

FROM THE SOLE

Tips to keep you running at your best

SEPTEMBER 2017



intraining
running injury clinic

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Podiatry

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HOW TO MAKE A STRONGER ACHILLES FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE

by Steve Manning - intraining podiatrist, coach and runner



One of the best ways to run faster with less effort is plyometric drills. These drills exaggerate a part of the running action while having a forced dynamic stretch component before springing back. They include mainly jumping, skipping and bounding.

Research has shown that these drills have the greatest effect on running performance in the least amount of training time. The downside is that they have an increased injury risk while doing them.

"Plyometric drills are able to increase the strength of the Achilles"

The reason that these drills are so effective is that they work on the elastic component of the muscle. That is the part of the muscle that stores the energy from landing and then returns that energy like a spring as you push off. This elastic component is critical to distance running efficiency.

The Achilles and deep fascia connective tissue that surrounds the calf muscle are the most important elastic tissues for runners. The thicker and stiffer the Achilles the better it is able to store the energy from landing. Plyometric drills are able to increase

the strength of the Achilles by changing the size and strength of each fibre in the Achilles as well as its overall width and resistance to stretching.

Three ways to incorporate plyometric drills into your training

① *Initially only do the drills for 10 to 20 minutes once or twice a week and for a training block of 6 weeks. This will reduce injury risk. After that you only need to incorporate a few minutes of drills with each speed session.*

② *These drills need to be dynamic but controlled. Do not strain or reach while doing the drills. Focus on staying on your forefoot and having as short ground time as possible.*

③ *Warmup properly before doing the drills with a run of at least 10 minutes. Doing some coordination drills like high knees and bum kicks can also help warm up the Achilles for the harder plyometric drills.*

Plyometric drills can be a very effective way to faster running through a stronger Achilles. Our podiatrists at the intraining Running Injury Clinic can instruct you on how to use the best technique to do the drills for the best result with the least injury risk.

ACHILLES INJURIES AND FOOTWEAR

by Doug James - intraining physiotherapist and podiatrist

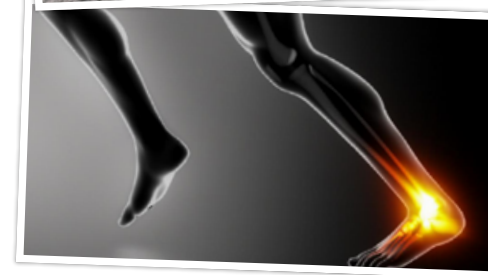
Footwear can be a contributing factor to many injuries, and Achilles tendon injuries are often affected by your shoe choice. If you are currently suffering from an Achilles tendon injury (such as tendinitis / tendinosis, or bursitis) there are a number of footwear factors to consider.

Heel pitch is a significant factor. Most running shoes have a 10mm heel pitch (ie the heel cushioning is 10mm thicker than the forefoot cushioning). This tends to help reduce stress on the Achilles tendon by raising the heel higher towards the calf muscle. Running in shoes with very low or no heel drop can increase the discomfort felt in the tendon, particularly if you have tight calves.

Heel and ankle cuff height can impact an Achilles tendon by placing undue pressure directly on the tendon. While a higher ankle cuff often feels more stable, it may also exert pressure on the tendon, exacerbating symptoms.

Heel cup shape is another consideration. While a narrow heel cup may help reduce heel slippage inside the shoe, it may result in pinching of the tendon. Compare the angled and rounded heel counters in the two shoes shown. An irritated Achilles may find relief in a rounded heel cup.

This was a brief snapshot of some footwear considerations as they impact an injury. If you have injury concerns, it is worth seeing a podiatrist at intraining Running Injury Clinic to have your injury, footwear and gait assessed.



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RECOVERY NUTRITION

by Liz Lovering - intraining sports dietitian, runner, chef and coach

If you are serious about your running you should be serious about your nutrition including your recovery nutrition. Recovery nutrition should consider fluids and electrolytes to help you rehydrate, carbohydrate to replenish glycogen (muscle fuel) stores and protein to repair any muscle damage and stimulate synthesis of new muscle (gains from the adaption to training). If you are training hard and don't adequately refuel ready for the next session you may find yourself not performing at your potential. A well-balanced diet that includes adequate lean protein, quality carbohydrates and meets individual energy needs is important for runners.

The body is most effective at replacing carbohydrate and promoting muscle repair and growth in the ~ 60-90 minutes after exercise, but this process does continue beyond that. So, after evening training a well-balanced dinner can easily meet your goals, and if you train in the morning, so can a well-balanced breakfast. At breakfast, quality carbohydrate is usually easy e.g. grainy breads, wholegrain cereals, muesli, fruit. But what about adequate protein post run? A great choice is eggs, but you could also add a milk drink (e.g. flat white or plain milk) to your usual breakfast of toast or cereal, add cottage or ricotta cheese to avocado on toast, add yoghurt to muesli, mix yoghurt with fruit and top with nuts and seeds, or have baked beans on toast.



Is your child?

- ☒ Limping
- ☒ Repeated complaints of pain
- ☒ Toe walking
- ☒ Requests for time out of game play



YOUR CHILD'S PAIN: IS IT A GROWTH INJURY OR SOMETHING ELSE?

by Margot Manning intraining podiatrist and running coach (children & adults)

Understanding the severity of your child's pain complaints can be difficult and confusing.

Many times these are likely to be growth related but if your child is playing a lot of sport more thorough investigation may be needed to determine if it is an adult-like injury.

Heel pain is a common example of this situation. Many heel pain complaints from children up to the age of 13 are Sever's. This is a growth related injury of the heel bone. With Sever's the pain can be more generalised to all the areas surrounding the growth plate – under the heel, and both sides. The Achilles tendon also attaches to the very back of

the heel in a fan-like shape. In children and younger teens this may also have some connection with the soft tissue* structures that are under the heel. The Achilles is a soft tissue structure that is prone to injury with the intense levels play that our children do in sport, playgrounds and the backyard.

Being able to differentiate between Sever's and Achilles Tendon injuries is important as

the management plan for these two injuries are quite different. Sever's injuries are bone related with a need to settle the inflammation and pain whereas injuries to the Achilles tendon requires a combination of exercises to improve strength.

Further complications to understanding the injury, is your child's ability or willingness to describe the pain. They often forget to mention the pain while in the moment of play, or may even be unwilling to tell you in fear of being told to stop. This can prolong the recovery time. Early detection and seeking advice can be useful not only for you but also in empowering your child to understand injury management.

CHILD COMPLAINING OF PAIN?

Take some time out and call the intraining Running Injury Clinic to make a booking with one of our podiatry and physiotherapy team who work regularly with children's growth pains, teenagers and sporting injuries.

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