

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 provided by **qualified, competent and understanding professionals**. For this reason, a runner must never accept final recommendations from professionals (physiotherapists, chiropractors, MDs, etc.) who are not runners themselves.

2. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Make sure not to exacerbate or “over-medicalize” your condition. Avoid repeated treatments without progress as well as 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, surface, shoes...).

4. RHYTHM IS KEY!

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

5. THE KENYAN SURFACE

Flat surfaces (road, track, treadmill) are very regular and make every stride mechanically identical. On these surfaces, a biomechanical flaw will be repeated over and over, thereby increasing the likelihood of overuse injuries. The best surfaces are found in **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** with 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 could sufficiently be altered by shortened muscle groups resulting in either an increased risk of injury or a decrease of mechanical efficiency**.

8. NATURALLY STRONG

Running or walking **barefoot** as often as possible is an excellent way to solidify muscles and tendons that are responsible for the body’s natural absorption mechanisms. Specific **stabilization, proprioception** and **strengthening** programs are also good ways to prevent injuries.

9. RUNNING OFTEN, ALWAYS MOVING!

It is preferable to **run as often as four to six times a week**, even if it’s for a short amount of time. When injured, complete rest is rarely the best treatment. A cross-training activity is recommended as soon as possible. A **cardiovascular activity that is not painful** will reduce 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, a **positive attitude** and healthy life habits all have a direct influence on the body and on injuries.