social interaction on the platform)

Recording an activity

Strava offers three ways to record an activity: syncing the data recorded by a fitness tracker, likely a GPS watch or FitBit device, recording your activity with the Strava app on your phone directly, or by entering the activity data manually.

Fitness tracker: Unfortunately, this basic guide can't delve into how to use your GPS watch or FitBit, but assuming it's one of the many mainstream brands Strava recognizes, you can link your Strava account with the watch so that activities recorded on it will automatically sync and upload to Strava. If you plan to connect a device on your first log in attempt, you will see a prompt on your dashboard to "Record your first activity" with an option to click on the "Connect a device" button.
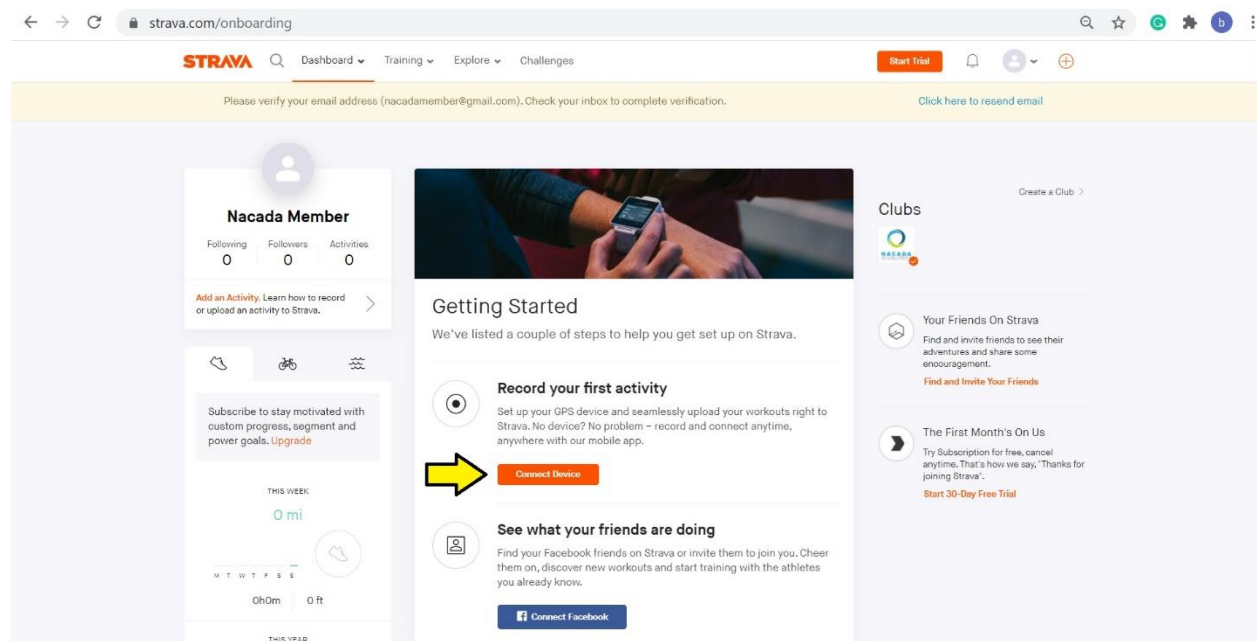
You can also add a device by clicking on the plus sign in the upper left corner of the page and selecting "Upload activity" to upload an individual workout from your device. You'll then see a list of available brands to connect with your Strava account. This connection will be saved in My Apps in your profile settings.
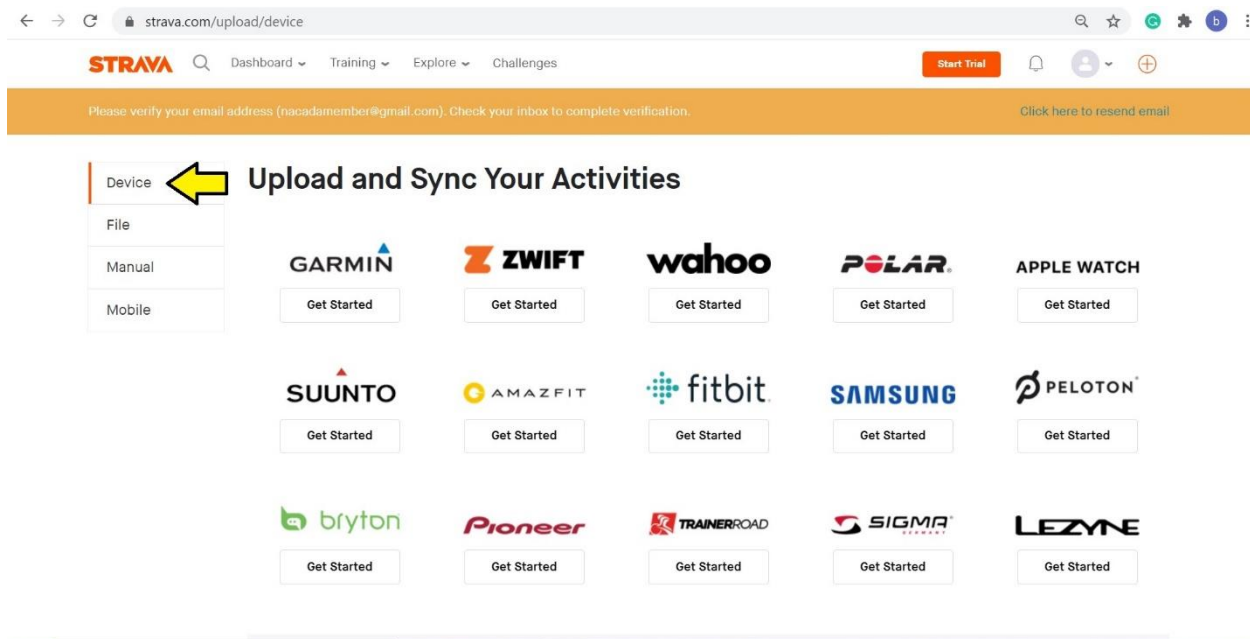
On the app, head to Settings, then Applications, Services and Devices (or look for "Link Other Services"), then Connect a device to Strava. This will automatically upload your workouts after you save the activity to your watch, making it that much easier for you to keep track of all of your runs on Strava.

Strava app: Tap the Record tab. You can change any settings you need to, such as toggling auto-pause or audio cues on or off, then hit Start. The GPS on your smartphone will record the data from there, and once you're done with your workout it will be uploaded to your activities when you hit save.

Manual entry: On both platforms, click the plus sign (again in the upper right of the desktop) and then select the manual entry option. From there, you can fill in as many details as you know. Manual entries will provide the opportunity to add non-run/walk, cycling, or swim activities your recent activities (including activities like Yoga, cardio workouts, or weight training).

Connect to a Club

Strava allows for community building through the facilitation of activity "Clubs". Clubs offer users an opportunity to connect, communicate, and share activity with other members in an organized and structured manner. A NACADA 2020 Annual Conference Club has been created and will be used throughout the conference to share information on upcoming and available events (Yoga, online workouts, virtual runs/walks, nutrition videos) as well as to track participate activities for conference challenges! To find and join a Strava Club navigate to the Explore tab on the top of the profile page and select "Clubs". Search for NACADA (make sure you set all search filters to "All"), when the NACADA 2020 Annual Conference club appears below the search criteria click on the Join button. All clubs have a leaderboard which tracks member activities on a weekly basis. Currently, club leaderboards will only track Run, Cycle, and Swim activities on the leaderboard, however an additional "Recent Activity" tab which will track all activity entries for members on a weekly basis (including manual entries for "other" activities such as Yoga, weight training, workouts, etc.). Each club also includes a Member and communication feed (Posts) tab on the main club page.
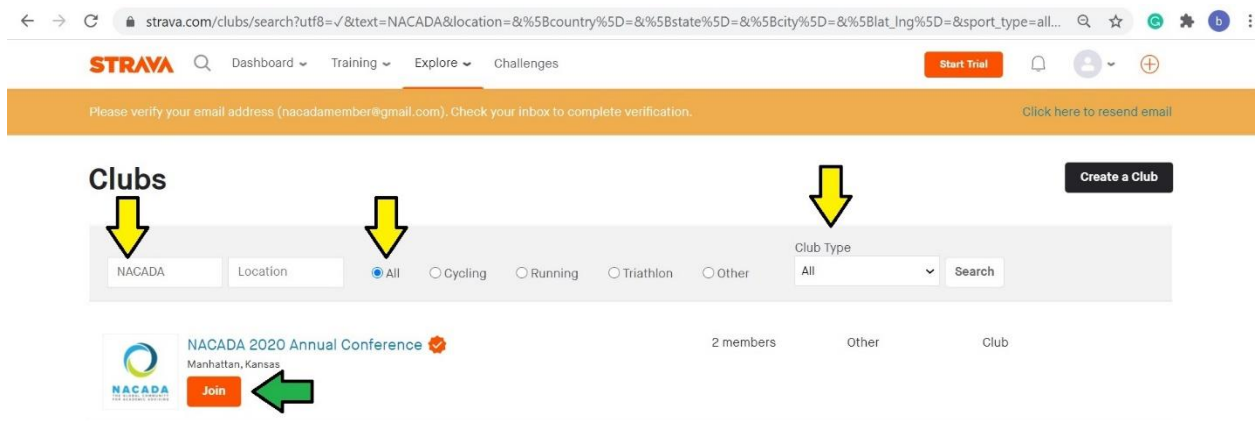
Additional Strava community opportunities

We've explored the basic functions, it's time to dive into what makes Strava unique: the social element!

We've already discussed joining the NACADA club, but if you tap on Clubs within the "Explore" tab, you'll see suggestions for Strava clubs near you (the main reason to include a location in your profile). Click on any that interest you, then choose Join. Strava clubs offer a way to connect with new friends and running peers you might never have met in person!

Another way to see updates from your runner friends is by searching out their profiles to follow, after which you'll see their activities in your feed, just like on Instagram or Twitter. Be sure to give them "kudos" on their runs, the Strava equivalent of a like. To find them, tap the symbol of two torsos in the upper right corner, and you'll reach the Find Friends screen. You can scroll through lists of possibilities based on prior Strava connections, Facebook friends, or your phone's contacts list.

You can also join Strava challenges, which will pit you virtually against thousands of other users to complete a task like running a certain number of miles in a month or posting an activity in a consecutive number of days in a week. Successfully completed challenges will often result in rewards like discounts on sponsored equipment or upcoming events.

Finally, once you start logging runs, you'll start to notice your performance on certain "segments" may be recorded. These are stretches of road or trail so popular with runners that Strava has created a leaderboard for them (or a user has created it as a segment). If you run the same routes often, you may start to notice certain names popping up again and again and you may find yourself competing for a top position on the leaderboard. Strava has two different leaderboards—one is based on the fastest times, while "Local Legends" ranks people who have run the segment the most times in the past 90 days.