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By Bruce Deacon

Feeling A Bit Sore?

It is only normal to feel a few aches and pains as you increase your training volumes. If things are going according to plan, you will feel tired after your long runs or hard workouts, and you will have a bit of soreness. However, it is important to learn how to distinguish these pains from injury.

As a rule of thumb, training soreness should subside after a couple of days of rest. This type of soreness is usually on both sides of your body. So if your hamstrings are sore, it should be both hamstrings. Pain should be dull and not sharp.

You can speed your recovery from this soreness with the help of massage, Epsom salt baths, or ice. Many elite athletes will use alternating hot/cold shower massage to work out the muscle soreness. Using a massaging shower head, spray your legs with hot water for 30 seconds. Next, turn off the hot water and spray them with cold water for 30 seconds. Alternate like this 8-10 times. This will increase the blood flow to your muscles to hasten the repair of damaged cells.

If you get pain that doesn't match the above descriptors, then it is best to treat it as an injury. Take a couple of days off, and ice the spot for 10 minutes every couple of hours. In many instances, this will take care of the problem. If the discomfort persists, then seek some treatment from a chiropractor, massage therapist or physiotherapist. Often aches and pains are the result of tight muscles or skeletal misalignments that can be treated in a couple of sessions.

If the injury still persists, then you should seek medical advice. A doctor with a sports medicine background will be able to help diagnose the problem and suggest some effective treatments.

An Ounce Of Protection Is Worth A Pound Of Cure!

Anyone who has struggled with injuries knows the benefit of a bit of injury prevention. Minimizing the risks is always better than being hurt. Here are 3 tips to keep you injury free:

- 1. Choose your running surfaces wisely.**

Pick soft but stable running surfaces. Dirt or gravel paths, wood chip trails, or smooth grassy surfaces are best. Avoid cambered roads if possible. While it is important to get used to running on asphalt in time for the race day, this can be done by doing a couple of runs a week on pavement. Keep your long runs off-road if possible.

- 2. Don't run in "dead" shoes.**

Regularly check to see if your shoes are showing wear to the outer sole or if the midsole has lost its **cushioning**.

- 3. Avoid over-stretching.**

Be careful when stretching not to push the muscle beyond its range of motion. Stretching too much beyond the muscle's range can damage the muscle and lead to injury. Don't force the stretch, but stay relaxed. Hold the stretch for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Preparing For The Dog Days!

With the warmth of summer already upon us, it is important to run smart to avoid sunstroke, heat exhaustion or sun burn. Summer running can be great, but it does come with some dangers.

You will find that the first few runs in the heat feel exceptionally difficult. Your body needs about 10 days to acclimatize to the heat. During this time, you will also begin to produce more sweat when you run. Your blood will become a bit thinner and you will form more capillaries near the surface of your skin, so that as the increased sweat evaporates it cools your blood more efficiently. However, even with these physiological changes, it is best to plan your long runs for early in the day to avoid the heat. If possible choose shady routes to stay cool.

With increased sweat rates, it is important to stay well hydrated, by drinking before, during and after your runs. Most diets contain more salt than needed, but you should be aware of the increased need for salt during and after summertime runs.

Dress for the weather. Choose loose fitting clothing made of fabrics that wick away the sweat. Wear a hat and sunglasses and don sunscreen if you will be in direct sunshine.

Any questions? Email me at coachbruce@royalvictoriamarathon.com.