

Injury Prevention for Marathon Runners

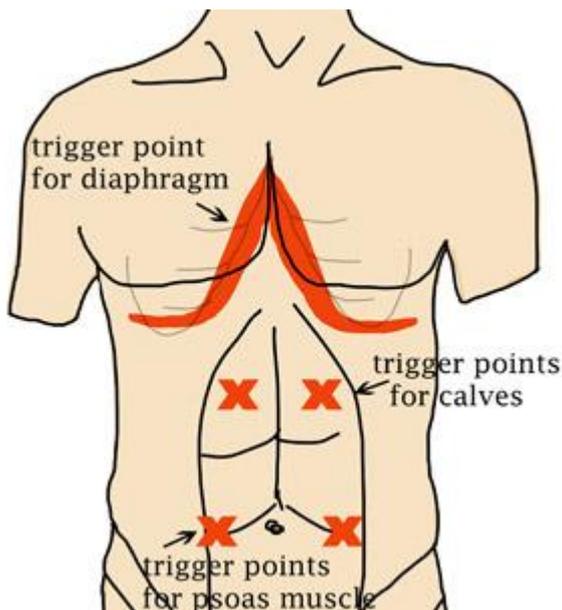


The last thing a runner wants is to be struck by an injury, bringing those stress-relieving runs to a halt. Here are some guidelines to help you stay injury-free while training for a marathon. From wearing the right kit, to stretching, hydration, and even ice baths, check out this handy guide for keeping running injuries at bay.

Preventing Injuries While Running

- **Mix the Terrain** - Road running can lead to injuries because of the repetitive nature of your footstrike on a flat surface. An imbalance in your muscle strength or leg alignment increases the risk of picking up a repetitive strain injury from long runs. Try a few runs off road for a softer, more undulating surface.
- **Support Yourself** - Make sure you wear the correct running shoes for your gait and the terrain you run on. Find out about our [Natural Gait Analysis](#) here. Remember to wear appropriate running clothing for the temperature - warm muscles are less likely to pull. [Compression clothing](#) which supports tired or tight muscles might also be a useful investment.
- **Electrolytes** - Don't forget to look after your hydration and energy levels using [energy gels](#) and [electrolyte drinks](#). Muscles can cramp through an imbalance of tissue salts such as magnesium.
- **Posture** - Try to be aware of your posture and gait, especially when you are tired. Overtraining is a classic reason for picking up an injury.
- **Enjoy!** - Remember running brings joy into your life and builds you up - it shouldn't break you down!

Preventing Injuries Before and After Running



There are some simple precautions you can take before and after a run to keep your body in balance.

- **Hydration** - Before setting off, make sure you are hydrated. If you are hungry take a moment for a light snack or energy drink.
- **Stretching** - You could do a little gentle stretching or warm up to loosen the muscles. One great tool that has emerged is trigger point therapy. You activate muscles by massaging the neural centres relating to those muscles. You can "switch on" the main muscles for running: glutes, hamstrings and quads, in this way. If the muscles are firing up, it is far less likely you will injure the smaller muscle groups like calves and shins.
- **Chill Out** - After a run, douse your legs in cold water. If you are really brave, have a dip in an ice bath. This will considerably reduce muscle stiffness.

Preventing Injuries Between Runs

This is where you can really do some positive work to support your running life and prevent injuries.

- **Cross-Training** - An excellent way to strengthen your body and give variety to your mind is cross-training: cycling, swimming and working machines in the gym. This is an effective way of increasing your heart rate and endurance, without impact damage to muscles.
- **Core Strength** - Because of our sedentary lifestyles, often core muscles become lazy and will benefit from doing pilates and core strength circuits. Even taking care of your posture at your desk can help. Yoga gives strength and suppleness and is brilliant for easing out sore muscles and joints. Just for maintenance, it is worth visiting a practitioner such as a physio, osteopath or sports masseur regularly.
- **Running Workshops** - For inspiration and for progress in your running technique, you could try a [running workshop at Run and Become](#).
- **Look Around** - There are many different schools of thought about running; search around and see what inspires and motivates you, then use that to strengthen your mind, emotions and body to prevent an injury.