

Prevention of Running Injuries

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Running is a wonderful form of exercise that may be very rewarding. On occasion, however, running can lead to medical problems. Here are a few tips on preventing and treating some of these running injuries:

Bones, muscles and tendons: The most common problems that runners encounter are overuse injuries that affect the bones, muscles and tendons. This type of injury frequently



takes the form of a “tendonitis” (which means

“inflammation of a tendon”).

Examples are Achilles tendonitis, patellar tendonitis and iliotibial band friction syndrome.

Similar overuse injuries include patellofemoral syndrome and plantar fasciitis. Basically, the tendon or other body part is being overused or overstressed, resulting in inflammation and

pain. This “overuse” is a relative term and is often related to muscle or tendon tightness, muscle weakness or other biomechanical problems.

If you start to develop a muscle, tendon or joint pain somewhere, apply ice for 15 minutes and repeat this a few times per day for the next few days. Take a break from running for a couple days. If the pain persists or is severe then have it assessed by a health care professional that knows how to assess and treat sports injuries. The earlier that you treat an injury, the easier that it is to treat.

Enjoy your running, and run safely!



You may be able to prevent these injuries by:

- starting your running program gradually (e.g., “walk-run” program, taking rest days between runs)
- increasing your running gradually, i.e. no more than 10% increase in distance per week
- remember not to increase your running distance, frequency and intensity all at once
- stretch muscles and tendons that are tight (e.g., hamstrings and quadriceps are often tight in runners)
- strengthen muscles that are weak (e.g., often runners are weak in their gluteal muscles)
- have proper running technique (in general running “heel-to-toe” is safest, unless you are running at a very fast competitive pace)
- replace your worn-out shoes (running shoes wear out quickly, and should be replaced approximately every 500 km and sometimes sooner especially if your shoes often get wet)
- make sure your shoes are the correct model to match your foot type (e.g., pronating feet require more stable shoes)
- do not run in cross-training or court shoes which are built for pivoting-type sports
- if you run on the side of a road, alter the side of the road that you run on
- get used to running hills and doing speed work gradually



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