Applying Running Heads in APA Style

APA Style requires that the title page of your document contain, starting at the top, right side, a line that reads: Running Head:<TITLE OF PAPER>. Subsequent pages should only include the title in full capitals. It can be tricky to place these headings and to get them to work alongside your page numbering. Here’s how to do it:

1. Although it is okay to take up to two lines for your title, APA recommends limiting the title to 12 words of less.

2. Insert your page numbers (see Page Numbering tab or ETD How-To guide).

3. On the first page, double-click in the header area at the very top of the document.

4. Since you’ve already inserted your page numbers, the first page (title page) of your document should already be set to “Different First Page” in the Header & Footer Tools tab. If not, check Different First Page.

5. Next, simply type: “Running Head: <TITLE OF PAPER>” (using your own title) in the header space and click the red X (circled below) to close the header and footer box.

That completes page 1. For the remaining pages, you will drop the prefix “Running Head” and just use the title of your paper. This is fairly straight-forward because the Different First Page box is already checked, which sets you up to have a different header on page 2.
To continue, then,

1. Now scroll within your document to the page that will have the widest page number. (Look at Roman numerals xvii, xvi, xii, vii, iii, for example, or in triple-digit page numbers in your main body text. The width here is important because it will affect the position of the running head.)

2. From the page with the widest page number, double click in the top header space to open the Header & Footer Tools tab.

3. When you do this, you will notice that the cursor is automatically placed just to the left of the page number (it is flashing but a little hard to see).

4. With the cursor at this location, begin typing the title of your paper.

5. After the last letter of your title, press the space bar and continue to press space. By adding these spaces, your title will slowly move to the left side of your document, while the page number remains on the right.

6. Use the space bar and backspace keys to properly position your title.

7. When you are finished, click the red X to close the header and footer tools.

On Mac systems, it is not necessary to manually space the header in relation to the page number. Simply click in the second page of the document then double-click in the header space and type the running header.