

RUNNING INJURIES

A runner commonly sustains two types of injuries – the acute trauma and the overuse injury. Both can be avoided by regular stretching, good shoes with shock-absorbing features, by avoiding overtraining and by receiving Chiropractic Care. Remember, if things start to hurt, stop training immediately and seek the advice of your Chiropractor, who can analyse your condition and recommend the most effective treatment.

Strains and sprains, often caused by running on un-level ground, can be treated by remembering 'RICE': Rice, Ice, Compression, and Elevation.

The affected area should be treated with Ice and splinted if possible to prevent further injury. The key to a speedy recovery is early evaluation by a Chiropractor or another medical professional.



Following is an overview of the most common injuries.

PLANTA FASCIITIS:

This is caused by stretching or tearing of the connective tissue on the bottom of the foot where the tissue attached to the heel and causes pain in a specific area on the bottom of the foot towards the heel, possibly radiating towards the ball of the foot. The foot feels tender early in the morning and becomes less painful with movement. This can be prevented by regular stretching of the calf and Achilles tendon.

BURSITIS OR TENDONITIS

This is irritation of the bursa (a fluid filled sac which sits under the tendon) or tendons from friction, pressure, trauma or dysfunction. This causes pain and stiffness on movement with no visible swelling at first, but swelling as the condition worsens. Common problem areas include knee, ankle and hips.

ACHILLES TENDONITIS

The Achilles tendon is the connection between the heel and the most powerful muscle group in the body, the calf. This is very common site for a disabling injury.

The biggest contributor to chronic Achilles tendonitis is ignoring pain in your Achilles tendon and running through the pain of early Achilles tendonitis. If your Achilles tendon is getting sore it is time to pay attention to it – Immediately.

SHIN SPLINTS

Shin splints result from faulty posture, poor shoes fallen arches, insufficient warm-up, muscle fatigue, exercising on unyielding surfaces or poor running mechanics. They cause pain or discomfort on the front, the inside and/or the outside surface of the shin bone or directly on the shin bone. This can be prevented by good shoes with shock absorbing features, heel toe landing for minimum impact, and calf stretches.

STRESS FRACTURE

These small fractures occur due to excessive stress (overuse of the bone) or an increase in intensity or distance running, resulting in gradual breakdown of the bone. Pain occurs especially in the foot and lower leg, becoming more intense with weight bearing activity. X-Rays appear negative initially but fractures become visible up to two weeks after the initial injury.

ANKLE SPRAINS

Running on level ground rarely results in an ankle sprain but cross country running, trail running and stepping in a pothole all could potentially lead to an ankle sprain. These injuries should be treated immediately with R.I.C.E. (REST, ICE, COMPRESSION and ELEVATION.) The ice should be applied for about 15 minutes at a time, with at least a 15 min interval before the next application.

RUNNERS KNEE

This essentially means softening of the cartilage of the knee cap. Portions of the cartilage may then be under either too much or too little pressure. This may result in cartilage deterioration at the inner part of the knee cap. Pain is usually felt after sitting for a long period of time with the knees bent.

ILIOTIBIAL BAND SYNDROME

This is pain or aching on the outer side of the knee and usually happens in the middle or at the end of a run and is often seen in runners who train only on a track or on uneven ground.

HOW TO AVOID INJURIES!

The majority of running injuries occur from overtraining. Avoid doing too much too soon. Your progress in mileage and speed should be a gradual one. An unrelenting increase in mileage from one week to the next will ultimately result in a breakdown. It is important to keep in mind the principle of hard days and easy days being interspersed and also hard and easy weeks. Mileage should usually only be increased approximately 10% per week. Every third week, you should drop back a small amount. For most runners one or two days a week, at least, should be devoted to rest or non-running activities. This gives your body a chance to recover and strengthen itself. Remember, pain is a warning, stop running and consult your chiropractor immediately.

Regular stretching may also help reduce injuries. Runners frequently develop tightness in the posterior muscle groups, such as hamstrings and the calf muscles. The quadriceps and anterior shin muscles may become relatively weak, due to muscular imbalance

CHOOSE THE RIGHT RUNNING SHOE:

Joggers should wear a shoe with good cushioning impact. Running shoes are designed to provide maximum overall shock absorption for the foot. Such a shoe should also have good heel control. Although not a cure-all. These qualities in a running/sports shoe help to prevent shin splints, tendonitis, heel pain, stress fractures and other overuse syndromes.

A good running shoe should have a wide, cushioned heel and sole. The heel should be "rockered" at the back so that the heel strike is under the heel, not behind it. The shoe should be deep enough so that the toes do not press against the front and long enough to allow free motion and gripping during running. There should be about a thumb-nail length between the longest toe and the toe of the shoe. Unless there is enough space for the toes, the toe nails will be injured.

Running shoes should have "spring" in the forefoot; that is, the forefoot of the shoe should tilt up off the ground when the shoe is resting flat on the ground. The shoe should be flexible but not limp and the heel counter firm and padded to support the heel. The sole of the heel should be soft enough to absorb much of the shock of running. A soft neoprene sole is a great help in absorbing shock. Most running shoes have a cushion to support the arch. This is desirable to avoid the foot 'going over' or 'pronating'.

Follow these simple guidelines when choosing your shoes:

- Don't just go by size. Have your feet measured.
- Visit the shoe store at the end of a workout when your feet are largest.
- Wear the sock you normally wear when working out.
- Fit the shoe to the largest foot.



Running shoes should be regularly replaced as the shock absorbing capability will diminish gradually and may be inadequate after 350-550 miles. The upper part of the shoe may not show much wear, but the shock absorption may still be gone. If you are running 20 miles per week, you should be replacing your shoes between 4 and 8 months depending upon your shock absorption needs.

Dr. Gemma Bailey D.C, Bsc (Hons) Chiro

Member of Chiropractic Association of Ireland and registered with Quinn Healthcare, VHI & Aviva



19 Fitzwilliam Square South (basement), Dublin 2
Phone: 01 6618949 Fax: 01 6618944
info@fitzwilliamhealth.ie www.fitzwilliamhealth.ie

