

# **Tips for Injury Prevention**

*By Laurel J. Freeman, B.A., L.M.T*

**With** the running season coming into full force, now is the time to really take care of yourself and stay injury free.

**How many miles are you running per week?** If you have increased your weekly workout more than 10% you may be setting yourself up for an injury. The *10% rule* is a good one to follow to allow for *full recovery*.

**What is the 10% rule?** This is where a person does not increase the amount they run more than 10% per week. For example, if you are running 70 miles per week, then the next week you would only want to add 7 miles or less.

**What does full recovery mean?** Full recovery allows the body *muscles, tendons* and *ligaments* the time needed to relax and regroup. Most muscle groups need 24 to 48 hours for full recovery. The body is an incredible machine and will strive to protect itself.

**What is a tendon and its function?** Tendons hold muscle to bone. Muscles or tendons can become strained. When the tendons have to start working to pick up the slack of the main muscle mass that's when injury can occur. This usually happens when a muscle is fatigued or stressed out. Tendons are very strong. However, when they are over used they can easily tear. This tear will weaken the integrity of the muscle spindle. Tendons do not heal well because their blood supply is limited.

**What is a ligament and its function?** Ligaments hold bone to bone. They can become sprained. Ligaments have virtually no blood supply going into that area and because of this factor they may never repair. Ligaments are usually the last to be injured, unless, of course, the person is playing a contact sport such as football, soccer, etc. or does not listen to their body pain signals.

**What can cause injuries?** Improper warm-up, lack of flexibility, bone alignment or posture, improper technique, muscle imbalance, fatigue, or over training, improper equipment, poor nutrition, lack of strength, muscle tension are a few examples. The ego can play a role in injuries such as emotional trauma, guilt, blame, depression, frustration, impatience, anger, the death wish, inadequacy and fear.

## *A few hints to prevent injuries:*

**Rest** is the best step (pardon the pun) toward injury prevent. If a person receives plenty of rest this will allow for full recovery. Enough rest will give the next workout a stronger performance.

**Warm-ups** and **stretching** play an important role to injury prevention. Doing this correctly can save you many injuries and pain. It is also helpful to do gentle stretching after a workout to increase flexibility and range of motion.

**Heat** should be applied before a workout to warm the muscles up. This will allow the blood to flow freely into the muscle group that is going to be worked.

**Ice** should be used as often as possible. Ice helps release metabolites (waste products) from an area. By applying ice, after a workout, injuries can often be prevented.

**Liquid** intake is very important for remaining injury free, especially water which helps the muscles replenish the supply of fluids. When a muscle group is depleted of fluid, the metabolites will stay in the area for a longer period of time causing muscle soreness and discomfort.

**Nutrition** plays an important role in how well a person will respond to a workout. Without proper nutrients the muscle spindles will not have the energy needed to carry out the exercise.

**Massage** is a good preventative, before and after an event. Pre-event massage helps promote circulation, improve flexibility, increases range of motion and invigorates the body for a more enhanced performance. Post-event massage reduces muscle soreness, can help stop muscle spasms and in the long run, prevent injuries.

**Stay well and injury free and hope to see you running!**

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