

Run Safe, Run Smart : A Few Training Tips That Will Keep You on Track



Team HRMS trained for the August 10 triathlon with running drills at Benedictine University in Lisle. Photos by Rocky Hagloch.

Summer's here. You're running outside at last. Or, maybe you're taking your running routine out of the gym and onto the paths for the first time. Whether you are a newbie or a veteran, the goal is to keep running without pain and injury -- this season, and on into the future. Good form and proper mechanics are the keys.

First of all, there is a big difference between running on a treadmill and running outside, says Brian Eccles, personal trainer and running coach at Symmetry Center gym in Chicago's River North neighborhood.

A treadmill provides some cushioning, allows you to easily control your pace, and it doesn't come with unstable surfaces, or the wind, rain, and hills you find outside, Brian notes.

On the treadmill, the ground is moving under you, so when your foot strikes the belt, it is being pulled through the midstance of your gait. The moving belt can drastically change some runners' mechanics, Brian says. Many of us have a tendency to lean forward to keep up with the belt, while other runners have more bounce in their stride due to the slight give in a treadmill.

When you move outside, a relaxed running form is key to preventing injury, he says. Focus on an upright form, with a slight lean through your body, and a softer foot strike.

TIP: Try to imagine a box around your waist about two feet in front and back of you. Focus on staying within this box, regardless of your pace. Over-striding the box requires unnecessary effort and puts more stress on the knees and hips.

TIP: Think of landing as softly as you can. This will force you to land on the center of the foot, just below the balls of your feet. And that will give you a more efficient transfer of force through the joints in your feet and ankles up through the hips.

TIP: Always strength train. One of the biggest problems with runners, Brian says, is that they are reactive instead of proactive -- waiting until an injury occurs before doing the right exercises. A good strength training program -- that focuses on core strength and the glutes (butt muscles) -- will keep the body's resistance to stress high, and help you avoid the most common running injuries.



Find strength and stretching exercises to incorporate into your training regimen at www.teamhrms.com

Whether you are training for a marathon/ triathlon or just running for fun and fitness, pay attention to form and mechanics, warm up, stretch, and stay injury-free.



HRMS Naperville Sprint Triathlon

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