

BEST PHYSICAL THERAPY FREE REPORT

THE TOP 7 CAUSES OF RUNNING INJURIES

...and How You Can Recover Faster
if You're Injured



Blue Hills
SPORTS & SPINE
Rehabilitation

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Foreword

As Physical Therapists who have made helping runners a career focus and specialty, we find ourselves repeating the same 7 things to runners quite often. There are very common reasons that most runners hurt themselves so perhaps you can avoid injury or avoid worsening your current pain/injury by incorporating some or all of these recommendations.

The Top 7 Causes of Running Injuries

1) Get in shape to run ... don't run to get in shape.

Trying to ramp up your mileage and “get in shape” too quickly is a common mistake that can lead to injury. Running puts a lot of stress on the body and the body can adapt very well to those stresses if you give it the proper time to do so. Rushing into longer runs when your body is not yet ready is a good way to get injured. There are also very common muscle weaknesses, even in seasoned runners, that can allow abnormal movements and forces through the knees and hips. These muscle weaknesses are very common causes of running injuries ... especially when trying to push into higher weekly mileage. Identifying and resolving them can be the difference between safely ramping up your mileage and having to stay off the running trails due to injury.

2) A proper warmup is worth your time. No run is worth an injury.

A proper warm up will allow the joints and muscles to be ready to perform and safely absorb the forces created during a run.

A good warm-up usually takes 10-15 minutes. A very simple and effective way for runners to warm up is just to jog at a slower pace for those 10-15 minutes before “starting your run.”

This one may seem quite obvious but we are amazed at how few runners actually build a warm up into their runs.

3) The arch was not meant to be a weight-bearing surface. That is why it is called the “arch.”

The arch is supposed to change shape with each step and it allows us to absorb and safely transfer forces up into the legs. If it becomes a weight-bearing surface, this places a lot of stress on the foot and knees. Having the right shoes, and possibly orthotics (depending on the foot), will allow the arch to do its job correctly.

4) Rest is your friend.

The body needs time to recover from the breakdown that is caused by running. A lot of micro-trauma occurs with every run even if there is no soreness created by the run. This is actually part of the body's strengthening process. However, if you don't allow for recovery/healing, these micro-traumas can accumulate into full-blown injuries. Rest is the only thing that allows joint, ligament, and tendon micro-traumas to heal. This may simply mean taking a day off here and there, but the optimal length and amount of rest periods can change drastically from one runner to the next. We are not saying that in order to get past a running injury you have to stop running altogether ... most of our patients continue to run while getting treatment. But if you never take a day off from running and find yourself injured, there's probably a very good reason you are in pain.

5) The absence of pain is not a good indicator of recovery.

If you had been injured or were having some pain with runs, and have been feeling better with rest or treatment, that's great! BUT while the absence of pain does indicate improvement, it doesn't mean full recovery. This is actually the time when you are most likely to get re-injured. The absence of pain often makes us think everything is fine, but if the cause of the original injury isn't fully resolved, re-injury is likely.

The underlying causes of the injury are something that need to be identified and treated by a well-trained professional.

6) Don't be afraid to stop a run if you don't feel good.

No run is worth an injury and no single run will “make” your training ... but it can break your training. If you aren't feeling good or are having some injury-type pain, shut it down for the day and make sure you are able to give it another shot soon.

7) Don't wait till you're in pain to get help. And if you're already hurting, the sooner you get good treatment the quicker and easier it will be to fix it.

The runners that deal with the least injuries have some key things in common... They not only understand and utilize the above 6 points, they also get their body alignment, movement patterns, and running form checked out by a professional before injury happens ... or at the first hint of pain that isn't immediately improving. They fully understand that most pains can quickly become much worse if you continue to run without resolving the issue. They also understand that new injuries are much faster and easier to fix than older chronic problems. They don't want to have to limit their mileage so they don't fool themselves into thinking “it'll get better on its own” when it has already been a problem for more than one run.

Take Home Point ...

Ever have a desire to hit the trail or just jog around the block and it is immediately followed by discouragement and fear about the pain you will likely feel? Or maybe you have a growing concern that the minor pain you've been having is getting worse rather than better? You are absolutely NOT alone. In our experience, most runners deal with some level of injury-pain at some point. The problem is that most of them also allow the problem to get worse and worse before looking for a solution... often becoming so bad that they have to severely limit their mileage or stop running altogether. Hopefully the information above has given you some ideas about where to look if you are already dealing with an injury and how you can avoid making it worse.

The professionals with the most training in treating running injuries are physical therapists, and the therapists at Blue Hills Sports & Spine Rehabilitation have made treating runners their career focus and passion. If you are currently dealing with an injury (or have one that keeps coming back over and over), we are more than happy to do a Free phone consultation with you. It'll only take a few minutes to get an idea of what might be causing your pain, and it doesn't require booking any appointments. Wouldn't it be nice to figure out why you're hurting and what can be done about it?