

TNT Fall 2007 Eastside Triathlon Team Injury Prevention Clinic

1. Rest

The most important part of your training is not your workouts, but your rest periods!! Your body's systems build and repair during rest –not during exercise. Continuous training with no rest periods will not allow your body to recover and could introduce unnecessary injuries.

2. Incremental Progression of Workouts

Increase your distance and speed for each sport in small increments each week. The body can and will adapt to athletic efforts if they begin at an appropriately lower level and progress upward slowly. Rushing into hard efforts, long efforts, hills, sprints or any highly stressful activity will increase the risk of injury greatly. Start slowly, and build slowly, the program progresses at a rate that will maximize your aerobic fitness and minimize the risk of injury. This gradual progression will allow for joints to adapt, connective tissue to thicken, and muscles to strengthen.

3. Proper Equipment and Fit

Sometimes the easiest way to prevent injury is by ensuring that you have proper equipment that fits correctly. Are your running shoes worn? Do they have the right amount of cushion and support for you? If you're purchasing running shoes, find someone at the store who runs, and ask them to recommend a shoe based on your foot type.

4. Flexibility and Stretching

Every workout should have a warm up and stretch period, as well as a cool down and stretch period. Never skip a warm up, cool down, or stretching period. Flexibility is key to both injury prevention and performance, so include at least one stretch exercise for each muscle group used during your workout. Here are examples for each of the major muscle groups for running

Standing quad stretch – Grab one foot and bring it behind you keeping your knees close and aligned, and your body aligned from head to toe.

Basic hamstring stretch – Place your foot on something stable at a height your comfortable with (curb in parking lot, bumper of car, etc.). Keep a slight bend in the knee of the leg you're standing on, and keep the knee straight of the leg you are stretching. Lean in toward your stretched leg only until you feel the stretch. It should not be uncomfortable.

Hip rotation – Lie on your back with knees at a 45 degree angle and feet flat on the floor. Lean your legs to one side completely to the ground, stretch the opposite arm out the opposite direction, perpendicular to your body. Turn your head towards your outstretched arm. This exercise can also be done standing.

5. Listen to your Body

As a triathlete, it is important to be in tune with your body. Your body informs you of injury early on by sending pain signals. Is that pain you're feeling "achy" or "sharp?" Most injuries that occur in triathlon are due to overuse of particular mechanisms (knee, hip, shoulder).

It may take you some time to be in tune with your body. Here are a few questions you may ask yourself:

Is the pain persistent (lasting though your workout, and possibly after)?
Is the pain limiting your range of motion?
Is there swelling in or near the area around the pain?

If the answer is yes, you should **RICE** – Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate. If the problem persists for 3 days, seek medical attention.

Being in tune with your body will greatly help you with every aspect of triathlon, so practice now!