



Physiotherapists:  
The Body Specialists

# Physio Tips

**RUNNING**

Physiotherapy Association of BC

## On your mark, get set, go!

Running is an activity that many enjoy and can be extremely beneficial to one's health. A 30 to 40 minute run, three or four times a week can help to maintain flexibility, increase mobility and build strength and endurance.

Proper posture and body mechanics will help lessen the strain on your body.

### Physiotherapists recommend:

- Stretch before and after your run. Concentrate on stretching the calf, hamstring, quadriceps, iliotibial band, groin, buttocks, outside of the knee and back. With each exercise, hold the stretch for at least 15 seconds, until you feel tension but not pain, and do not bounce.
- Before starting your run, relax and take a deep breath. This allows the lungs to move into an efficient position and the hips to pull forward, for an easier run. After exhaling, try to maintain your chest in this alignment.
- Look straight ahead and run in a straight line. Swing your arms naturally.
- Good running posture will allow your feet to run almost automatically, with a quick, gentle push. The push off should always be forward and not upwards.
- A smooth stride will reduce effort and therefore increase efficiency. Increasing the frequency of your stride and keeping the feet lower to the ground will allow your muscles to stay relaxed.
- Increases in mileage and speed should be by 10%. An unrelenting increase in mileage from one week to the next will ultimately result in injury.
- Pace for interspersing of hard days and easy days and also hard and easy weeks.
- One or two days a week, at least, should be devoted to rest or non-running activities.

Because of the repetitive nature and impact running has on your body, runners tend to be more susceptible to injuries.

- Avoid running on hard surfaces. Dirt paths are better than asphalt and asphalt is better than concrete. Grassy areas may look inviting but they may hide holes, rocks, and other potential hazards;
- Rotate your activities (running, cycling, swimming, etc.) to reduce strain and keep it interesting;
- Don't overdo it – proper rest is essential; listen to your body and watch for recurring or persisting pain – if concerned, seek early professional attention from a physiotherapist.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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