

How to Avoid Running into Trouble

If you are training for your first marathon, or have recently taken up running, you will be obsessing about avoiding injury. With no idea how to address my various aches and pains, I asked experts for advice.

Paul Hobrough: Physiotherapist:

"My ethos has always been 'prehab' rather than rehab. Coming in at an early stage is better than when you are actually injured but it's not as good as seeing a physio right when you decide to run a marathon. You would struggle to get most people who didn't want to run a marathon to balance for 20 seconds on one leg. If you get them to do something functionally close to running, such as a single leg squat, you will notice their knees deviating and hips swinging out laterally. These tests show me that this person isn't running 42 kilometres without having a lower-leg injury. The minute that you feel a slight niggle, speak to somebody."

Liz Yelling: Olympic marathon runner and Commonwealth Games medalist:

"Injury prevention is as much a part of my plan as the hard training. This includes a small amount of time stretching after each run, plus core stability and conditioning work. I also have regular massage and physio checks. This is supported by good nutrition and hydration, which help the body to recover faster."

Phoebe Thomas: Coach training Brighton Marathon entrants:

"If there was just one muscle group I would encourage you to target, it is your glutes. This large set of muscles plays a huge role in stabilising each stride you take. They reduce rotation in the pelvic and hip area and assist in lower limb stability. The one-leg squat is an ideal exercise."

Wayne Edwards: Musculoskeletal Podiatrist:

"Low-arched feet need more support from the shoe. Average-arched feet can be accommodated in most neutral shoe designs. High-arched feet benefit from cushioning. We recommend people go to a specialist running shop and have video gait analysis to work out the right shoe."

Mhairi Keil: Performance nutritionist for the English Institute of Sport:

"Paying attention to the nutrients you are consuming is key to minimising injury. This will enhance muscular performance, optimise recovery and support the immune system. Muscle damage caused during training will impact on subsequent sessions and failure to repair the tissue can accumulate. Risk of injury is increased when muscles are fatigued, so pay attention to fuelling up strategies and energy provision during intense runs."

Dean Karnazes: Author of Run! 26.2 Stories of Blisters & Bliss:

"If there is time to work on your style, avoid landing on your heel and rolling to your toe. Shorten your stride and land mid-foot with quicker foot turnover."

Dr Rod Jaques: Director of Medical Services at the English Institute of Sport:

"When you get up to a reasonable level of fitness, periodise training so you have hard weeks followed by easy weeks. This provides an opportunity for recovery. You have to do at least three runs in excess of 24 kilometres in the lead up to the marathon. On the day you will do 42 kilometres but there is evidence that if you train between 2½ to 3½ hours, you're going to be able



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to make 4 or 4½ hours. Taper training prior to the race then do not run for 7 days beforehand to allow your glycogen stores to build up to maximum levels".

Adharanand Finn: Spent a year in Kenya training with elite runners:

"The best thing that we can learn from Kenyans about preventing injuries is not to be afraid to skip a training session if you're tired. Their mantra is 'listen to your body'. Because it can be hard to get decent treatment for injuries in Kenya they are more careful not to overdo things.

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