

Running Injuries in Older Runners

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Common Facts in Older Runners

- VO2 max and muscle mass decrease
- Metabolism slows and body fat increases
- Flexibility decreases
- Balance suffers
- Osteoarthritis occurs
- Recovery time increases from injuries

Most Common Injuries are Overuse Injuries

- Plantar fasciitis
- Achilles tendonitis
- Gastrocnemius-soleus strains
- Hamstring strains
- Medial Tibial Stress Syndrome
- Patellar tendonitis
- Iliotibial band tendonitis
- Morton's neuroma

Two Injuries Unique to Older Runners

- **OSTEOARTHRITIS**: Damage to articular cartilage, causing pain, limits ROM
- Injuries From **FALLS** due to poor **balance**

Preventing Injuries in Older Runners

- Strength training: Get in the gym at least twice per week, helps muscle mass, bone density.
- Improve flexibility: Yoga and pilates improves core strength
- Improve balance: Single leg standing exercises daily while brushing your teeth
- Cross training: swimming and biking are great nonweightbearing exercises
- Replacing running shoes every 250-500 miles
- Rotate running shoes, don't wear the same pair every run

Squats using Bosu Ball



Plank Strengthens Core Muscles



Preventing Injuries in Older Runners

- Keep BMI low
- Longer Recovery Time, run every other day
- Keep hydrated, especially if taking diuretics!
- Vitamin D supplementation
- Start running at slower pace, stretch after running
- Compression socks, sleeves

Common Strength Exercises to Reduce Running Injuries

- Squats: improves quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteals
- Push ups: strengthens pectorals, deltoids, triceps
- Planks: strengthens all abdominal muscles
- Lunges: improves quadriceps, hamstrings and gluteals
- Balance exercises using Bosu ball, may combine w/ squats to work leg muscles and core.

Vitamin D

- Normal level of vitamin D is 20-80 ng/ml (nanograms per milliliter)
- Optimal level of vitamin D is 40-80 ng/ml
- Fat soluble vitamin found in cow's milk, fish, egg yolks
- To achieve optimal level need to use supplements
- Improves immune system, improves healing, may help protect us from cancer (colon, prostate, breast)
- Patients with celiac, Crohn's disease, or problems w/ fat soluble malabsorption may be low in vitamin D.
- Supplements come in 1000u, 5000u capsules

Running Techniques Helpful in Reducing Running Injuries

- Shorter stride, quicker cadence, less impact on legs and hips
- 160-180 steps/minute
- Run “tall” don’t lean forward at the waist
- Try to have foot strike underneath body or center of gravity
- Don’t focus on foot strike (midfoot, forefoot, heel)
- Backward arm swing
- Mix up runs, don’t run the same route everyday
- Use different running shoes, not the same pair every run

Helpful Tips to Avoid Injuries

- Listen to your body, if you're tired, rest or run shorter route
- It's ok to walk and run
- Do balance and strength training consistently
- Eat clean, fresh fruits, vegetables, consider gluten free
- Allow more time for recovery, swim or bike
- Mix up terrain, flats, hills, trails, pavement
- Have fun, it's ok to run 2-3 days per week
- Stretch after runs, "childs pose" great low back stretch

Child's Pose



THANK YOU!

