



RUNTEX UNIVERSITY

## INJURY OR JUST SORE?

Am I injured or is this normal soreness? And if this is normal, why does anybody run? These are the thoughts that cross your mind every morning you get out of bed and take those first few painful steps. Soreness occurs when you begin a running program and when you are trying to increase your speed or distance too fast. If you don't pay attention to your soreness it will turn into injury. Listen to your body and adjust your training to keep your soreness from turning into injury. The difference between soreness and injury is soreness goes away when you warm up. If your soreness persists after you have warmed up you will favor that part of your body and you will inflame another muscle or joint. This is called compensation injuries and can be worse than the original injury.

If you wake up in the morning and can barely walk, you are either over training or in the wrong shoes, or both. You can expect some soreness because your feet are the only part of your body hitting the ground. However, the foot is well designed for running and if it is being stressed properly, you will experience very little soreness. Your early morning pains are an indicator of over training and you should adjust to avoid injury.

Because we are all human and will overdue it occasionally it is important to know how to get rid of soreness quicker. The best ways to accomplish this are hydrotherapy, massage therapy, stretching, and alternative exercise. A good hot shower, bath, hot tub, or a session of hot and cold water will bring in blood flow without stress on your muscles and joints. Massage relaxes the muscles and helps rid the muscles of the "junk" that cause the soreness. Stretching your sore muscles gently will not only help remove soreness, but will increase your flexibility.

Alternate forms of exercise will help you get rid of soreness and increase your overall fitness. Cross training will keep your muscles balanced and decrease your chance of injury. Swimming, bicycling, and walking are good alternates for your rest days. I don't recommend trying two new sports at once. If you weren't active before this program, use water, massage and stretching on your rest days.

Bottom line is, you can't expect to improve your fitness without getting sore. The secret is to learn how to minimize and recover from the soreness. If your soreness is excessive, your program is too aggressive or if there is a problem with your footwear, nutrition or rest. Your soreness should go away as you get use to your training. If you are the type to keep adding more to your program, you can expect continued soreness. You need to find your best method of soreness management and stick with it.

