

Top 10 Tips for Healthy Running in 2019

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After treating a lot of injured runners this year, we have seen a few patterns. So, we decided to offer some tips to help keep you running without pain in 2019:

1. Avoid “too much too much too soon”. Many injuries such as shin splints, calf issues, IT band syndrome and knee pain happen when runners increase their mileage too quickly. Ramp up slowly, follow the 10% rule.
2. Stretch and roll – the most problematic (and most relevant) muscle groups for runners are the hip flexors, quads and calf muscles. Practice daily and after every run for the best results.
3. Perform strengthening exercises 2 days week. Focus on your core, hips and ankles.
4. Learn proper recovery habits. Follow a hard day with an easy day or day off. Plenty of sleep is crucial to healing. Develop good anti-inflammatory practices. Eat your vegetables and limit consumption of foods linked to inflammation.
5. Coaching. A formal plan from a qualified coach is helpful to keep training intensity and volume at the appropriate levels to meet your goals.
6. Work on running form. If you are not working with a coach, watch some videos and spend some time practicing on the treadmill. Run tall with good forward lean, shorten your stride and increase your cadence, especially when recovering from injury.
7. Know your cadence. Not everyone can achieve the recommended 180 steps per minute but even small increases in cadence can take a lot of stress off commonly injured areas. For example, if you are in the 150s try to get in the 160s.
8. After resting an injury, start back slow. If you are not able to run, walk regularly and focus on pain-free strengthening and stretching. Start with a walk-jog program and test your response. Don't run through pain.
9. Vary your training surfaces. Pounding away on the same concrete sidewalks with the same camber can take its toll. It is important to run on level surfaces but running 1-2 days per week on dirt trails, a track, or grass can have great benefits. Not only is a softer surface more forgiving, it can change your impact stresses by slightly varying your foot strike. It can also strengthen your ankle and intrinsic foot muscles by forcing your foot to adapt.
10. Have a proper shoe fitting. There's no substitute for good running form, ankle strength, and flexibility but the wrong shoe for your foot type can have big implications all the way up the chain. A lower heel to toe drop can help promote better running mechanics but make this transition **gradually**. Change shoes every 300-500 miles or 6 months (this is a general guideline). Rotating 2 to 3 pairs of shoes is also a good idea depending on the type of run and surface you are on that day.