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### LAPS WITH L.A.P.S. : THE SPORTS MEDICINE CORNER



#### Running Safety 2016

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#### Top 10 Tips for Running Safety

Running is a great way to stay fit and enjoy the outdoors. With summer right around the corner, there's no better time to start a great fitness habit. And, running doesn't have to be just for adults; children, with appropriate supervision, can safely enjoy running too. Here are some tips to help your patients and their families stay safe and avoid injury.

- 1) **Erase the "no pain, no gain" mantra.** Athletes should never be encouraged to play through the pain and running is no different. While muscle soreness does occur during training, the soreness should not increase during a run; if pain is increasing with activity do not continue the activity. And, when the pain is in any joints (hips, knees, ankles, etc.) or associated with swelling, further evaluation by a sports medicine physician for possible injury is advised.
- 2) **Good nutrition and hydration!** Eat high quality carbohydrates (ex: bagel, pretzels, etc) 2-3 hours before running. Do NOT skip breakfast! Drink water steadily throughout the day to pre-hydrate. During running, replenish with small amounts (1-2 ounces) every 20 minutes. If running for over 1 hour, drink a sports beverage instead of water. Sports beverage should have sodium (Na), potassium (K) and glucose/dextrose. Avoid "sports drinks" with artificial sweeteners and special additives (ex: caffeine, ginseng, etc.).
- 3) **Don't try to run a marathon on the 1<sup>st</sup> day out!** Gradually increase running distances and intensity. The general rule of thumb is to increase about 10% per week. Remember that even taking a break of 1-2 weeks off from running/cross-training can decrease fitness so when a regimen is restarted, start at minimal distance and gradually increase time and intensity by about 10% per workout/week.
- 4) **Run on level surfaces.** If you never paid attention you probably never noticed that most roads are designed to rise from the curb to crown of the road; this helps avoid pooling of water during a rainstorm to keep roads safe for drivers but puts runners at risk for overuse

injuries. If you enjoy running the same route regularly, make sure to change directions or vary the side of the street each run. Also, when including hill runs in training, allow extra time for recovery as these runs are more intense and more traumatic to the body.

- 5) **Don't forget the wonders of cross-training.** Incorporating other athletic activities into your running regimen is an excellent way to improve cardio-vascular training without further impact on the joints. Also, it's a great alternative when there is a lower extremity injury, or even just a lot of muscle soreness as you build your endurance. Cross-training ideas for cardiovascular fitness include swimming, biking, and elliptical trainer. And, it's great to incorporate some strength and flexibility work into cardiovascular training as well, so test out that local yoga or pilates class or even try martial arts or water aerobics.
- 6) **Shoes don't cure injuries but they can help prevent them.** Get the right fit—Always try both shoes on. If feet are slightly different size, fit the larger foot. Make sure toes have room to splay with a roomy toe box with an index finger width between the longest toe and end of the shoe. Also, remember shoes do wear out and this wear and tear ruins the shock-absorbing function of the shoe; replace shoes after you have pounded the pavement for about 300-500 miles. Check shoe fit often for kids, especially during growth spurts.
- 7) **Don't forget your core!** We hear all about the “core” and core stability, but what does that really mean? The core muscles include the abdominals, lower back and buttock muscles. Core stability refers to the ability to control the position and motion of the trunk and pelvis to allow optimum production, transfer and control of force and motion to the limbs. In other words, core strength enables you to be an efficient running machine! By getting the core strong and keeping it strong the pelvis is able to remain stable during the running gait which prevents many lower extremity injuries.
- 8) **Face traffic during running.** A recent study published in *Accident Analysis and Prevention* (October 2012) confirmed that running while facing traffic results in a 77% decrease in fatal and non-fatal injury to runners.
- 9) **Special care for the overweight/deconditioned athlete.** Biomechanics can be quite poor when athletes are out of shape or overweight. Consider beginning with a strength training program to develop the muscle strength and cardiovascular conditioning before starting running.
- 10) **Have fun!** Running is a great way to get in shape and stay in shape and there are lots of ways to make it fun. Grab a buddy and challenge each other. If you're trying to motivate your kids off the couch to join you, come up with a family competition to encourage each other to achieve healthy goals; remember kids are encouraged to get one hour of physical activity a day and adults can strive for 30 minutes or more of physical activity at least 5 days a week. The treadmill is a great option, but try switching it up with a neighborhood run and enjoy the exhilarating spring air and the local scenery. Find some upbeat tunes to listen to; research studies have shown listening to music with a higher tempo helps you run faster and keep you motivated longer.