

# Weekly Wellness Tip

## Safety and Injury Prevention for Runners

Running is an excellent way to stay fit, relieve stress, and spend time outdoors. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned strider, these guidelines will help keep you safe and healthy for many miles to come.

### **Avoid injury**

The majority of running injuries occurs from overtraining, overuse, and improper stretching, and therefore can be prevented. Follow these tips:

- Alternate hard days and easy days. Schedule at least 1 – 2 days per week for rest or cross training.
- Don't add miles too fast. Increase your total weekly mileage by 10% per week, and every third week drop back a small amount.
- Ease into speed workouts by throwing a few short distance surges or uphill sprints into your normal runs. Once this becomes routine, progress to track workouts, again, starting slowly.
- Replace your running shoes when they begin to wear. The shock absorbing capacity is likely gone at that point.
- Stretch properly, which means regularly, carefully, and thoroughly.

### **Stay Hydrated**

You need to replace fluids to avoid dehydration, regardless of the temperature when you're running.

- Drink early and drink often – a few ounces every 15 – 20 minutes. By the time you feel thirsty, you're already on the way to dehydration.
- For workouts lasting 60 – 90 minutes or less, plain water is all you need. For longer workouts, add a sports drink, which provides fluid as well as some carbohydrates and electrolytes.
- Get in the habit of drinking at least eight, 8-ounce glasses of fluids (not counting carbonated or caffeinated ) each day.

### **Don't Be Anonymous**

Unless you do all of your running on a treadmill, prepare yourself for various obstacles out on the streets:

- Wear light, bright-colored, and/or reflective clothing.
- Run facing the traffic.
- Don't run with earphones. It prevents you from hearing approaching people or cars.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back.

### **Don't Be an Easy Target**

Many people enjoy the solitude of running. If you're one of them, take a few extra safety precautions:

- Be aware of your surroundings and stay in an area you're familiar with.
- Don't run in secluded areas alone.
- Use discretion in acknowledging strangers. Look directly at others and be observant, but keep your distance and keep moving.
- Vary your runs (both time of day and route).
- Find a partner to run with – a friend, a dog, or a running club.
- Don't run too close to bushes or parked cars where someone could hide.
- Don't wear jewelry.
- Be careful if anyone in a car asks you for directions. If you answer, keep at least a full arm's length from the car.
- If you think you are being followed, change direction and head for open stores, groups of people, or a well-lit house.