



4 Ways to Prevent Running Injuries

Breathing in fresh air, the exhilaration of conquering another mile, or a pathway to better health — these are just a few of the reasons why people choose running. Whatever your running routine, you've probably spent some time thinking about how to avoid injury. It's a sport known for a fairly high rate of injury due to the amount of stress put on your feet and legs.

With some proactive steps, you can lower your risk of getting hurt. We've put together a list to help you stay safe and avoid some of the most common running injuries.

1. Include Strength Training

Strong muscles, ligaments, and tendons guard against impact, improve form, and lead to a consistent gait. Your strength training should focus on all muscle groups, including the trunk and upper and lower body. A few specific exercises include:

- **Lateral Side Steps** - To build hip and glute strength, use a resistance band placed just above your ankles or knees. Do a partial squat with your feet separated and take 10 to 15 sidesteps in one direction and then reverse direction.
- **Hamstring Curls** - Lie on your back and place your calves and heels on a stability ball, with your feet hip-width apart. Set your arms on the floor, move your hips upward, bend your knees, and pull your heels toward your buttocks, moving the ball toward your body. Extend your knees and lower your hips to move the ball away. Complete 12 to 15 reps.

2. Pay Attention to Form

Run with good posture. If you have poor posture, it can result in excess stress on the back and knees. Keep your upper torso straight, your head aligned directly over your shoulders, and be sure your lower back is not arched.

Avoid overstriding. If your foot lands well ahead of your knee, you are increasing the amount of force on your muscles and joints.

Keep your arms moving from front to back. If your arms tend to swing across your body, it can rotate the shoulders and reduce your core stability. Keep your elbows close to your body with your arms relaxed.

3. Take Some Rest Days

Most runners need at least two days off per week. Each time you run, you are breaking down muscle. In order to rebuild, you need 36 to 48 hours of rest. Built-in rest also reduces your chances of overuse injuries and may give you a needed psychological break.

4. Slowly Increase Weekly Mileage

Increasing your mileage too quickly raises your chance of injury. Add only about a mile per day. For example, if you run 20 miles over four days, you can add one mile to each day the next week for a total of 24 miles. Many experts also recommend staying with the same mileage for two weeks before attempting to increase it.

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