



Taunton Running Club is the UK's largest independent running club and was formed to provide a base for those that run for fun, to keep fit, improve their physical / mental health or simply think it would be nice to run with no pressure, rules or regulations. The club is free and is run by experienced volunteers and its running group leaders (affectionately known as the Elders). The Elders meet occasionally to iron out problems, introduce new ideas, arrange social events, add new groups or resolve issues advised by members.

Running is free, you can do it anywhere and it burns more calories than any other mainstream exercise.

Regular running can reduce your risk of chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. It can also improve your mood and keep your weight under control.

This info sheet is designed to help make your running a more enjoyable experience.

Beginners Tips

Kit: Running requires little equipment, but a pair of cushioned running shoes is essential to help improve comfort and minimise the effects of shock on the joints. There are many types of trainers on the market but until you're happy with your running and you have no problems don't buy expensive shoes. For ladies, a good sports bra may be needed – ask your female group leader for advice. **Chaffing:** Wearing clothes that chafe can be quite painful – running tights for both men & women will minimise below the waist chaffing.

When you first start running your body will protest at using muscles in your legs, shoulders, arms and diaphragm that are not used to the extra work. ***It is very important not to do too much too soon.***

You should also be aware of connective tissue issues - tendons that attach muscle to bone and ligaments that hold your bones/joints together. The connective tissue around hips, legs and feet may be the first to start "grumbling" and you should look after these areas by using compression socks, tubigrip or as a minimum, by applying "Deep Heat" to warm them up before running. You may need some help in choosing or modifying shoes to correct pronation in one or both feet - ask your group leader or one of the club's more experienced runners to check your running style.

Diet

A runner's diet is not about weight loss as such but providing the body with the energy and nutrients lost during running. Running will change your lifestyle and your wellbeing, so make your diet part of your training plan. As a runner you need to hydrate (take in more liquids) to replace bodily fluids lost during exercise and eat more healthily. A balanced runner's diet should contain

- ◆ **Drink More Water** – You can add replacement electrolyte replacement tablets to make a flavoured drink
- ◆ **50-60% Carbohydrates** – pasta – grains – beans – vegetables – fruit – the digestive system breaks these down into a form of sugar known as glucose which in turn is stored in the muscle tissue and liver as glycogen (the fuel that helps you run). Avoid bad carbohydrates – mainly found in processed food.
- ◆ **20-25% Protein** – Fish, Meat, chicken, beans and nuts. Try a handful of cashew nuts a day.
- ◆ **10 -15% Fats** – there are bad fats (saturated and trans fatty acids) and good fats (monounsaturated, polyunsaturated and Omega-3). Avoid the bad fats where possible. The good fats help keep your blood cholesterol levels down, help control blood sugar levels, help you absorb nutrients (vitamins and minerals), help with general wellbeing and lubricate your "running machine". **Good fats** can be found in olive oil, safflower oil, peanut oil and corn oil. Omega-3s found in fish (tuna & salmon), seeds, avocados and nuts.

You can make smoothies with bananas, nuts, cereals, vegetables, fruit and yogurt that blend into an easily digestible drink.

Breathing

Learning to control your breathing is one of the most important factors for beginners - When you're new to running, you'll find you breathe more heavily or erratically – you will cover the basics of breathing techniques with your group leader but if you find breathing is a problem ***please ask for some "one to one" help.***

Shin Splints

New runners often suffer from Shin Splints - this term generally refers to pain felt in the lower leg connective tissue that connects the muscle to the shin bone (Tibia)

Cause: The pain is a symptom seen by many new to running or those that train excessively. Generally, this is caused by biomechanical irregularities that pull at the connective tissue making it sore or tender. Clearly, those new to running have weaker tendons / muscles and as they progress, Shin Splints are less like to occur. If you suffer from shin splints, compression socks may help you minimise the problem until you legs strengthen.

Treatment

RICE - Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation Rest is the main treatment - the application of ICE or gel pack to help reduce inflammation - Apply a COMPRESSION bandage - ELEVATE the leg.

In the early stages, it good to have your running technique checked by one of the clubs seasoned runners. Both Pronation or Supination can be a contributory factor - the right kind of shoe or an orthotic may be all you need.

Many swear by compression socks and strapping up lower leg will help contain the trauma on the muscle tissue.

Painkillers: These will help reduce inflammation but do not take them to mask the pain during running - this will only make it worse.

If the pain is really bad you should rest it for a week or two at least and then start gentle training - If you have the right shoes and/or wear compression socks, you may not even experience the problem again. However, an underlying non-correctable biomechanical problem may cause the problem to recur or even cause permanent damage. If you're not sure, ask your GP or a sports injury specialist.

"Running through" an injury as a beginner is not a good idea - more experienced athletes do this to great effect but only after many years of knowing their bodies.

As is usual with running injuries - let your body do the talking - pain is the bodies way of telling you to stop.

Runners Stitch

Stitch is generally a muscle spasm associated with the diaphragm, the muscle that assists in breathing and its connective tissue. The spasm can occur in either the muscle or the ligaments and the primary symptom is typically a sharp pain on the right side, immediately below the ribs.

When we inhale, to "pull" air into the lungs the diaphragm moves down. Conversely, when we exhale the diaphragm moves up and we "push" air out of the lungs. Like other muscle cramps or spasms, diaphragm spasms or stitches are thought to occur from the strain and fatigue associated with the increased workload of the diaphragm during accelerated breathing from exercise.

Runners new to running often get stitch as more is asked of their diaphragm than normal and the blood (oxygen) supply to the diaphragm is compromised.

Stitch may also be caused by not breathing correctly - synchronise you breathing with your leg cadence eg. Breath out forcefully every other time your right (or left) foot hits the ground.

The good news is that most muscle spasms are thought to be associated with muscle fatigue and as your fitness level and overall conditioning improves, the risk of stitch decreases.

If you get stitch slow your pace immediately, take deep breaths & within 1 or 2 minutes the pain should subside.

Running Hills

- Know a hills coming up? **Take deep breaths** one or two minutes before the base of the hill
- **Shorten your stride** AND keep your breathing synchronised with your increase leg cadence (rhythm)
- On steep hills, drive your arms harder
- Lean into the hill from your ankles, not from the hip
- Look forwards rather than down at your feet

Helping Endurance

A spoonful of Sodium Bicarbonate (Baking Powder) in a glass of water (or squash) an hour before running helps boost endurance by helping to neutralise lactic acid and Hydrogen ion build up in the leg muscles.

If you have any questions about niggles, injuries or techniques, please email admin@tauntonrc.uk