



The 10 Laws of Injury Prevention

“A lot of injury prevention comes down to common sense. Listen to your body—that’s why God gave you nerve endings.” -Philip Stull, Orthopedic Surgeon

1. Increase mileage gradually

-a few miles here or there may not seem like a major burden on your body but think of it as steps taken and it really adds up. For example, a runner lands on each leg 750x per mile!

-do not increase your weekly mileage more than 10-15% per week.

-build plateaus (breaks) in every 3 weeks after building mileage. A plateau week can be a week where you hold steady (repeat the week before) or better yet, decrease your mileage for that week.

2. Increase intensity gradually

-faster walking and running (pickups, accelerations, hills) put a greater strain on your body, this type of training should NOT consume more than 20% of your weekly workouts

-at this level, monitor your intensity with the talk test, RPE scale, or a heart rate monitor.

3. Increase mileage before speed

-as you gain fitness you will want to run or walk longer and faster, this is great BUT do not do both at the same time

-both (longer and faster) require greater amounts of recovery

-build a solid foundation of quality mileage at a slower, steady speed which will allow you to prepare your body to handle the stress of the faster workouts

4. Alternate hard efforts with rest

-as beginners, every run or walk may feel hard because of the adaptation your body is going through, this is normal

-it is always a good idea for beginners to alternate workout days with rest days

-be flexible, your body WILL TELL YOU if it needs more than 1 day of rest

-allow your body at least 1 full week of rest per year for rejuvenation

5. Pay attention to early warning signs

-in most cases, your body will send signals before an injury is really full-fledged

-something not quite right that does not go away after a day or two could get worse if you do not pay attention, it often does

-it is easier to apply ice and rest for a few days than recover from an overused muscle or torn muscle

-non-localized pain that goes away in 1 to 2 days is common for beginners

-sharp pain or joint discomfort during your workout is a red flag

TURN OVER

6. Wear the right shoes
7. Mix it up
 - cross training gives your body a break from the repetitive movements of walking and running
 - it is best to choose non-weight bearing activities (cycling, swimming)
 - great way to build strength in other areas of the body or to enhance flexibility
8. Increase your flexibility and strength
 - if you put enough miles on your legs without stretching, you will feel it. Range of motion will be reduced and running and walking will feel strained.
 - strengthening arms and core will enhance your form
 - adopt a 5 minute “NO EXCUSES” stretching routine that focuses on the overused muscles of walking and running: calves, hamstrings, quadriceps, glutes, IT band.
9. Vary your workouts and terrains
 - too much of one thing is not wise in running and walking
 - be careful of always running or walking the same route (slant of the roads, curves)
 - soft surfaces are the best for walkers and runners (if you have the choice between the concrete and the asphalt, always go asphalt)
 - trails are good for most because your feet do not land in the same position each step, this type of training will strengthen and help you develop balance in both your feet and ankles
 - make an effort to get out on dirt trails or wood chip trails at least 1 time per week
10. Fuel properly
 - what you eat and drink can affect your injury risk
 - protein helps with muscle repair
 - calcium helps build strong bones
 - dehydrated muscles are more prone to strains and tears
 - low calorie diets can cause you much fatigue during your workout which in turn could cause you to trip