

Handout for Week 8:

Avoiding Injury

Injuries happen and whilst there is no magic formula for avoiding them, a greater understanding of some of the pitfalls may just be enough to keep you on your feet.

Poor running style

We might aspire to perfection but in reality most of us need to adopt a style that feels natural and doesn't leave us open to a higher risk of injury. Try "running tall" and your head will lift and spine lengthen. Add to that relaxed arms and shoulders and you're half way there. Push your chest up and forwards, try to keep your pelvis level (imagine it's a bucket full of water that you don't want to spill) and keep your bum and tummy tucked in.

Trick of the trade

Imagine holding a crisp between your thumb and forefinger with your thumb uppermost, then try not to break it! This keeps your arms and shoulders relaxed.

Look ahead and not at your feet.
Keep smiling!

What are you running in?

Are you wearing running shoes as opposed to fashion trainers? Are your shoes suitable for your gait (the way you run)? Do they fit? Are they suitable for the surface you run on? Are they worn out?

Do go to a specialist running shop to get advice.

Don't do too much, too soon.

If you want to avoid injury, then patience really is a virtue. Don't increase your weekly mileage by more than 3 or 4 miles a week (less if you are a beginner). A general rule of thumb is to increase it by no more than 10% each week.

Insufficient Strength

You've probably heard of core stability but what's it got to do with running? Your core is the middle bit of your body including your trunk and pelvis. This is supported and stabilised by specific muscles. If those muscles are weak and don't do their job properly then other muscles have to step in. These other muscles are not designed to do the job, so can be left short or tight, pulling the body out of alignment and therefore leaving you more susceptible to injury. Work on your core stability and this is less likely to be a problem