



## Running Injury Prevention: Footwear vs. Running Form

by Heritage Fitness



Running injuries are a frustrating outcome of improper running technique and preparation. Lack of knowledge of proper running form can mean the difference between a successful running practice and being sidelined with discomfort or injury.

Runners often put a lot of focus on footwear. While footwear is important, it does not prevent or fix injuries. There is no clear scientific evidence for using one particular shoe model over another for given foot types or pathologies, regardless of what some manufacturers claim. We also live in a society where the belief of having “flat feet” or “pronating” is bad. Hence, there is a stigma that foot types (especially flat feet) influence the injury patterns. Evidence suggests that the incidence of running injuries plays an important role with the training patterns. In other words, training patterns and running form are crucial for improving efficiency as well as injury prevention. A running shoe should be light, simple, and should allow the foot to function naturally as it was designed to.

If shoes don't prevent running injuries, what does?

### Here are our top five injury prevention recommendations:

1. If you are not sure of your running form, if you want to improve your performance, and/or if you have an existing injury, seek a qualified physiotherapist for guidance.
2. A runner should strive to attain: **A)** Adequate foot strike (mid-foot to fore-foot striking) **B)** Efficient cadence – how many strides in a minute – ideally between 170-190 bpm. The shorter your strides, the higher your cadence! **C)** Proper posture – your body should be erect, but slightly falling forward (not leaning forward).

3. Wear simple, light, comfortable, and flexible running shoes. Be sure to gradually transition into your new shoes so that your body adapts.
4. Vary your running surfaces. A biomechanical flaw will be repeated over and over on regular flat surfaces which makes every stride mechanically identical to the last.
5. Be progressive! Give your body time to adapt. Overuse injuries are caused by an overload of the body's anatomical structures if the applied load is greater than the body's capacity to adapt. Every new stimulus must be integrated progressively (hills, volume, intensity, surfaces, shoes...).

Running is a fantastic option to stay physically and mentally fit. With a little guidance, you can ensure your enjoyment of the activity doesn't end because of an injury.

**Do you want to prevent running injuries? Are you experiencing discomfort in your muscles or joints when you run? Do you have an old injury still nagging you? We can help. Contact Heritage Fitness today to book an appointment with a physiotherapist who can create a customized treatment plan based on your specific requirements.**