

How Muscle Imbalance Leads to Injury

By Dr. Jon DeGorter



Good running form begins with proper postural balance. Your body's alignment is an important factor in your running form. Your posture throughout the day has a big impact on your running. Poor posture and alignment in running can (and does) lead to lower back pain, shoulder and neck pain, and reduced flexibility and mobility which can lead to pulled muscles. The muscles and joints work best when the body is in alignment while moving.

Postural alignment and muscle balance is the basis of proper movement and performance. When your body is in symmetry you will have increased stability, better running efficiency and less risk of injury. If your body becomes misaligned due to muscle imbalances, it will affect your form and your ability to improve, and also set you up for a long list of injuries: hip flexor tendonitis, knee and ankle issues, quadriceps, hamstring and calf strain, achilles tendonitis, IT Band syndrome and more.

Muscle imbalance occurs when overused muscles become stronger than less active muscles around them, including the muscles that work together while running. The stronger muscles overcompensate for the weaker ones. When the weaker muscles can't match the strength and endurance of the stronger ones, they fatigue more easily and causing the stronger muscles to work harder. Over time, these muscles wear down and develop overuse injuries.

To prevent muscle imbalance and the resulting postural misalignment, targeted exercises can strengthen weaker muscles. For weak hips and glutes, glute bridges, single-leg squats, and standing wood-choppers work the deeper stabilizing muscles. You can do hamstring curls for weakness in the hamstrings, and supermans to isolate your lower back muscles. Planks are great for your abs and your entire core.

Restore Balance and Stability

If strengthening weak muscles and other remedies do not alleviate pain or your injury worsens, a trained sports injury specialist can identify any problems with muscle mobility or strength, and any mechanical abnormalities that may be a contributing factor. Once properly assessed, muscle imbalances and postural dysfunctions are easily correctable. We focus on mobilizing joints and releasing short, tight muscles and soft tissues, and strengthening longer, weaker muscles to correct the body's alignment and increase movement control. Proper alignment is usually established in as few as 4 to 6 visits, depending on your individual progress and goals.

Improved Balance & Symmetry Will:

- Increase strength and stability
- Reduce tension, aches and discomfort
- Improve running form with better biomechanics
- Greatly reduce the risk of injury

Active Release Technique® treatment corrects tightness and weakness by regularly working out adhesions responsible for muscular misalignment that adversely affects your running form. A trained **ART®** provider pinpoints the problem area and the underlying cause contributing to pain and injury. **Active Release Technique®** stimulates repair and accelerates healing by restoring normal tissue texture and reestablishing full flexibility, balance and stability. What makes **ART®** different from physical therapy and other treatments is how it identifies and heals scar tissue adhesions that interfere with normal strength, balance and flexibility, and not simply stretching out the muscles. **ART®** is completely natural and non-invasive and can prevent the need for more invasive treatment.

Dr. Jon DeGorter is part of the Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care team. Dr. Jon specializes in treating runners and triathletes. He is well versed in injury prevention and rehabilitation — keeping athletes doing what they love to do.