



Preventing Running Injuries

Facts on running-related injuries

Running is one of Australia's most popular sporting and leisure activities. Running is popular because of the low costs of involvement, the ability to participate at any time and the associated health benefits.

How popular is the sport?

- ◆ About one in five Australian's aged 16-65 undertake some form of jogging. One in seventeen attempt marathons or fun runs.

Who is injured ?

- ◆ Running injuries can effect anyone who participates, regardless of their age or gender.
- ◆ A recreational runner who steadily trains and occasionally participates in a long distance run has a 37%-56% chance of sustaining a injury.
- ◆ A population survey estimated an injury incidence of 3.6 injuries per 1000 hours of running.

The cause and types of injury

- ◆ Overuse injuries are the most common type of injury associated with running.
- ◆ Running injuries are associated with inadequate warm-ups, training errors, incorrect running style, poor footwear and poor environmental conditions.
- ◆ Approximately 75% of running injuries happen from the knee downwards.
- ◆ Knees are the most common body part injured accounting for 25% of running injuries. Other commonly injured body parts include the feet, ankles, lower leg and shin, upper leg, back and hip/pelvis/groin.

Cost of running injuries

- ◆ Running injuries can lead to a reduction in training or full cessation of training.
- ◆ Many injuries result in medical consultation and up to 5% result in absence from work.
- ◆ 20%-70% of injuries are likely to reoccur at a later stage.



References

- ◆ McGrath A and Finch C. Running the race against injuries: a review of the literature. Monash University Accident Research Centre. Report No. 104. October 1996.
- ◆ Van Mechelen W. Running injuries: a review of the epidemiological literature. Sports Medicine. 1992; 14 (5): 320-335.

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Safety tips for runners

Preparation

- ◆ Warm-ups and cool downs, including stretching, should be undertaken both before and after a running session.
- ◆ If you have sustained an injury in the past consult a professional for advice about appropriate exercises to perform.
- ◆ Runners, particularly women and girls, should ensure that their diet is nutritionally balanced.

Training practices

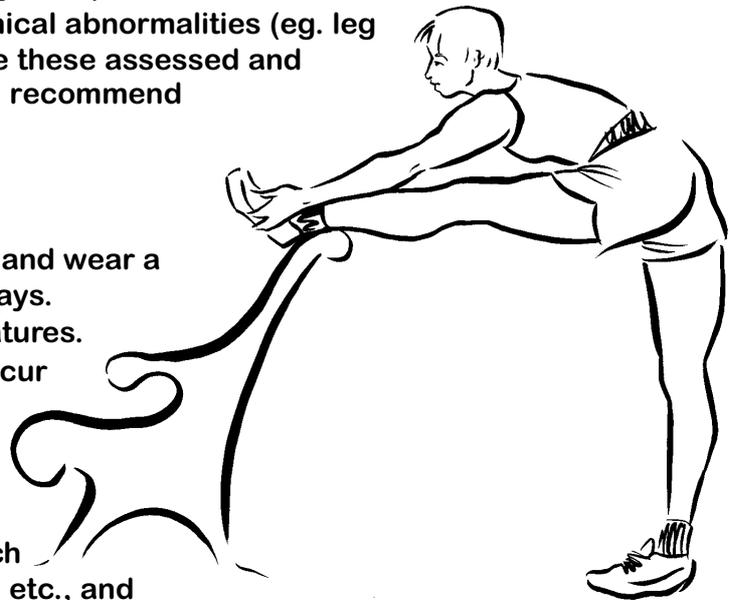
- ◆ Recreational runners should not run too far a distance per week. If fitness is your overall goal, intersperse running with other activities, such as cycling or swimming.
- ◆ Build up running speeds and distances gradually.
- ◆ Follow an individual training program prepared by a qualified coach.

Equipment and technique

- ◆ Choose shoes carefully, preferably with professional advice.
- ◆ Runners with potential biomechanical abnormalities (eg. leg length discrepancies) should have these assessed and treated by a professional who can recommend corrective actions.

Environmental factors

- ◆ Ensure you drink adequate water.
- ◆ Use a broad spectrum sunscreen and wear a hat and/or sunglasses on sunny days.
- ◆ Avoid running in extreme temperatures.
- ◆ Avoid slippery surfaces as can occur during wet or cold weather.
- ◆ Avoid running on soft sand, cement or other hard surfaces.
- ◆ Ensure that running tracks are regularly checked for hazards such as potholes, loose debris, rubbish etc., and properly maintained.



If an injury occurs

- ◆ A running injury should receive prompt first aid treatment.
- ◆ Injured runners should allow adequate time to regain their strength and range of movement before recommencing running.
- ◆ When restarting running after an injury, it is important that runners build up to the previous distance or pace slowly.

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