

Tip: INJURY PREVENTION

1. Shoes & Socks

- Try out your shoes and ensure they fit. Be sure that your shoes are properly sized – your feet swell after you've been on them for awhile. Make sure that there is plenty of room in the toe box and that the shoes are long enough. A good test: there should be an index finger to thumb's width between the end of your longest toe and the end of the shoe. (Too short shoes can cause toenail loss.) Another 'test' for shoe width is to remove the shoe liner and stand on it. If your foot overlaps the edge of the liner, it isn't wide enough for you. I have reverted to Women's wide or Men's. A few models can now be ordered in wide widths for women and men.
- Invest in good socks. Socks made of CoolMax (or other wicking fabric) are ideal. They help prevent blisters and keep feet drier (and more comfortable) than cotton socks. Double-layer CoolMax socks are available and marketed as blister resistant. The double layer reduces friction rubbing on the skin. Blisters are caused by moisture and friction.

2. Walking Surface

- Firm, Flat, Smooth
- Watch for cambered (sloped) roads.
- Concrete is harder than asphalt.
- Grassy areas are uneven and possibly more dangerous.
- Tracks are fine; Just remember to walk in outside lanes and reverse direction.
- Dirt trails are fine, as long as they are not too uneven. Forest Park is a favorite for longer distances.

3. Warm up / Cool down

- Start all walks slowly, gradually increasing into your training pace to raise your body temperature, allow your muscles and connective tissue to warm up (muscles work more efficiently). End with a cool down, which lowers your body temperature, enhances the removal of toxic wastes from muscles. Cool down will include stretches. Flexibility is most important, so don't skip this step.

4. Train, Cross Train, DON'T STRAIN

- Do not walk long or hard 2 days in a row.
- Do not increase your mileage by more than 5 - 10% per week.
- You should not feel totally depleted of energy at the end of a workout or not recovered within 2 hours following workout.
- Do not train when you have a fever, bad cough or increased heart rate
- Prevention is the key to staying healthy. Listen to your body: utilize the **R.I.C.E.** principal if something feels 'funny':
 - Rest
 - Ice
 - Compression
 - Elevation

Remember the 5 most dangerous words: "maybe it will go away". Seek professional help when in doubt!