



How To Keep Your Feet From Getting Too Stressed Out!

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Being active is good for your health, but also puts your body at risk of injury. Many physical activities require the participant to place force through their foot. Walking alone places the force of 2-3 times your body weight through the feet. Running places the force of 4-5 times your body weight through your feet and if you sprint this increases to the force of 6-7 times your body weight. When too much stress is placed on a normal bone or when normal stresses are placed on an abnormal bone (osteoporosis, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis) stress fractures can result as bone breakdown occurs at a faster rate than bone remodeling. If not treated, the stress fracture may progress to a complete fracture. Stress fractures in the foot are most common in the following bones: metatarsals, navicular and talus.

To prevent stress fractures this spring, at a time when most people are increasing their activity levels, please be aware of the following risk factors and what you can do to lower your risk:

- extrinsic factors (outside your body)
- new shoes or worn shoes – replace your shoes at least every 6 months; do not wear new shoes for a race or on a long run
- poor foot orthotics – make sure the foot orthotics are required and properly made
- poor warm up – always warm up for at least 10 minutes before moving on to higher impact and/or intensity activities
- increasing intensity or volume of training too fast – increase your distance or decrease your time by only 10% per week
- running a loop in the same direction – alternate the direction of your running loop
- running on hard surfaces – try to avoid running on the pavement and cross train by biking or swimming
- over training – rest your body when you become truly fatigued (i.e. your times are decreasing despite increases in training)
- steroids – avoid
- smoking – avoid
- alcohol – safe intake is about 7 drinks per week for women and 14 drinks per week for men

Stress fractures present as slow onset of localized, deep pain that is increased with activity and relieved with rest. It may progress to the point where there is pain present at night. If you suspect you may have a stress fracture of the foot, please talk to a healthcare professional.

For more information about stress fractures in runners please check out the following article on Runners World: <http://www.runnersworld.com/injury-treatment/stress-fractures? page=single>