

Running and Overuse Injuries

The majority of running injuries are due to overuse. Some of the most common running injuries are runners knee, plantar fasciitis, achilles tendonopathy, shin splints and iliotibial band (ITB) friction syndrome, all of which are due to overuse. Being unable to run can be an incredibly difficult experience for the enthusiastic runner to endure.

Most articles site that a six minute mile run takes, on average, just over 1000 steps. The amount of steps per mile increases at slower paces. That means, for the average runner, a 5km run requires over 3000 steps, which results in repeating the same movement over 3000 times.

There are many factors that can contribute to overuse injuries: footwear, training errors, inappropriate running surfaces, weakness, muscle imbalances, poor core strength and previous injuries to name just a few. As physiotherapists, we specialize in human dynamics, movements and mechanics, which can be used to analyze running and identify any current or future problems. If even one small part in the system of running isn't working, this can quickly lead to breakdown and injury. The basis of overuse injuries in the average runner can range from abnormal foot and ankle mechanics to poor core strength.

Most people try to 'run through' injuries and pain; this can lead to changes in running pattern and further exacerbate any existing problems. More often than not these 'nagging pains' need to be addressed as they do not go away on their own. Catching an injury sooner rather than later leads to shorter rehabilitation time and a quicker return to running.

Physiotherapy treatment to address running injuries can include analysis of running, review of footwear, stretching, consideration of orthotics, precise exercise instruction or core stabilization exercises. As well, it can mean reviewing running routines and adjusting training regime. Each person's treatment is unique and individual to them. If you are running on a routine basis, cross training and specific strengthening are essential to preventing overuse injuries.

Whether you're training for a marathon, 10km, 5km, or just run for fun, perhaps it's time to stop ignoring that 'nagging pain;' or maybe you would just like to be assessed to prevent injury. Regardless, a physiotherapist can help. For more information contact your local health professional or contact us at PhysioFirst Virden 462 7th Ave South.

Submitted by Kendra Usunier, Physiotherapist