ten tips on avoiding running injuries

In order to prevent a running injury, it’s best to form good habits early on. Here are 10 ways to protect your body while running.

- **learn proper running techniques**, including gait training and posture drills, from the experts — often physical therapists specializing in athletic conditioning.

- **have a training plan**, like alternating easy days with harder days. Running as much as you feel like it will cause problems.

- **choose the right running shoes**. Your shoe should feel slightly spongy when you walk on a hard surface. It should bend easily in the area of the ball of the foot, have a wide heel (about 2.5 inches), and a slightly raised support under the arch.

- **learn from many sources** and read a variety of books and magazines on running.

- **stretch before and after every run**, especially the Achilles tendon, hamstrings, and quadriceps.

- **warm up** and go easy before you go hard. Walk or jog slowly for at least five minutes.

- **vary your training**. Keep long and easy runs separate from short and hard runs.
- **pain is not normal.** Respect injuries and listen to your body, reducing your mileage to a pain-free amount.

- **rest on rest days.**

- **set appropriate goals** for your fitness level. Running needn’t be competitive — just a great way to stay in shape, both physically and mentally.

The material and information contained in this article is for information only and is not intended to serve as medical advice or consultation. Consult your personal physician before beginning any exercise program or self-treatment.