

NJURY PROOF YOUR RUNNING

- **Save your energy for race day**

Training is training, racing is racing. Most of your training runs will be done at an easy pace or at a targeted pace to prepare your body for race day and get to the starting line injury free. It is important to understand your individual paces to meet those goals, especially if you train with a group where your best buddy may be able to run a comfortable pace much faster. Remember training is not about competition with your peers.

- **Rest – recovery – sleep**

Being sure to get a good night's sleep and taking recovery days during a training cycle is equally important as training days. Sleep allows our bodies time to rebalance internal systems, promote soft tissue healing and for mental health stability.

- **Cross train**

There is an adage that says if you want to improve in something then you need to practice doing that activity the most. This is true for running however running is a repetitive activity of pounding 2.5x our body weight with each step. If your out for a 5 mile + run, that's a lot of steps and body weight to carry around. Adding in a day or two of cross training such as elliptical, bike, swim, or yoga can give our joints and soft tissue a much needed break from the pounding.

- **How is your posture when your not running**

Typical runners are training 5-15+ hours per week leaving the majority of our waking hours not training. As such, you must pay attention to your body position throughout your day whether you are sitting, standing, walking, or household activities. Sitting the majority of your day will set you up for a boatload of issues as outlined in this great infographic: <https://goo.gl/pxZW4b>

- **Appropriate shoes**

Running is a fairly minimal activity not needing any special equipment except for a good pair of running shoes that are appropriate for your body. Choose a running store where the salespeople know how to observe your gait and your feet to help you choose the right shoes and a store with a good return policy so you can test run your new shoes for at least 2-3 weeks. How can you decide which shoes are right?

1. Primarily - Do they feel good when standing, walking and running – take a test run
2. Can you stand on one leg easily without losing balance
3. Can you stand on 1 leg without losing balance during these activities
 - a. raise other leg out to side 5x
 - b. bring other leg across 5x
 - c. turn your head side to side

- **If your injury prone, consider a run/walk method**

Understanding your body is key to a successful training cycle, staying injury free, and ultimately meeting race day goals. If your injury prone, like I am, consider a run/walk method of training and racing. The many benefits of run/walk method allows the runner:

1. to build time on their feet while limiting the amount of pounding steps
2. to maintain great running form without muscular fatigue

3. to reset their running form as they begin each cycle of running
 4. to reduce post run soreness
 5. the ability to run faster during the run cycles than if running continuously and possibly having a faster racetime
- **Supplemental exercise program including flexibility, balance, and strength exercises**
 - Runners need to have enough mobility in their joints - spine, shoulders, hips, knees, ankles, and big toes in order to absorb each step and be as efficient as possible.
 - Runners need great balance as running is a series of 1 legged hops.
 - Runners need to be strong in order to create enough force to propel their body through the air efficiently.

As everyone is different, an exercise program for one, is not necessarily one for all. It's important to be your own health advocate for great prevention is key. Ask your MD or chiropractor for a script for PT so you can find out the specific exercises your need to prevent injury.