7 Easy Ways to Avoid Injury as a Runner

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Common Injuries

Runners can pick up a wide range of injuries! It is extremely frustrating to miss out on any running training or races and it is usually easily avoided.

Some of the most common injuries we see when treating runners are:

- Plantar Fasciopathy
- Iliotibial Band Syndrome
- Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome
- Stress Fractures
- Achilles Tendinopathy
- Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome (Runners' Knee)

Here, you can find 7 tips to avoid injury when training!

Don't Over Do It

One of the most common ways that runners get injured is by doing too much too soon in training.

It is very important to gradually build up your leg strength and endurance over time.

Usually when a runner gets injured they have increased their training volume and overloaded their tissues.

A good rule of thumb is to not increase weekly mileage by more than 10% a week, although this may still be too much for some people!

Nutrition

Eating the right food is extremely important if you want to recover after a tough session.

It is vital to intake a large amount of carbohydrates after a run in order to refuel your glycogen (energy) stores in your muscles. Ideally you want to eat something within 30 minutes after your run.

Many runners also miss their protein requirements. Protein is essential to allow muscles to recover and rebuild after a run and without adequate protein you will not fully recover after a session.

Sleep

Sleep is the ultimate recovery tool and provides your body with the best opportunity to rebuild, repair and recover.

Lack of sleep has many negative effects on performance. It increases your risk of injury, inhibits your ability and makes it difficult to focus on your technique.

Lack of sleep also increases your likelihood of illness which will impact your training further.
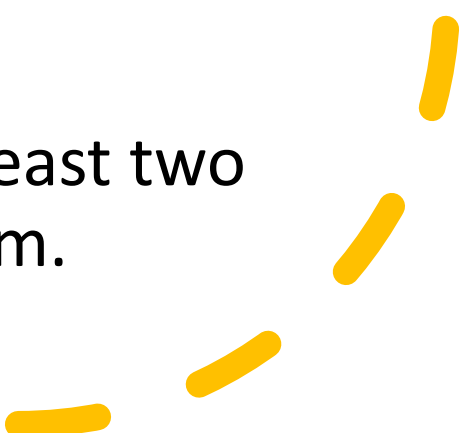
Strength Training

In order to run faster and longer, your body must be strong enough to do what your are asking it to do.

Lifting weights helps to strengthen muscles and connective tissues while improving your neuromuscular coordination and power.

Strength training can help to improve running economy. This means that you will be able to run at the same speed and require less energy.

Runners should aim to include at least two strength sessions into their program.

Technique

Running with correct technique is vital to prevent any injuries. Many of the injuries we see are due to mistakes with a runner's form, especially relatively inexperienced runners.

The most common mistakes we see are overstriding and low cadence. Each stride you take, there is 3-5 times your body weight going into your foot.

This increases the further away you land from your centre of mass. If you take thousands of steps every time you run there is a huge amount of force going into your legs.

In order to reduce the force you must increase your cadence and be light on your feet. Think "Lots of small steps" rather than "a smaller amount of long steps".

Footwear & Orthotics

Having the correct footwear is essential when you are out running. Every foot is different and you may need to try a few shoes before you find the ones for you.

It needs to provide good support to prevent from any overloading of the tissues, but also light enough so they don't feel like you are dragging weights around on your feet.

Custom orthotics can be useful if you have high arches/flat feet or any history of lower limb injuries. Your physiotherapist can recommend them if required.

Come See a Physio

If you are new to running and are afraid of getting injured or you are an experienced runner with a history of running injuries. You should book in to see a physiotherapist who specialises in running injuries.

They will assess your biomechanics and running style and provide you with an exercise plan to suit your needs, as well as offering hands on manual therapy and education.

Don't let pain get in the way of your goals!