

Cold Weather Running

By Dr. Jon DeGorter, DC



Cooler temperatures are a welcome relief after a hot and humid summer, but lower temps also means adjusting your training. More than just dressing appropriately for cold weather, there are other things to consider to prevent injury and improve performance.

In colder temperatures your body tries to keep your internal organs and other vital areas warm by reducing circulation to the extremities to help keep your body functioning properly. The reduction in blood circulation to the extremities, where most repetitive stress injuries in runners occur, puts these areas at increased risk for injury. Cold conditions also affect your muscles, reducing contraction force. When your muscles are not able to generate the proper amount of force it puts more strain on tendons and ligaments.

WARM UP

A warm up increases blood to flow to the muscles that are to be engaged, which helps deliver oxygen to tissues and removal of carbon dioxide, a harmful toxin for muscle performance. As blood flow and oxygen to muscles increases, muscle viscosity is reduced, and nerve impulses quicken, allowing for faster communication between neurotransmitters. This allows muscles to move quickly and efficiently as the brain connects with the relevant motor patterns for the upcoming activity.

Dynamic stretches are an excellent way to warm up, prepping your cardiovascular, neuromuscular and muscular systems. A dynamic warm up increases flexibility and enhances range of motion, reducing the risk of tearing muscles and ligaments. Movements should activate and elongate your muscles, which helps performance and prevents injury. A dynamic warm up can be easy exercises like squats, monster walks and hip extensions, where you actively turn on muscles for the activity you're about to do. For examples of dynamic stretches and how to do them go to www.jonaschiropractic.com, click on 'resources', then 'downloads' to find '*5 Dynamic Stretches to Warm Up*'.

Hydrate

It may seem less of a priority in colder weather, but hydration and fueling are important elements of staying healthy in any season. Dehydration still occurs even with the lack of feeling sweat. More layers means your clothes absorb the sweat more so you don't necessarily feel the sweat on your body the same way you do in the summer. Dehydration has a negative impact on performance and contributes to muscle pulls and strains. Fuel your runs so you have enough energy available for your activity level.

Post-run routine

After you finish a winter run, a cool down is still beneficial. Spending a few extra minutes on a strength and mobility routine will make you more resistant to injuries and improve your running economy by improving power transfer.

Listen to your body and don't ignore discomfort. Be proactive when you feel aches and pains by having those problem areas evaluated right away. Seeking treatment early will require less time off and keep you on track for an optimal performance.

Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care

Active Release Technique® can relieve symptoms and repair muscles, tendons and fascia faster. **Active Release Technique®** involves intense active movement-based massage treatments, which sets it apart from passive massage techniques and physical therapy treatment. **ART®** promotes faster recovery, restoration of normal tissue function and helps prevent injury by reducing scar-tissue build-up and promoting ideal muscle length through the healing process. While other therapies can provide relief, **ART®** combined with specific stretching and exercise heals the tissue in the shortest time with the lowest incidence of re-injury.

Dr. Jon DeGorter is the USATF-Long Island Chair of the Sports Medicine Committee, and part of the Jonas Chiropractic Sports Injury Care team. Dr. Jon specializes in treating runners and triathletes — keeping athletes doing what they love to do.