

## **Going The Distance.....Without Pain**

### **The 4 Most Common Running Injuries and How to Treat Them**

Running has continued to increase in popularity in the United States over the past decade. The number of finishers of United States marathons cracked the half-million mark for the first time in 2010, according to [Running USA](#). There are many great benefits to running, such as improved cardiovascular health, decreased stress levels, and a great opportunity for competition. Running is relatively a low-cost sport to participate in and many people can continue to run even at an older age. Running may seem like a pretty straight forward sport, but according to the American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation around 70% of all runners will be injured at one time during their running career. While many of these injuries may appear minor they can get worse over time if not properly treated.

### **Types of Running Injuries**

The four most common running injuries that occur are Iliotibial band syndrome, Patellofemoral Syndrome, Achilles Tendinitis, and Plantar fasciitis. Iliotibial band syndrome is the most common cause of pain on the outside of the knee in runners. The iliotibial band is a band of connective tissue that stretches from the outside of the hip and inserts into the outside of the knee. A common cause of this condition is always running on the same side of the road. Patellofemoral Syndrome or sometimes referred to as "Runner's knee" is the most prevalent disorder involving the knee. It is characterized by pain in the front of the knee around the knee cap. Unfortunately the cause is unclear and can be due to improper biomechanics or alignment of the knee cap. Achilles Tendinitis is the acute inflammation of the Achilles tendon. This condition occurs more often in runners with a high arch, faster runners, or those runners who never stretch. Plantar fasciitis is the inflammation of the tissue along the bottom of the foot. This condition often affects runners with a higher Body Mass Index (BMI).

### **Causes**

The causes of these four injuries can be different for everyone, there are several common causes that will often contribute to these injuries. Over-training, Improper footwear, weakness or previous injury, and improper biomechanics are all factors contributing to these injuries. Determining the cause of the injury is key to successful treatment and prevention.

### **Treatments**

Because of the nature of these injuries, there are several different treatments that can be applicable to all four injuries. R.I.C.E. is an acronym that stands for rest, ice, compression and elevation. This is a good rule to follow after first being injured. Gentle, slow stretching can also be helpful to alleviate tightness that may be contributing to an injury. Massage can be useful too for pain relief and increasing blood flow to the injured tissue to promote healing. Changing your training may help to alleviate some of your aches and pains as well, such as incorporating more rest or changing your shoe type or the type of running surface. Strengthening exercises are a key component to not only treating your injury, but also preventing it from occurring again in the future. Various modalities can also help to speed the healing process. Some of

these modalities include electrical stimulation, laser, and ultrasound. Physical Therapy incorporates all of the above treatments and is a good idea for someone looking for a comprehensive treatment plan with results.

In my opinion the benefits of running far outweigh the risk of injury associated with the sport. The good news is that most running injuries are very treatable and rarely cause someone to completely stop running.

For a free consultation for your running injury, please contact **Action Therapy Services at 815-725-4919 or 630-904-5641**. If you would like specific strengthening exercises for the above mentioned injuries sent to you please contact **kerri@actiontherapyservices.com**