



Endurance Health Tips from AthletiCo:

#1 – Avoid Overtraining

- In addition to proper stretching, strengthening and nutrition, it is important that the runner understands not to over-train and cause injury. Replacing one or two weekly runs with other aerobic activities, such as elliptical workouts, cycling, or swimming, will give your joints a break from repetitive impact and allow for continued cardiovascular improvement. Also, since these are low impact, you can do them for longer periods of time than you would for your typical run.

#2 – Injury Screening

- Treatment for injuries will depend on the extent of damage done to muscles, tendons, or ligaments. For mild injuries, use the R.I.C.E. treatment consisting of Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. First, *rest* the injured area from painful activity. Next, *ice* should be applied for 15-20 minutes. After icing, *compress* the injury by applying a wrap starting at the point furthest from the heart. Decrease the tightness of the wrap as you move towards the heart. Once the injury is wrapped, *elevate* it above heart level to decrease swelling.

#3 – Diet: Eat in Moderation

- When thinking about diet, think MODERATION. Eating right is a lifestyle. If you want to have a cookie, have *A* cookie, not the whole sleeve of Thin Mint girl scout cookies. Restricting yourself from eating the things you really want to eat, will only lead to binging on them in the end. Keep a food diary to hold yourself accountable for what you eat; this may make you think twice about that second or third piece of pizza.

#4 – Develop a routine - slowly

- Overall, don't plan to completely change your routine in a few weeks. If you've never been a runner, it's going to take time to learn to enjoy it. Stick with it through the first month, build it into your day, and before you know it, it will become a habit and you won't be able to go a day without it!

#5 – Over striding

- Over striding is a common mistake that many recreational runners make. Over striding results from the foot landing too far out in front of the runner as they make contact with the ground. The runner has no other choice but to land on the heel with their leg nearly straight in the extended position. The heel is not designed to take that stress over a sustained period of time. The force of impact will travel up the skeletal system and result in an abundant force along the knee joint, which can result in injury.

Simply by shortening your stride so that your foot falls nearly underneath your hips will correct most of the problems associated with over striding. Runners can start by counting their strides for a minute when they go out for their next run. The optimal stride rate is 178-182 steps per minute. This rate is appropriate for any pace. Runners should gradually shorten and quicken their stride to eventually achieve this number. This will not happen overnight, so be patient. Eventually you will become more efficient and hopefully injury free!

#6 – Sprains

- A Sprain results from the over-stretching or tearing of a ligament. Bones are connected by ligaments, and when ligaments tear, a sprain occurs causing pain, muscle spasms, muscle weakness, swelling, or a "pop" or cracking sensation. Sprains usually result from falling or twisting and most often affect the ankle and knee.

Proper treatment for a sprain includes rest, ice, compression, elevation, and anti-inflammatories, followed by progression of exercises for flexibility, strength, and balance.

#7 – Strains

- Strains, also referred to as pulls, result from the over-stretching or tearing of a muscle or tendon. Strains occur to both muscles and tendons and include symptoms of pain, muscle spasm, muscle weakness, swelling, or a "pop" or cracking sensation. Strains usually result from excessive muscle contraction during actions such as sprinting, landing, or during a quick change of direction.

Proper treatment for a strain includes rest, ice, compression, elevation, and anti-inflammatories, followed by progression of exercises for flexibility, strength, and balance.

#8 – Achilles Tendonitis

- Achilles Tendonitis is the inflammation of the Achilles' tendon, which is caused by overuse activities such as explosive change of direction or rebounding, as well as decreased calf strength and flexibility. Symptoms include tenderness and swelling over the tendon and pain with walking, stairs, and running.

Treatment includes ice, anti-inflammatories, flexibility training, and lower extremity strengthening. Foot biomechanics and proper footwear should also be addressed.

#9 – Plantar Fasciitis

- Plantar Fasciitis is a catch-all phrase used to describe foot pain along the inside of the arch and heel. Increased pain usually occurs with the first few steps in the morning or after prolonged sitting. Plantar fasciitis can occur in individuals with poor foot biomechanics, as well as those with decreased flexibility and strength in the surrounding muscles.

Ice massage and rolling the foot over a rolling pin or tennis ball may help reduce pain and irritation. Proper footwear and a walking analysis should also be addressed.

#10 – Low Back Pain

- There are many causes of low back pain including muscular/structural imbalances, decreased strength, poor body mechanics, and poor work ergonomics. As the lower back is subject to the repetitive stresses of daily life and occasional injury, it may respond by showing symptoms of wear and tear. These symptoms may be pain around the waistline and/or lower extremities, and possibly, numbness and tingling to the lower extremities.

If any of these symptoms persist or worsen, seek immediate medical attention. A program emphasizing proper body mechanics, aerobic conditioning, lumbar stabilization, core strengthening, and patient education is the key to eliminating and preventing low back pain.

For more information or to set up a complimentary injury screen at any AthletiCo location, please visit us online at athletico.com or call our Injury Hotline at 1-877-ATHLETICO.