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How to Prepare for Running

Luckily, running requires less preparation and fewer materials than virtually any imaginable sport/hobby. When it comes down to it, all you really need is a decent pair of shoes. Nonetheless, here are a few bits of advice for all you runners out there! Hope it helps...

Health Benefits of Running

Regular running offers many health benefits including:

- Helps to build strong bones, as it is a weight bearing exercise (Decreases susceptibility to Osteoporosis).
- Strengthen muscles.
- Improve cardiovascular health (lowered BP, decreased cholesterol).
- Help maintain a healthy weight.
- Improved mood (endorphins released, feeling a sense of accomplishment).
- Improved coordination.



Get a Thorough Musculoskeletal Assessment from a Physio

Running requires the body to absorb continuous repeated impact forces, and running-related injuries are common. The relationship between biomechanics and injury is specific to each body part. Overall, poor mechanics of any body part will increase the landing forces acting on the body and increase muscle response as a result. Tissue and bone stress will take place which – depending on the individual and the amount of running – can become excessive and cause injury.

Before you begin preparing to run, evaluate your running technique and seek guidance from our qualified physiotherapists at PHYSIO4ALL with a biomechanical assessment which involves a needs analysis, anatomical marking, running technique analysis, footwear analysis and technique modification.

A 50% DISCOUNT ON YOUR INITIAL ASSESSMENT WILL BE GRANTED UPON PRESENTATION OF THE VOUCHER BELOW.

Progression of Running

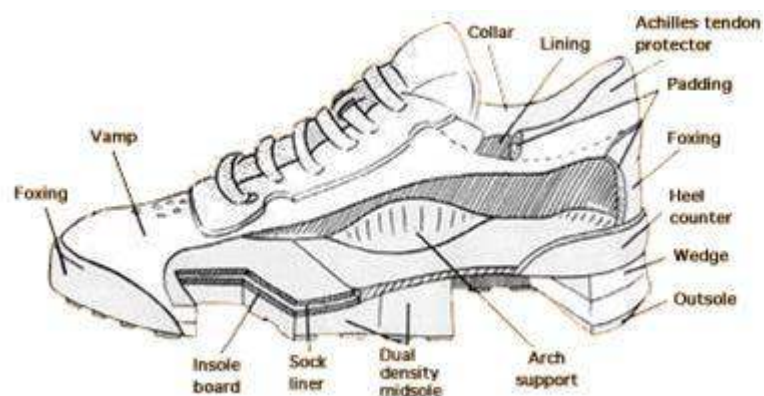
You should ease into your running program gradually. If you're returning to running after a long hiatus or you are a beginner, it's tempting to jump in feet first, but doing too much too soon will lead to fatigue, injury or re-injury. Here are a few guidelines for safely increasing

mileage and intensity to reach or surpass your previous level of training.
Important training tips:

- Abide one of running's cardinal rules: Increase mileage by **no more than 10 percent a week!**
- Walking from slow to medium pace as part of your warm-up (initial 5 minutes)
- After first 5 minutes it is essential to carry out 3-5 minutes of **dynamic stretching**.
- **Cool down** from brisk to slow and then carry out at least 10 minutes of static stretching.
- Carry out at least **2 stretch sessions per week** outside of your exercise program.
- It would be beneficial to **cross-train** (swim, cycle or row) on your off days.
- Incorporate rest days in-between training days, these may be used for cross training.
- **Be patient and don't get frustrated.**

Correct Footwear

Before entering into a running program you should ensure you have the correct footwear to **ENHANCE** your foot mechanics and minimise the chance of sustaining running related injuries. Note that if the running shoe you purchased is not comfortable, then it's likely that it is not suitable for your foot and will therefore not function effectively during running.



Determine your foot type to achieve overall footwear comfort.

Your foot type is determined by your:

- Foot width: broad, normal or narrow
- Arch shape: High, normal or flat
- Foot length in cm

Ensure that the base of the inside of the shoe fits the base of your foot. Also ensure that you have a thumbnail's length of space from the end of your large toe to the shoe's edge.

Know Your Running Technique

There are three categories to describe the way in which you make contact with the ground while running:

- Forefoot striker- You contact the ground with the balls of your feet first
- Midfoot striker- Your entire foot contacts the ground at once
- Heel striker (Majority of runners are heel strikers)- Your heel makes contact with the ground first

In regards to stability and cushioning in the shoe, the most recent technologies include spongy foam and silicone based compounds that absorb shock, improve shoe durability and enhance rebound energy. Look for silicone-based compounds with high resiliency as they

are the most effective for rebound energy, minimizing energy expenditure and improving overall running performance.

At PHYSIO4ALL we can give you more advice regarding your foot type and running technique to help ensure you purchase the correct running shoes.

Warm-up and Cool-down

Stretches are most effective when incorporated as part of your warm up routine as well as the cool down after running. If you are injured, part of your management may be to stretch up to three times daily in order to get a substantial change in muscle length.

Dynamic Stretches

Current research suggests that the use of dynamic stretches - slow controlled movements through the full range of motion - are the most appropriate exercises for the warm up as they help reduce muscle stiffness, which is thought to increase the likelihood of muscle tears. For this reason, we advocate dynamic stretching prior to performing for injury prevention and preparation and static stretching away from training or competitions to increase range of motion.

Running mainly involves the lower body (the ankles, knees, and hips). Specifically, running works the hip flexors, the quadriceps, the hamstrings, and the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles. Below are both dynamic and static stretches to ensure all these muscle groups are stretched correctly.

Leg Swings



- **Flexion/Extension-** Stand sideways onto the wall
- Weight on your left leg and your right hand on the wall for balance
- Swing your right leg forward and backward
- 10 to 12 repetitions on each leg

Lunges



- Standing tall both feet together (starting position)
- Keeping the back straight lunge forward with the right leg approx 1 to 1½ metre
- The right thigh should be parallel with the ground and the right lower leg vertical
- Spring back to the starting position
- Repeat with the left leg
- 12 to 16 repetitions on each leg

Ankle Bounce



- Start position - both hands on the ground and standing on both toes.
- Gently lower one heel to the ground.
- Alternate with the opposite foot.

Any stretching is best performed after your muscles are warm, so only stretch after your general warm-up. Always stretch after your run. Light dynamic stretching or static stretching is a good way to cool down after running.

Static Stretches

Static stretches are more appropriate to the cool down as they help muscles to relax, realign muscle fibres and re-establish their normal range of movement.

Hamstring Stretch



- Put one leg in front of the other.
- Keep back knee straight.
- Bend forward as though trying to touch toes.
- Hold 30sec.
- Repeat on other leg.

Gluteal Stretch



- For a “figure of four” with your hip flexed to 90 degrees and your foot pointing across your body.
- Pull the leg towards your chest.
- Hold 30sec.
- Repeat on other leg.

Diet Advice

- **Eat healthy carbohydrates** (such as fruits, vegetables and whole grain cereals, pasta and grains) for high-octane fuel.
- **Eat protein** (such as meat, fish or meat alternative) at most meals to help build and repair muscles.
- **Drink at least two cups of non-caffeinated fluid** two hours before exercising; then drink six to 12 ounces every 15 minutes while exercising.
- On race day, **eat a snack about an hour before your run**. Choose an easy-to-digest carbohydrate food such as a banana or cereal with skim milk. Avoid eating too much fibre (it can cause discomfort) and fat (it can take a long time to digest).

You need to experiment to find the timing, amount and make up that best suits your individual needs. Having a small amount of food in your stomach before running will ensure you have enough energy for the session and your glycogen (long term energy) levels don't get too low.

Staying hydrated is critical to your running performance and, more importantly, for preventing heat-related illnesses. Dehydration may lead to fatigue, decreased coordination, and muscle cramping. Runners need to pay attention to what and how much they're drinking before, during and after exercise. Current research recommends two before you start your run, try to drink 500-700mL of water or other non-caffeinated fluid and 1'50mL just before your run. Don't forget to replenish your losses after running with fluids. For every 1 hour of running you need to drink at least 600mL of fluid.

Supplements

Antioxidants help decrease damage caused by free radicals (substances in the body generated by pollution, sunlight, conversion of food into fuel and the immune system). Free radicals can reduce performance and impair the repair process that occurs after exercise.

Dose: Take an antioxidant supplement daily — selenium (100 milligrams), alpha lipoic acid/ALA (50 milligrams) and vitamins A (10,000 international units), C (1,000 milligrams) and E (100 milligrams).

Omega-3 fatty acids will support your immune system.

Dose: 2,000 to 4,000 milligrams a day with food.

Calcium will keep bones strong; calcium reduces the risk of muscle tears and stress fractures.

Dose: A combination calcium (500 milligrams) and magnesium (250 milligrams) supplement twice a day.

Magnesium - Running cramps usually involve the muscles of the calf, and occasionally the hamstrings and quadriceps. Often maintaining good hydration, mineral and sugar levels in the muscles can reduce cramping. If you're a regular sufferer of leg cramps, running calf cramps and night time leg cramps and have tried 'almost everything', then perhaps magnesium supplement may have some benefits for you. Magnesium has been implicated in the prevention of muscle cramps and muscle spasms. Increased loss of magnesium from the body has been seen during and after exercise, as a result of increased sweating.

Dose: 500mg a day

Countdown to City2Surf...

We have just 16 weeks left until the much anticipated City2Surf, 14km run takes place. This year it will be held on Sunday 8th August 2010, so its time to start preparing. Remember, **by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.**

To assist you in this process, we are offering a **50% discount (a \$40 saving)** on your initial musculoskeletal assessment from one of our highly experienced physiotherapists. Please present this voucher when visiting the practice.



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Valid until 30th May, 2010
Conditions apply.



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Yours in health,

The PHYSIO4ALL team



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