

Train more (consistently) to reduce injury risk (15/05/2021)

The statement often thrown about by runners is that they want to achieve their goals, whilst continuing to run but do everything to remain injury free. **The search for the silver bullet in injury prevention in running has thus far only provided one definitive answer. DON'T RUN!**

Whilst we can laugh at the fact the only way to avoid injury, is to not run at all, there are so many external and internal inputs that may result in injury, there is no definitive means to prevent injury.

Interestingly as the topic suggests, one of the key factors for reducing injury risk has a great inter-relationship with improved performance. **So how do we train more, perform better, and reduce injury risk?** When physical stress (running, strength work, jumping etc.) is placed on our bodies, there is a response to the stimulus. However, we also need to allow adequate recovery (rest or easier exercise) from a running workout to become more resilient. **Simply, if our bodies can absorb the load, recover, and adapt then do it all again and again, we remain injury free, and ultimately have the potential to reach new levels of performance.**

The ability to train over long periods of time (months to years, rather than a few weeks) builds improved tissue conditioning, resilience, and the ability to get stronger, faster and tolerate more volume. If too much too soon is applied, or inadequate recovery occurs, injury risk increases. **Injury ultimately results in an inconsistent running/loading platform, reduced tissue stress, greater risk of recurrence and a reduction in performance.** Additionally, consistency is key, training infrequently on an irregular schedule (e.g., once one week, 5 times the next, then 3 times the week after) may impact our ability to perform and may make an individual more at risk of injury, especially if this pattern of poor consistency is ongoing.

Therefor the ability to train week in, and week out improves our bodies resilience and ultimately performance. Rather than getting injured and having to manage the associated issues with time away from the sport/hobby/activity that most of love. **The question is do runners get injured because they have over done it? Or, more so have they become injured because they are inadequately conditioned?**

In summary, take your time, train consistently, allow your body to recover and challenge yourself as you earn the right to train hard. And enjoy!

Note:

- It is important to consider the long game with running. For example, a generic 12-week marathon program when you have not “earned the right” to involve yourself is fraught with danger and higher risk of injury.
- Time off due to illness, a break following an event, or injury needs to be recognized and considered as to allow for a gradual return to previous loads and potentially more.