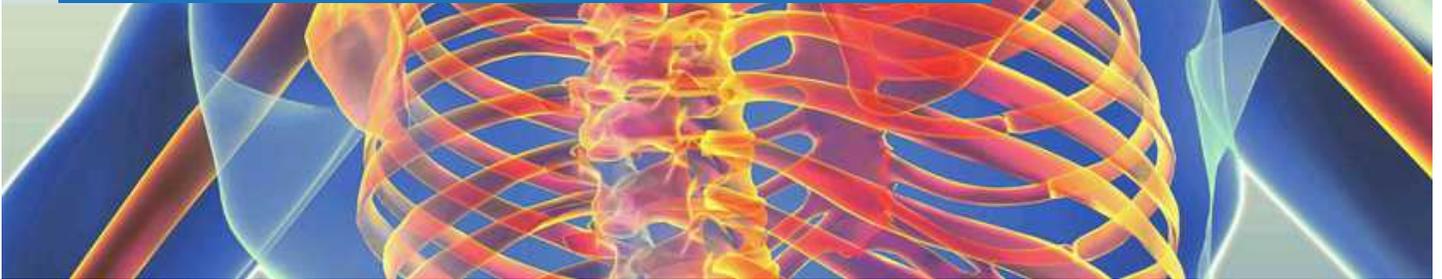


COMMON RUNNING INJURIES AND HOW TO PREVENT THEM

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR INJURIES

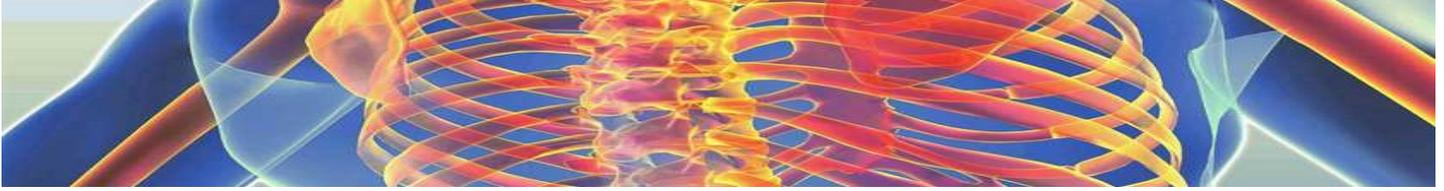
It's a beautiful spring morning. The heat of the day has yet to descend on the city and the corporate daily shuffle is about to commence. You throw on your running kit and decide to get a quick jog in before being held hostage at your desk for the rest of the day. The light breeze on your face and the luscious smell of freshly brewed coffee billowing out of the coffee shops you run by is almost distracting you from that deep ache that is developing in your knee. It will go away you tell yourself. All of sudden every step you take feels like someone is jamming a knife into your leg. Uh oh... this isn't good.

If you're anything like me then you have had your fair share of running injuries and dread the day these injuries creep up on you. We all tend to ignore the aches and pains that come on from excessive exercise for fear of that ache actually being a serious issue and possibly limiting our training regime. No achilles tendonitis! You do not exist today. I want to share my tips and tricks with the aim of limiting your visits to treatment rooms such as mine.

Let's talk about the most common injuries that you've likely either experienced or likely to experience.

"We all tend to ignore the aches and pains that come on from excessive exercise for fear of that ache actually being a serious issue and possibly limiting our training regime"





ITB syndrome

What it is: inflammation of the iliotibial band, which runs from the hip to the shin, caused by overuse. This is one of the most common injuries that plagues runners.

Diagnosis: pain on the outside of the knee when it is bent along with heat and swelling over the tissue itself.

Prevention: you're going to have to be brave, suck it up, dig out that foam roller and a box of tissues to help you deal with the tears that will come from rolling out your ITB. Get rolling the outside of your thigh between the knee and the hip. 2-3 minutes on either side should be sufficient, but make sure you're doing this at least twice a day. If you have already damaged the ligament then you'll have to rest for a few days, ice the area, elevate and slowly build back up your miles.

Metatarsalgia

What it is: inflammation between the metatarsals of the foot causing discomfort when weight is put on them. The metatarsals are the long bones which run from your toes to the arch of your foot.

Diagnosis: aching and/or stabbing pain in the ball of your foot when weightbearing. The pain will likely be most extreme when you put weight on the front of your foot (toes and ball of foot).

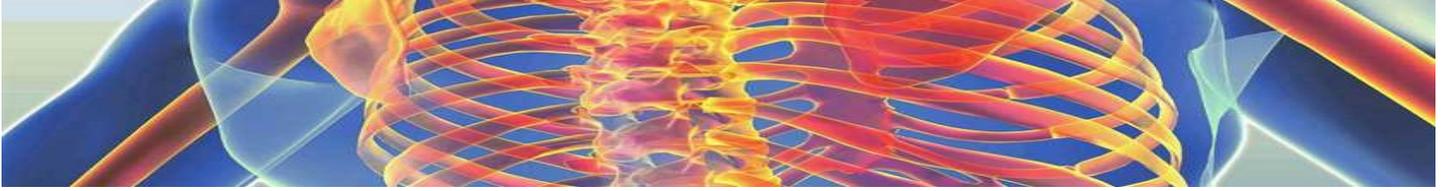
Prevention: wear the right shoes and ignore the idea of barefoot running, no matter how fashionable you think your new minimal support trainers are. Also note that if you suffer with tight calves and sore feet after running, a massage and/or osteopathy could improve your foot mechanics and limit the risk of this injury occurring.

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SrdjanPav/ GETTY





Lower back pain & the psoas muscle

What it is: a shortened psoas muscle can put a great deal of strain through the lower back and result in lower back pain. The psoas muscle attaches from the vertebrae of the lower back to the lesser trochanter of the femur (outside of the hip), is shortened when you bend forwards and lengthens when you stand upright.

Diagnosis: feeling tight in the hip/pelvic area with associated back pain. This back pain may be exacerbated by moving from a seated to a standing position.

Prevention: a simple lunge stretch for the hip flexors will help keep this muscle lengthened. Keep both feet pointing straight ahead, one in front of the other, and lunge forward and down (keeping an upright posture) to achieve a stretch in the anterior of the thigh and pelvic/groin area. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat on each side as needed. Don't neglect the psoas!

Plantar Fasciitis

What it is: the thick, fibrous, ligament-like structure that runs from your heel to the ball of your foot becomes inflamed. It is responsible for shock absorption and is a common foot injury affecting runners and non-runners.

Diagnosis: pain in the heel of the foot that is sore to touch. When the plantar fascia is stretched it will be painful usually on a specific point on the heel (towards the arch rather than the back of the heel). Activities involving walking on your tip toes will be the most painful.

Prevention: the best way to manage and/or avoid this injury is by rolling a tennis ball on the underside of your foot. Dig deep! This will be exceptionally painful to start with but will become less so as the plantar fascia stretches. A golf ball can also be used, but many will find it is too painful using anything other than a tennis ball initially.

If you are able to use a golf ball then kudos to you – you are well on your way to recovery!

Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome (Shin Splints)

What it is: a symptom developing in the lower leg as a result of heavy exercise, such as running. The exact cause is unknown but it is thought to be due to either muscle strain, tiny tears and inflammation in the membrane that sits between the tibia and fibula (interosseus membrane) or possibly a minor stress fracture in the tibia.

Diagnosis: pain that develops in the lower leg between the knee and the ankle following heavy exercise, running on hard surfaces, exercising in shoes with poor cushioning or possibly as a result of a lack of calcium in your diet.

Prevention: mix it up! Try varying your running conditions to avoid repetitive running on concrete surfaces. It's also important to monitor this type of injury as picking it up early, icing and resting can ensure a quick recovery. If pain develops don't fret. Decrease your mileage, give yourself a couple of days off, R.I.C.E (rest, ice, compress and elevate) and ensure to do lots of stretching, especially to the calf muscles. Anti-inflammatories may also be taken to reduce inflammation and discomfort.

So when you next find yourself trying to ignore an injury ... DON'T! Assess what might be causing it and if necessary, visit a professional who can diagnose, treat, rehabilitate and show you how to limit the likelihood of the injury re-appearing. Start off by icing and elevating the sore area (20 minutes of icing every 2-3 hours) and resting.

There are numerous injuries that affect runners out there. If you have any further queries or if you're being bothered by an old injury that doesn't seem to be going away, pop in and see us and we'll do our best to get you back pounding the pavements in no time.

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