

# Tips for a Healthy Runner

## Wearing the correct footwear →

The most important piece of equipment a runner has is their shoes. It is very important that runners are educated on proper footwear in order to prevent injuries. We suggest, especially for athletes who are new to running, to try and purchase a sneaker that does not fold in half completely. When a sneaker can completely fold in half, it means the shoe has limited support, and will not absorb the forces caused by the impact of running. When athletes select shoes that are not supportive enough, the bones in the lower body absorb all of the forces. Those forces can lead to “shin splints”, stress fractures, and other lower body injuries.



## Great Sneaker Stores →

The following stores will analyze your gait (the way you walk and run) and recommend the sneaker that will best support you.

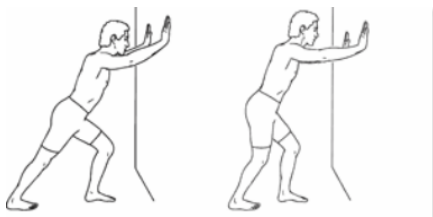
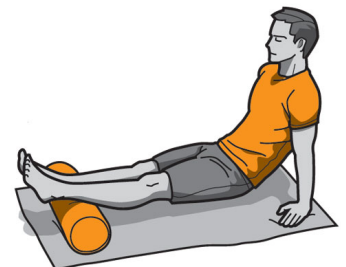
Runners Haven – Randolph  
Running Company – Morristown  
Fleet Feet – Montclair

## Keep track of your mileage →

For runners, sneakers do not last forever. In fact sneakers only last between 250-300 miles or 6 months, whichever comes first. If you do not remember how old your sneakers are, we recommend you purchase a new pair. Old sneakers can cause multiple lower body injuries that can lead the athlete to miss practices and meets.

## Stretches to prevent “Shin Splints” →

Hold each Stretch 30 Seconds 5 times  
each stretch. Foam roll 2 minutes  
each calf.



### **“Food is Fuel” Nutritional Recommendations →**

Throughout an athlete's day they are burning more calories than a non-athlete. Sleeping, sitting in class, and taking physical education class all use up an athlete's calorie store, and all that is done before practice even begins. Therefore, it is very important for track athletes to fuel their bodies correctly, because whatever calories are put into their bodies determines what type of energy the body will be able to put out. Do not skip meals!! It is important for track athletes to eat at least three meals a day, 4-6 meals would be ideal. Snacks are a great idea, especially after school, because it is a very long time between lunch and practice. You want to choose snacks that are healthy so the body can use the calories efficiently. It is important to eat a variety of foods, proteins, carbohydrates, fruits, and vegetables all in moderation. Dairy products such as milks, yogurts, and cheeses are all very important for track athletes to keep their vitamin D and calcium levels regulated. Low vitamin D or calcium levels can decrease bone density and predispose track athletes to bone related injuries. Processed foods that are high in oils and unhealthy fats should be avoided when possible. Although processed foods are high in calories, the body has a difficult time processing those calories and using them for energy. Hydration is a huge factor in a track athlete's performance. If the body is even 2% dehydrated it can decrease performance drastically. Combinations of water and sports drinks with low sugar levels are the best option. Caffeine and energy drinks should be avoided because they can actually dehydrate athletes. If any track athlete is interested in professional nutritional counseling the Pope John athletic trainers can be contacted for more information. We also recommend the nutritionist who works with Dr. Padavan our school physician. Please find his contact information below.

Glen Tobias, MS, RD, CSSD  
Atlantic Sports Health Nutritionist  
973-971-6898

### **The Female Runner →**

The menstrual health of a female athlete is extremely important in injury prevention and long-term health. Contrary to popular belief it is ***NOT*** normal to have irregular (skipping) periods or to completely lose your period. Unbalanced diets, diets that do not provide enough calories to match the calories being burned during activity, low body mass index, and excessive training with no days off, all put female athletes at risk for irregular periods. Inadequate diet can cause female athletes to have decreased vitamin D levels, which can lead to bone density issues, and put the athlete at an increased risk for osteoporosis. If you have been menstruating for a year or more and you are skipping periods, please speak to your physician or Miss P in the training room.

### **Recovery Recommendations →**

We recommend our track athletes have *at least* one day of complete rest per week. Athletes should think of the one-day of rest, as part of their training regiment. We have also found that athletes who run 30 miles or more per week are at an increased risk for lower body injuries.