



Female-Focused Survey Results & Race Organizer Tips



The International Trail Running Association (ITRA) has partnered with the Pro Trail Running Association's Women's Equity Group to drive meaningful change in the sport.

While female participation in trail running grew by 1% last year, bringing women to 29% of our database, there is still significant work to be done in fostering a more balanced and supportive environment.

To better understand the challenges women face in trail running, we conducted a global survey with 3,000 female trail runners, providing their insights. The feedback has highlighted the key barriers and obstacles female trail runners face in races, which we are now sharing with our 6,000+ race organizers worldwide.

Key takeaways from the survey:

- 83% of female trail runners rated the importance of trail running races feeling inclusive and welcoming for women as high, highlighting the need for more inclusive race environments.
- 68% of female trail runners would be more likely to participate in races that actively promote female participation.
- 45% of female runners see the lack of female-specific facilities, such as changing rooms and toilets, as a barrier to trail running.
- 32% of women feel that trail running's intimidating messaging is a barrier.
- 50.5% believe that race marketing does not adequately represent female athletes.
- 54% of women would be more encouraged to participate if races provided suitable facilities in both the race village and on the course.
- 43% of women would be more encouraged to run a race if it represented a wider range of ability levels.

Practical Steps to Boost Female Participation in Trail Races

Based on insights from our global survey, explore our top six strategies to create a more inclusive and welcoming trail running experience for women.

1) Toilets and Changing Facilities

Ensure adequate toilet facilities at the start, finish, and along the course. Providing changing spaces and period products at aid stations helps create a more comfortable race experience.

2) Inclusive Representation

Use diverse imagery in race marketing, showcasing women of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Avoid portraying trail running as only for the toughest athletes—highlight accessibility and community.

3) Equal Prize Money and Recognition

Ensure that women receive equal prize money, sponsorship opportunities, and podium recognition as men. Their achievements should be celebrated equally, with fair media coverage, including equal live streaming, representation, and visibility across all event media channels.

4) Fair Deferral Policies

Offer pregnancy deferrals so women can postpone their race entry to a future edition when they are ready to compete, without financial or logistical penalties.

5) Realistic Cut-Off Times & More Ability Levels

Avoid overly strict cut-offs, especially early in the race, as they can disproportionately impact women. Ensure shorter races are beginner-friendly, allowing for run-walk participation and a wider range of ability levels in races.

6) Clear and Accessible Information

Provide detailed race logistics, including transport, accommodation, bag drop, toilets, and gear recommendations. Active social media and race reviews from female participants help create a welcoming environment.

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