

Quick Fixes

To err is human—to run better is divine!

By Ashley Lauretta

Running seems pretty straightforward. You lace up your shoes, step outside and go. Despite its apparent simplicity, a few missteps can make the difference between slogging through your next race or flying across the finish line. We asked a panel including a nutritionist, coach, race director and sports psychologist for the most common mistakes they see in runners of all levels—and to deliver easy fixes for moving forward without any bumps in the road.

Mistake: Forgetting to refuel after a long run or workout.
Quick Fix: Prepare a post-run snack before you hit the trails or road. “It is recommended a person eat within one hour after any run [lasting 45 minutes or longer],” shares Keri Gans, R.D., author of *The Small Change Diet*. “This is to optimally replenish glycogen stores and repair and rebuild muscles. Fatigue may set in and your appetite will go on overdrive the longer you wait to refuel.” Reach for a snack around 200

calories that contains both carbs and protein. Gans recommends Greek yogurt with berries, an open-faced turkey sandwich or a glass of low-fat chocolate milk.

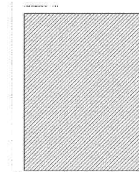
Mistake: Not tracking how many miles you put on your shoes.



Quick Fix: “I always write the date I start running in a pair of shoes somewhere on my shoes with a Sharpie marker so that I know when to replace them,” explains Lesley Mettler, founder and head coach of coachlesley.com. Mettler also recommends replacing shoes every three to six months during training to minimize the risk of injury. It’s too easy to buy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CORBIS/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



a pair of shoes then forget when you bought them. Oops! The Sharpie trick keeps the date in plain view to ensure it won't slip your mind.

Mistake: Always going at it alone.

Quick Fix: Sometimes, it is preferable or even inevitable to run solo. But for motivation (and safety!) it is best to run with friends. "Running alone, especially when you're just starting, can make the miles tick by very slowly and lead to boredom and even giving up," shares Brae Blackley, race director of the Zooma Women's Race Series. If possible, schedule at least one run a week with a buddy. None of your friends run? Not a problem. Blackley says, "Many running stores and gyms, or even fitness apparel stores, have regular running groups that cater to all levels." Make a new friend!



Mistake: Skipping workouts due to lack of motivation.

Quick Fix: Running comes with emotional highs and lows, but you don't have to let a bad attitude affect your workout. "While it is commonly assumed that motivation must rise before one acts, in fact, the opposite is often true. Motivation typically rises *after* one acts," explains Simon Rego, Psy.D., director of psychology training at Montefiore Medical Center in New York. "Instead of waiting for your motivation to rise, just start the process: Put on your running gear, and grab your iPod." Rego also recommends concentrating on what you'll feel like after the run—not before or during. The simple question, "Have I ever finished a run and thought to myself *that wasn't worth it?*" is often enough to get you out the door.



Mistake: Performing the same workout too often.

Quick Fix: Is your go-to speed workout always 400-meter repeats? Mix it up! The benefits decline if you perform any workout too frequently as the body becomes habituated. "The ideal training plan does not repeat workouts," explains Sarah Lesko, M.D., and head of corporate development at Oiselle, a women's running apparel brand. Lesko adds, "It is best to mix up workouts as much as possible." Keep your legs guessing: Incorporate different distances, speeds and elevation profiles into your training to stay in the best shape possible while avoiding burnout.

Mistake: Not eating enough.

Quick Fix: Keep a food diary to get a full picture of what you're really eating. "It is not uncommon to see patients overeat because of their run, but I have also seen the opposite," Gans explains. "Patients who under-eat have a hard time losing weight, and it interferes with their performance." Correct any issues by analyzing your diet for three days. If your average caloric intake is under your current weight multiplied by 18, you're not eating enough. Add calories in the form of fresh, whole foods.

Mistake: Running after a long car ride or flight.

Quick Fix: "Sitting in the same position for a long period of time forces your leg and core muscles to reset to a runner-unfriendly position," Lesko explains. Going for a run (even an easy one) without returning to normal muscle settings can increase risk of injury. When you arrive at your destination, hold off on your workout for a minimum of six hours. "It is better to miss a day of running than run too soon. During your wait time, perform active stretching." Then, once your body has recovered, run wild! ■



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