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# 10 ways to minimise running injury!

## 1 Strengthen your body

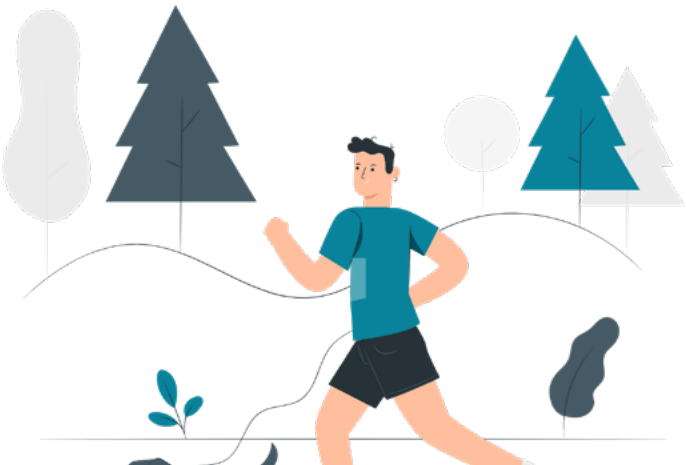
Running requires far greater lower limb and core strength than walking. Therefore, if you are new to running or looking to increase your running distance/ speed, you need to strengthen your lower limb and core muscles sufficiently. Common areas for runners' injuries stem from poor core stability and muscular imbalances. Include resistance, core or Pilates training to build strength and minimise injuries.

## 2 Gradual progression/training change

Remember the tortoise and the hare, slow and steady wins the race! Only increase or change one variable at a time e.g. speed, frequency, training intensity, hill work, interval training, running surface etc. If you are new to running, consider the couch to 5km programme. Introducing anything new should be done carefully, this includes new shoes, new types of training or running on a new surface. Our bodies are excellent at adapting to change, just look at all those people that have trained their bodies to run marathon distances and ultradistances. Adaptation takes time, allow for this in your training.

## 3 Comfortable footwear

When choosing a running shoe, it is important to consider the running terrain and typical distance you wish to cover. While also considering your foot posture. The most important consideration with running footwear is that they must be comfortable while running! Try to run on a treadmill within the store or checking the returns policy before purchasing new runners. Footwear and insoles do not cause injury but may be used to alter the load through your knee or ankle if recovering from an injury. Remember to change running footwear every 800 to 1000 km.



## 4 Warm up & cool down properly

Make sure to warm up adequately before exercising. This prepares the body for training by increasing your heart rate, flexibility and body temperature. A dynamic warm up should include gentle jogging, dynamic stretches, stride outs, hopping and skipping exercises. Your cool down following a run should include some static stretches and/or foam rolling of key muscle groups; quads, hamstrings, calves, hip flexors and glutes, holding each for approximately 30 seconds and repeating 2-3 times. This will minimise the onset of muscle soreness and prevent muscles from getting tight which over time may lead to injury.

## 5 Rest and Recovery

Every runner requires 1-2 days' rest per week. If you are new to running, you may require more than this. Rest days allow your body time to repair and strength for the next running session. It is recommended that healthy adults should sleep 7-9 hours per day, while athletes may require more. Insufficient rest may place you at risk of overtraining syndrome. Difficulty sleeping, general fatigue, performance declines, an elevated heart rate, increased blood pressure and irregular or missed periods (in females) are all signs you may be overtraining.

## 6 Adequate fuel and hydration

Running increases your body's food and hydration requirements. If you are running while dehydrated or hungry your running form is likely to suffer and this can easily lead to injury. Therefore, it is important to consume adequate food and drinks prior to and following running to minimise this risk.

## 7 Embrace variety

Vary your running surface, direction, route, speed. Smooth, soft surfaces, such as trails and running tracks place lower loads through our bodies than hard tarmac ground.

## 8 Be patient and set realistic goals

Goals are important if you want to succeed but unrealistic goals have the opposite effect. Pushing your body too hard will lead to muscle and joint injuries and injuries cause frustration. Learn to listen to your body. If you feel your body tightening up after 8 km but you have a 12 km run planned, recognise that your body is asking you to stop. Other times, your body will be feeling good and you can push on past a goal.

## 9 Running technique

Running style may aggravate an injury. If you have a previous injury that you are worried about aggravating or a persistent niggle that isn't resolving, you may benefit from a running analysis. Your local Chartered Physiotherapist may provide slow motion video analysis to evaluate your running form. Specific running cues and targeted exercises can then be provided for running retraining.

## 10 Act early

If you feel a niggle get it assessed and treated as soon as possible. Prevention is better than cure but addressing problems quickly minimises their impact on your training.

Contact your Chartered Physiotherapist for further information and an individualised plan on minimising the risk of running Injuries or for assessment, treatment & rehabilitation of injuries.

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