

Keeping It Fun

I enjoy my running; it truly is fun. However, there are a few annoyances that can take the fun out of running. I have provided a summary of tips you can use to help stay focused on the “enjoyment” aspect of running. These are general tips, many of which will be addressed later in the book in more detail. Enjoy these tips and stay having fun!

Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness

This general soreness and muscle ache comes from tiny tearing of the muscles as a result of running a longer distance or increasing the speed or intensity of a run.

Ice or a cold water stream on the sore muscles immediately following your run will help provide comfort and recovery. A warm Epsom salt bath and some gentle stretching will make for a more relaxed sleep and speedy recovery.

Skin Chafing

Chafing generally occurs under the arms, between the thighs, along the bra line for women and around the nipple area for men. The culprit is the salt in our sweat, which causes the abrasive chafing in these sensitive areas.

The chafing control product Bodyglide works best. Vaseline also works in a pinch, but it stains clothing, whereas Bodyglide will not. For guys, try NipGuard bandages; they work wonders on preventing raw chafed nipples.

Blisters

Friction between your foot and your shoe is usually the cause of blisters. This can be from poorly fitting shoes, a rib or seam in your sock or, on occasion, running on a slated or uneven surface that causes the shoe to rub on the side of the foot.

The best recommendation is Running Room CoolMax double layer socks, they work! If you do have a blister, cover it with a liquid bandage, which provides protection and helps dry the area, promoting healing while you continue to run.

Black toenails

You have arrived wearing the badge of the black toe. Most often this condition occurs with an increase in mileage or from running a downhill session for an extended period of time. The repeated tapping of the toe against the front of the shoe causes blood to pool under the toenail.

If there is no pain, leave the nail to fall off by itself, but apply an antifungal cream to prevent infection. If you suffer a throbbing toe, then have your doctor (don't do this at home kids) make a small hole in the nail to drain the blood. It sounds far worse than it is; the good news is the relief is instant. The key in the future: make sure you go up from your current shoe size by a half or a full size to prevent a reoccurrence.

Athlete's Foot

Runners with red cracking skin, itching feet and soreness between the toes are nearly always suffering from athlete's foot. This condition usually results from someone using a public change or shower room.

Rule one: always wear sandals in the change room and shower areas of public facilities. Spray your shoes with an anti-fungal product, taking care to remove the insole to give them a good spray.

Muscle Cramps

A muscle cramp during a run is usually caused when the fatigued muscle has become overstimulated and contracts involuntarily. Cramping can also result from insufficient electrolytes like potassium and sodium salts or from poor hydration.

Gentle stretching of the affected muscle is one solution. Massage the muscle gently to reduce the cramping effect. Work with isotonic sports drinks to remedy the problem.

Stitches

A stitch is a sharp pain in the diaphragm usually just under the bottom front of the rib cage. There are two theories for the cause. The first is that the discomfort is the result of the dome-shaped muscle of the diaphragm becoming irritated as it rises and falls to allow the lungs to breathe. The jostling effect of our running irritates this muscle and causes the cramp. The other theory is that the cramp is related to food. Many runners find it helps to avoid foods high in sugar and fat, as well as apples, fruit juices, dairy products and chocolate.

Personally, I think most of the stitch issues are related to breathing techniques. Breathe like a swimmer with deep, full and relaxed breaths in rhythm and time with your running cadence. This more relaxed and rhythmic breathing allows for a better run and cuts the risk of the dreaded stitch. Think belly breathing!

Burping, flatulence, gripping stomach pains and toilet calls

These annoyances can cause considerable discomfort and embarrassment to runners, enough to make some stop running. There is no simple or consistent cause for these calls, nor is there one simple solution. Running activity and the jolting movement of the body cause gastrointestinal disturbances. For some people a cup of coffee will help stimulate the bowels into action prior to the run. Having said this, caffeine and alcohol are stomach irritants, so avoidance may also be the solution. High fiber foods or dairy products prior to a run can also be the culprits. Many of our athletes also find the high sugar content of sports drinks can be detrimental. An easy solution for this is diluting the sports drink with additional water. If you find, as many runners do, that invariably it is at the 10 minute or 15 minute mark into your run that you get a call for the

toilet, simply plan a loop around your start point of 10 minutes. Stop, use your facilities and continue your run. Plan your long runs around potential public toilets. If there are none on your route, gyms, health clubs, gas stations, coffee shops, community clubs, fire halls and churches are all generally sympathetic to a runner in need.

Sweating

Sweating is your air conditioning and cooling system. It regulates your temperature and helps eliminate toxins. While running you sweat between 500 and 1000 ml per hour. Sweat by itself doesn't stink; it is when it contacts bacteria that we stink. So start your run clean and with a deodorant. Cotton is more smell resistant, but we know that it runs hot and we chafe. The high technical fabrics are perfect for sweat wicking, and they dry out quickly but retain the sweat odor.

Wash your clothing after each run to avoid stinky clothes. If your sweat smells odd consult your doctor. Sweat odors can indicate a medical condition such as diabetes or liver disease. Your sweat is a sign of your character so don't sweat the sweat, after all you are an athlete.

Urinary Incontinence

Urinary incontinence* affects many runners, particularly woman after pregnancy. This hindrance to running is usually caused by pelvicfloor weakness. These muscles support the pelvis and abdomen and control the emptying of the bladder and bowel.

The best course of action is pelvic floor exercises and lots of them. Done consistently and properly these exercise are very effective in stopping urinary incontinence. If you tried them and they didn't work, you likely did too few or did the exercises incorrectly. Athletes are proactive, so do the exercises and do them often. If they still don't work, see your doctor.

Lacking Motivation

Runners struggle occasionally to get themselves out the door to train. Motivation comes from within us. Do not rely on the coach or the club to motivate you to achieve your lifelong goals. Training tips supply the inspiration—now it is up to you to supply the motivation and perspiration.

Be consistent.

Be gentle and yet progressive.

Set short- mid- and long-term goals.

Build some rest days into your training.

Mentally prepare as well as physically prepare for every race.

Build long slow distance, strength and speed training into all programs.

Adapt your training to the conditions and take pride in your courage to accept the challenge to run.

If you find running boring, it may be you can't stand running with yourself for 30 or 40 minutes, so invite a friend along or join a group for motivation.