

Injury Advice for Runners

Rudi Chaplin, The Treatment Lab

10 Common injuries for runners.

ITB friction syndrome

Also known as “Runner’s knee”. This will give you pain into the outside of the knee. It is caused by repetition, and is an overuse injury. Poor biomechanics can contribute to the injury, especially weak glutes and foot motion.

Shin Pain/”Shin Splints”

A common injury for runners. Usually causes pain to the inside of the shin, but can also give pain to the front and outside of the shin. Tight calfs, and poor biomechanics can contribute to this injury. Especially foot motion. Also weak glutes may lead to this injury.

Calf tightness

Most runners will experience tight calf’s at some point. If left untreated, it will usually lead to shin pain. Running puts a lot of strain on the calfs, especially hills and intervals.

Patella-femoral pain

A term given to pain located around or underneath the knee cap (patella). Will often give pain up or down stairs after a run. May also give clicking/grinding noise (crepitus). Is often caused by poor biomechanics, especially weak glutes and foot motion. Also caused by tight IT Band and weak VMO (Vastus medialis oblique).

Stress fractures

Every runners worst fear! A stress fracture will only heal with rest, and will force a period of no running. A stress fracture is common in the tibia (shin), fibula (outside shin) and the metatarsals (foot). It can be caused by poor biomechanics, especially foot motion. A stress fracture usually occurs with a sudden increase in mileage, and not enough rest.

Achilles Tendinopathy

Very common injury for runners. Usually occurs with an increase in mileage, not enough rest, change of footwear. Biomechanics, especially foot motion can contribute to this. Often there will be weakness in the tendon, and a rehab programme will include increasing eccentric and concentric strength of the calf and Achilles.

Patella Tendinopathy

Pain on the edge of the patella, especially underneath. Poor biomechanics, especially weak glutes and poor foot motion can contribute to this injury. There will often be tightness in the quads and hip flexors. A rehab programme will include increasing eccentric and concentric strength of the quad and patella tendon.

Trochanteric bursitis

Pain on the outside of the hip. It will often hurt during and after a run, and when laying on your side. Often caused by tight IT band and poor biomechanics, especially weak glutes and poor foot motion.

Plantar fasciitis

A sharp pain under the heel. Often worse in the mornings and after a run. Tight calf's can contribute to this, and also poor biomechanics, especially foot motion.

Lower back tightness

A general ache in the lower back that gets worse throughout a run. Tight lower back muscles and tight hip flexors can contribute to this. Also poor biomechanics, especially weak glutes and weak core stability.

8 Top tips to help prevent injuries

Injuries are a common occurrence with any physical activity, but there are some things that can help reduce your risk of injury.

1. Correct footwear

Many injuries are caused by poor foot biomechanics. Your footwear is the most important purchase as a runner. Your trainers should be suited to your foot motion type, and so a gait analysis is important.

Replace your trainers every 350-400 miles to ensure there is effective cushioning that will help prevent injury.

When you find a trainer that you get on with, stick with them when you replace them. A change in trainer (to a non-suitable pair) can sometimes cause injuries.

2. Strengthening

Many injuries are caused by poor biomechanics, especially weak glutes. Many runners only run, but strength work is very important. You don't have to go to a gym, but you can complete glute strengthening exercises at home. An example routine for glute strengthening can be found at:

<http://www.thetreatmentlab.co.uk/2017/02/06/dont-forget-the-glutes/>

Also, Pilates exercises to strengthen your core can prevent injury and make you a more efficient runner.

3. Stretching

Many injuries can be caused by muscular tightness. Stretching of muscle groups can reduce tightness. Yoga is very good for flexibility.

4. Warm up and cool down

A gentle warm up including dynamic stretches is important to increase flexibility. Gentle stretches after as part of a coll down can reduce post run tightness.

5. Sports Massage

Regular sports massage can help reduce muscular tightness and can help prevent “niggles” developing into an injury. If you are injury free and running well, a sports massage every 4 weeks can help maintain good muscle condition. It can also reduce DOMS (Delayed onset muscle soreness) after a long run, and a pre-race massage a few days before an event can help prepare.

6. Foam rolling

Although painful, it can help reduce DOMS. It can also give a temporary improvement in flexibility, so when followed by stretching, it can be beneficial. But don't roll you IT Bands! It can make them tightner. The muscle at the top of the IT Band (TFL) is best to release when rolling.

An example of general foam rolling exercises can be found here:

<http://www.thetreatmentlab.co.uk/2016/10/05/foam-rolling-does-it-really-work/>

7. Rest!

You will need rest days! Running more won't necessarily make you faster if you don't allow your body time to repair and adapt. Not enough rest will contribute to many injuries.

8. Gradually increase your mileage

Your body will need time to adapt to running. Gradually, strength of bones, muscles and tendons will increase if the load is not too great.

If you increase your mileage too quickly, you will increase your risk of injury, especially the dreaded stress fracture! As a rule, there should not be more than a 10% increase on your weekly mileage.