

Ten Common Running Mistakes

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Sometimes we hit a wall in our running. And I'm not talking about the "Wall" you always hear about when you're training for a long distance race and you deplete your energy stores. No, this is a much bigger wall. This is when you're running is just not feeling right, things are just not working for you and you're at a loss. Maybe you're injured. Maybe you've lost your motivation. When you get to that point, it's important to take some time to check in with yourself to see if you've been making some of these common running mistakes.

Mistake #1: Not listening to advice. It may be hard to believe, but we don't know everything. When it comes to running, especially training for something, we need to rely on outside sources of information and expertise to help us. Simply finding a training plan online and trying to follow it often isn't enough to get you to the starting line. Asking for help when you need it is your best bet to have the race you've been hoping for. Don't know who to ask? Ask any one of our staff members and they can steer you in the right direction.

Mistake #2: Taking that advice too far. The flip side of asking for help is taking it too literally. What works for one runner doesn't always work for another runner. Going back to that online training plan, that may not be the appropriate plan for **your** fitness or ability. It's great to get advice and help from others, but you have to take that advice for what it's worth: a suggestion. It's not the be all and end all. You have to find what works well for you. Seeking help from someone that has experience with lots of different bodies and abilities will be of more value.

Mistake #3: Not recognizing we all have to start somewhere. Whether you are new to running, new to a particular distance, or a particular workout, you have to start somewhere. You're not going to finish the race without putting in the work. You have to go through the steps in order to get to the end. This may sound like common sense, but you'd be surprised how many runners think they can do something big, like running a marathon, without putting in the weeks and months of miles.

Mistake #4: Not recognizing that sometimes less is more. The easiest way to get injured as a runner is to do too much before you're ready. Sometimes we may get a little overzealous, to put it politely, and we take things a little further than maybe our bodies are ready.

Mistake #5: Not listening to your body and knowing your limits. OK, so you've taken things a little too far before you were ready. That's fine. But now you're feeling a little ache in your knee. It's not too bad, so you keep running. Huh. Now it's really achy. But you have to do your long run tomorrow. So, you do it. The next morning, you try to run and can't get through a mile. Sound familiar? Imagine if you had listened to that little ache. Maybe iced it, rested a day, and took it a little slower. Perhaps you wouldn't be sidelined and not able to run if you had just listened to your body in the first place.

Mistake #6: Getting caught up in comparison. This is a big one. Comparing ourselves to our running friends, or even the pros, is tough thing to control. You may ask yourself why you can't run as fast or as long as one of your friends. Well, you have to look at the conditions. Do you both train the same way? Complete the same workouts? Have the same home and work life? There are a million things to take into consideration. And what about when everything is exactly the same and you still can't keep up? Well, unfortunately for some, a person's genetics are the ultimate determinant of what you can do on the road. I know, it's a bummer. Blame your parents.

Mistake #7: Believing your doubts. As much as genetics and our life situations determine our running prowess, your attitude can make a difference too. You know, we really are our own worst enemies. When you believe you're not able to do something, whether it's completing a huge race such as a marathon, or simply just completing that day's run, you most likely won't be able to do it. It's usually fear that is causing the doubts to enter your mind. Letting your fear and doubts take over is basically never giving yourself a chance. You're selling yourself short.

Mistake #8: Not recognizing the prize is in the process. I'm sure you've heard all the sayings. It's all about the journey. Focus on the journey and not the destination. You've heard it all. And as much as I dislike canned sayings, this one is true. It is all about the process. Your training program is where you get prepared for the big day, both physically and mentally. Your body learns how to run the distance, you learn what works and what doesn't, and you can handle everything mentally and emotionally. You have to take your training seriously or you just won't get to race day. Or maybe you will but most likely, you won't have the race you really want. Trust me on this.

Mistake #9: It's all in your head. Are you recognizing a pattern here? Most of these mistakes are mental. There are a few mistakes you can make physically, like over-striding or not wearing shoes that are right for your body. But really, what will derail your training plan is that noggin

of yours. Don't let your head get the better of you. When you do start getting a little mental, just stop, relax, and do whatever it is that helps you clear your head.

Mistake #10: Not having fun. What's the point of doing anything if it's not fun? When you start feeling like your running is more like work than play, you may need to back off a bit. Don't try to run through it. Try taking a day off. Sometimes a mini-break is all you need to re-energize your running.

We've all made these mistakes once or twice in our running. Take what you've learned from your mistakes and use it to make your running that much better.

Happy running!

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