



TIPS TO S.M.A.R.T. RUNNING

So, you've made the decision to start running. Congratulations! It's a great way to improve your health and your quality of life. Like all physical activity, however, running carries the risk of injury. It is important to know how to prevent injury and what steps to take should injuries happen.

The following **S.M.A.R.T.** tips for running (**S**tretch, **M**ove, **A**dd it up, **R**educe strain, **T**alk to a physiotherapist) have been prepared for you by the **Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA)** to help you get the most enjoyment out of your running program.

STRETCH – BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR RUN

Stretching will help to relax your mind, as well as:

- Prepare your body for activity
- Reduce the risk of muscle injury
- Restore full mobility after an injury
- Improve performance in your running
- Reduce muscle tension
- Promote circulation

When stretching, physiotherapists recommend that you:

- Warm up by walking for at least five minutes
- Do slow, controlled movements to the point where you feel a mild tension in the muscle. If this pull lessens, stretch a little more - it should never be painful
- Hold the position for 20 – 30 seconds, and don't 'bounce'
- Breathe regularly throughout the stretch
- Repeat the stretch on the opposite side, 3 -5 times

Runners should concentrate on **stretching** the **calves** (gastrocnemius, soleus), **thigh** (quadriceps, hamstrings), **groin** (adductors), **buttocks** (gluteals), **hip flexors** (rectus femoris, psoas and tensor fascia lata), the **iliotibial band** (outside of thigh) and **back**.



Cool down

When your run is over, take time for a cool down –a brief, relaxed walk along with some of the same stretches you did before your run. Spend at least 10 minutes cooling down to help work the metabolic wastes and excess fluid out of your muscles, and to allow your heart rate to slow down gradually. By the time you stop, your pulse should be within 20 beats-per-minute of your resting heart rate.

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S This information sheet is part of the CPA's **S.M.A.R.T.** approach to your mobility (focusing on **S**tretching, **M**oving, **A**dding it up, **R**educing Strain and **T**alking to a **physiotherapist**). The information provided is intended for general use and is not meant to substitute for the professional, personal assessment your physiotherapist offers.

1 Cette fiche de renseignements fait partie du programme de l'ACP « cinq points pour assurer votre liberté de mouvement » (**1. Étirez-vous; 2. Bougez; 3. Additionnez les minutes; 4. Réduisez la fatigue; 5. Consultez un physiothérapeute**).

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4 Ces renseignements sont fournis à titre général seulement et ne prétendent pas remplacer l'évaluation professionnelle, personnalisée offerte par votre physiothérapeute.

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MOVE – TODAY FOR TOMORROW

Running is a great activity to get your whole body in motion, and body posture is an important part of your running technique.

- Before your run, take a couple of deep breaths to expand your lungs. After you exhale, maintain this position, with shoulders down, relaxed and slightly back. Keep your head up and avoid excessive arm movement while running.

ADD IT UP – AN HOUR IS POWER

With proper clothing you can plan your runs 12 months of the year.

- In winter, wear a hat to minimize heat loss
- In summer, drink at least two glasses of water before a run to ensure proper hydration
- Wear shoes that give your feet the support they need - proper shoes can help improve the biomechanics of your feet and legs, which will help prevent injuries
- Ask for advice at a specialized running shop

REDUCE STRAIN – USE WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

- Start running at a slow pace if you haven't been active for a period of time - increase speed as your conditioning improves
- Use the run / walk technique – start with a two-minute run / one-minute walk, gradually increasing your run time
- Increase your distance by 10 per cent each week
- Your running pace should always allow you to carry on a conversation, while you breathe comfortably
- Take time to recover between runs, the most important day in any running program is your rest day, and are as vital as training days because rest days give your muscles time to recover and build strength
- Vary the direction or route you run - repeating the same course puts strain on the same parts of your body each time you train
- Eat sensibly and drink plenty of fluids - get to know the best time for you to eat or drink before running to prevent cramps or nausea and to maintain your level of hydration

If you do experience an injury, use the **R.I.C.E** steps to reduce pain, minimize internal swelling, and promote healing.

- **Rest** – to protect yourself from further injury
- **Ice** – to help reduce pain and swelling within the first 48 – 72 hours after an injury - Note: Ice packs should never be on longer than 15 minutes or more than twice an hour
- **Compression** – wrap an elastic bandage around the injured area to control swelling, but it should not feel uncomfortably tight
- **Elevation** – use pillows to raise the injured limb above the level of the heart while lying down - before you can safely return to running it is essential to regain strength, flexibility, balance and co-ordination - begin your retraining at 50% of your pre-injury level - consult a physiotherapist for detailed assessment and management of your injury

TALK TO A PHYSIOTHERAPIST

A physiotherapist will assess your injury and provide appropriate treatment that will promote an earlier return to running as well as advice on how to prevent recurrence of injury. Physiotherapists are healthcare professionals who help people of all ages and lifestyles gain and maintain their desired level of active living and physical functioning. With their applied knowledge and understanding of the human body in action, physiotherapists are able to help you to increase mobility, relieve pain, build strength and improve balance and cardiovascular function. Physiotherapists not only treat injuries, they also teach you how to prevent the onset of pain or injury that can limit your activity.

How do I find a physiotherapist?

- Visit the website of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association at www.physiotherapy.ca to access our "Find a Physiotherapist" resource, and to learn more information about physiotherapy. The CPA website can also link you to resources for finding physiotherapists through provincial association branches and regulatory colleges.
- Check the yellow pages of your local telephone book for listings of physiotherapists and physiotherapy clinics. You can make an appointment with a physiotherapist directly anywhere in Canada.