

Golden Rules of Running Injury Prevention

Additional Notes

Ease into change.

10% rule. When increasing weekly mileage, keep increases to 10% or less. For example, if you are building your mileage to run a half marathon and you run 15 miles total this week, you should not run more than 16.5 miles total (15 miles + 1.5 miles) next week.

1 year to half marathon. Ideally, new runners should have a year of fairly consistent running under their belt before attempting that first half marathon.

Another year to marathon. After that first half marathon, get another year of fairly consistent running under your belt before attempting that first marathon.

Respect recovery.

3 weeks up, 1 week down. After 3 successive weeks of increasing the running program (whether that increase is adding distance or adding difficulty), back down the mileage and difficulty for 1 week. Backing down 25% is usually adequate, but if your body is feeling particularly tired 40-50% may be necessary. After a week of recovery, return to the pre-recovery week levels.

Long runs no more than ½ total weekly mileage. If you are only running 10 miles a week, your long run should be no more than 5 miles. If you need to push that run longer, you need mileage during the week to support it.

10 day cycles are preferred to 7 day cycles. Most published training plans call for long runs once a week because this is what works best for most runners' schedules. However, long runs every 10 days tend to work better from an injury prevention perspective for most recreational adult runners, particularly those prone to aches and pains.

Train in cycles.

The ideal running year has 4, 3 month seasons.

Secondary Race Season	Strength Building Season	Primary Race Season	Recovery Season
Run and race for fun, not worrying about PR or distance goals. Try a new, shorter distance or a color run. Limit racing to 1-4 fun races.	Drop mileage somewhat and focus on strength training and low-impact cross training. No racing.	Really go after that goal race distance or goal time. May have 2-3 races that build to prepare you for that ultimate goal race. For example if the goal race is a ½ marathon, the lead up races might be a 5K early in the season and a 10K several weeks before the ½ marathon.	Drop mileage significantly, particularly in first few weeks after goal race. Run primarily easy base mileage. Spend time foam rolling, doing yoga, and working on flexibility. No racing.

Base before hills before speed. You should feel strong and comfortable running at conversational paces before adding hill workouts. You should feel comfortable doing hill workouts before doing speed workouts. Jumping to speed or hill workouts too soon places more stress on the body tissues than it can usually handle.

Address aches and pains quickly.

Finger versus palm triage. Pains that you can point to exactly with one finger are generally more indicative of an injury that needs temporary rest and medical attention than pains that require your entire palm to describe. In either case, if you are not significantly improving after one week of reduced (palm) or no (finger) mileage, seek the advice of a medical professional.