

## Running Injury Prevention By Dr. Wes Dawkins

With the New Year upon us many of us have made the resolution to get back into shape. Jogging is one of the simplest and cheapest ways to accomplish this. It provides a quick and effective aerobic workout. Unfortunately, runners often encounter injuries that can keep them off the pavement and treadmills. It is a very high impact activity that puts a lot of stress on the bodies joints and muscles making them susceptible to injury. However, training errors account for 70% of all running injuries. If we can correct these training errors, we can significantly reduce the injury rate.

Overuse injuries are the most common type of injury seen in runners. These can be broken up into two categories, excessive mileage and inappropriate progression of distance or intensity. Runners should limit their weekly distance to 45 miles or 70 km. Increasing the weekly mileage above that will not be any more beneficial to your health or your race times and will increase your risk of an overuse injury. The body needs time between workouts to recover and rebuild. If you are new to running, getting back into shape or looking to increase your mileage, it should be increased by no more than ten percent per week. Trying to do too much too quickly only leads to injuries that will set you back and keep you from achieving your fitness goals.

Besides a well designed training regime an appropriate pair of running shoes designed for your type of foot (flat, wide, rigid, etc) is your next best bet for preventing an injury. Every step you take while running creates a force ten times your body weight that travels through your foot into your ankle, knees, hips and back. A good shoe can help absorb some of that force and help to position and stabilize your foot so it can better absorb the impact. Be sure to shop at a shoe store that has knowledgeable employees who are capable of analyzing your foot type so they can make well informed recommendations.

Even a well fit shoe can cause problems. Running shoes become worn and need replacing well before the tread wears out. Shoes that have logged 400 miles or 640 km need to be replaced. For example, runners averaging 15 miles (or 25 km) a week should replace their shoes every 6 months. A good way to remember when your shoes need replacing is by writing the purchase date on them. By knowing your weekly mileage you can figure out when you'll need new ones. That way you can plan ahead, buy your next pair and gradually break them in before the old ones wear out.

If foot, leg or back problems have bothered you in the past, custom orthotics could help to alleviate them and prevent them from recurring. See an orthotics specialist such as a chiropodist, podiatrist or chiropractor to see if you're a good candidate.

The take home point is listen to your body, limit your weekly mileage and build up your endurance slowly. Don't let an injury keep you from keeping your New Years resolution.

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