

10 GOLDEN RULES

1. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Proper medical and coaching supervision for all runners, whether high performance athletes or joggers, must be done by **qualified, competent and understanding professionals**. For this reason, a runner must never accept final recommendations from a professional (physiotherapist, chiropractor, MD, ...) that is not a runner himself.

2. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Be careful not to complicate or «over-medicalise» your condition. Avoid repeated treatment without progress. Avoid surgery. Do not choose **plantar orthoses** as a first option. Use a simple **running shoe**... very flat, allowing for sensations from the ground.

3. YOUR BODY WILL ADAPT!

The **human body will adapt** as long as the applied load is not greater than the body's capacity to adapt. Overuse injuries are caused by an overload of the body's anatomical structures (bones, tendons, muscles). Every new stimulus must be integrated progressively (hills, volume, intensity, surfaces, shoes...).

4. RHYTHM IS THE KEY!

To minimise ground reaction force, energy loss and injuries while maximising stride efficiency, it is preferable to keep your stride rate **over 170 strides/min**. Quality workouts (intervals, race pacing) should be done between 180 and 185 strides/min.

5. THE KENYAN SURFACE

Flat surfaces (road, track, treadmill) are very regular and make every stride mechanically identical to the last. On these surfaces, a biomechanical flaw will be repeated over and over increasing the chances of overuse injuries. The best surface is **cross-country** or trail running. Firm and irregular; these surfaces allow for a wide variety of movements and therefore a mechanical load that is properly distributed on the lower body.

6. WARM-UP: A WELL KEPT SECRET

To get ready for a workout, you must **increase your body temperature** by a progressive jog (15 to 20 minutes) followed by **progressive functional ballistic stretches**.

7. STRETCHING : YES AND NO!

Pre-workout static stretching should be done **ONLY IF** running biomechanics are sufficiently altered by shortened muscle groups to either increase the risk of injury or decrease mechanical efficiency.

8. NATURALLY STRONG

Barefoot running or walking as often as possible is an excellent way to solidify muscles and tendons that are responsible for the body's natural absorption mechanisms. Specific **stabilisation, proprioception and strengthening** programs are also good ways to prevent injury.

9. CROSS-TRAINING

When injured, complete rest is rarely the best treatment. A cross-training activity is recommended as soon as possible. A **cardio-vascular activity that is not painful** will decrease recovery time.

10. WE ARE WHAT WE EAT / BODY AND MIND

We are what we eat... literally! **Quality, variety and balance** are the most important words when speaking of an athlete's diet. Having fun, having a **positive attitude** and having healthy life habits all have direct influences on the body and on injuries.