

Prevent Foot & Ankle Running Injuries



Both long-distance runners and casual joggers can improve their performance by keeping their feet in top condition and taking steps to control foot problems common in runners, according to the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

For runners, the feet and ankles are vulnerable to injury. Be on the alert for signs of foot problems that can slow you down if not treated promptly.

HEEL PAIN

The most common complaint of foot pain is heel pain caused by inflammation of the ligament that holds up the arch, a condition known as plantar fasciitis.

At the first sign of heel pain:

- Do stretching exercises.
- Wear sturdier shoes with arch supports.
- Ice the foot and take anti-inflammatory medications.
- If heel pain continues, visit a foot & ankle surgeon for further treatment.



ACHILLES TENDON PAIN

Tendonitis can occur in the Achilles tendon or other tendon areas of the foot and ankle and can serve as warning signs of overuse. Overzealous training can cause tendonitis, especially among beginners who try to do too much too soon.

At the first sign of tendon pain:

- Rest!
- Ice the foot, do some stretching exercises and take anti-inflammatory medications.
- If pain continues, visit a foot & ankle surgeon who can help with orthotics and physical therapy.



BALL OF THE FOOT PAIN

Pain in this area of the foot below the toes is often a neuroma (a pinched nerve between the toes) or inflammation of the joints where the toes meet the bones in your foot. It can cause pain, numbness and burning in the area for runners.

At the first sign of pain in the ball of the foot:

- Wear sturdier shoes with arch supports as overly flexible shoes are often the cause.
- Visit a foot & ankle surgeon; padding, orthotics or injections are often effective in relieving pain.



STRESS FRACTURES/BROKEN BONES

"It can't be broken, I can walk on it!" Don't believe this common myth among runners about broken bones in the foot. Stress fractures can occur in the foot and can be slow to show symptoms, such as swelling and pain.

If you suspect a stress fracture:

- Remember RICE - Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation.
- If pain and swelling continue after three or four days of RICE, see a foot & ankle surgeon for an x-ray and proper diagnosis.

Visit FootHealthFacts.org for more on foot and ankle health information for runners.



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