

Top 11 Injuries

Why 11? Because it's one higher.

And the winners are:

1. Plantar Fasciitis
2. Heel Spurs
3. Bunions
4. Repetitive Ankle Sprains
5. Runner's Knee (occurs from abnormal patella tracking)
6. Iliotibial Band Syndrome (outer knee or hip pain)
7. Shin Splints
8. Pelvic Torsion (Short leg syndrome)
9. Hip Pain
10. Low Back or Neck Pain
11. Muscular Imbalance

A survey of 8,000 people treated over a 5-year period at the San Francisco-based Chiro-Medical Group sports-medicine clinic found that running was the sport of choice for most of those injured.

Of course, the simple act of running was not the actual "cause" of those injuries. No, the leading cause of injury among runners stems from "overuse"-trying to get too much of a good thing.

A common Cause

In overuse injuries, normal tissue is subjected to repetitive stress, which, in turn, causes microtrauma. Over time, the effects of microtrauma add up resulting in tissue injury, joint dysfunction, and pain.

Sports-related injuries occur most often in the lower extremities than any other region of the body. Your feet, ankles, legs, hips, and lower back absorb the micro and macro traumas of walking, jumping, kicking, and running. As a result, your lower extremities are subject to problems ranging from simple blisters to fractures.

More than 25 million Americans run regularly and 70% of them will sustain an injury sometime during their running careers. But studies show that experienced runners who keep their weekly mileage in moderation (less than 30 miles per week) have less risk of injury than novice runners, runners logging more than 30-40 miles per week, and runners who have improper biomechanics.

And according to The Sports Injury Handbook, in general, sprinters will suffer more problems with their hamstrings and tendonitis, middle-distance runners (5K, 10K) commonly complain of backaches and hip problems, and marathoners seem to incur more foot and leg problems.

In addition to anatomical flaws (particularly in the feet) and amount of mileage you run, the other major factors that can cause injury are the surfaces that you run on, the shoes that you wear, and the way that you train.

Prevention

If you now suffer or have previously suffered any of our *Top 11 Running Injuries*, You should make the effort to be evaluated for those factors that you can easily correct. Running without pain or injury may be as simple as changing the type of running shoes that you wear, being fitted for orthotics, or reassessing your running form. But to cure what may be ailing you now and to help prevent future injury, you'll need the advice of experts who can analyze your running form and biomechanics.

If you're serious about your running – whether for competitive reasons or just to stay fit and healthy – you should create your own “support team” to keep you on track and running injury free. Your team may include a knowledgeable coach, the trained staff at a specialty running footwear store, a sports podiatrist, even a massage therapist. But your team should always include medical professionals who understand and support your running.

Remember that aches and pains indicate that something is wrong. Enduring pain – “running through it” – can increase the degree and severity of injury.

To avoid becoming too familiar with our *Top 11* list, seek help and treat pain properly.

Next month: Dealing with Plantar Fasciitis, the #1 Running Injury.