

Return to Running Program General Instructions

1. It is safe to begin the return to running program once you are able to walk 1 mile comfortably without any pain or swelling.
2. Jogging should be done no more than every other day.
3. Use other modes of exercise (bike, elliptical, swimming) for aerobic conditioning while increasing your running distance.
4. The program should be performed step by step. Do not advance your program until you can successfully complete the initial step. Let pain and swelling be your guide. If the activity creates pain, swelling, or causes you to limp, go back to the previous step.
5. Before starting the program and after completion of the program, allow 15 minutes to perform stretching exercises.
6. It is preferable to start on flat terrain, such as a treadmill or soft track, before moving to hard or uneven surfaces.
7. Ice the injured area for 20 minutes after exercise and cool-down.

Running Progression

Phase 1

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Day #1 | Jog $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, Walk $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, comfortable pace |
| Day #2 | Jog $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, Walk $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, comfortable pace |
| Day #3 | Jog $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, Walk $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, comfortable pace |

Phase 2

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Day #1 | Jog $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, Walk $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, comfortable pace |
| Day #2 | Jog 1 mile |
| Day #3 | Jog 1 mile |

You can continue to increase distance by $\frac{1}{4}$ mile per session until you reach your desired distance. When you have reached your training distance without causing any pain or swelling, and have a normal running form, you can gradually start to increase your running speed.

Running should be limited to 3 to 4 times per week with rest days in between run days. You should follow “periodized” training approach which utilizes the Heavy- Light-Medium format. For example, if your usual long run is 8 miles, then your “Heavy” run is 8 miles. If you are running three times per week, then your run distances would be:

- Day 1: Heavy: 8 miles
Day 2: Light: 4 miles
Day 3: Medium: 6 miles

This approach will help prevent over-training and subsequent injury.



ALAN H. LEE, M.D.
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY AND SPORTS MEDICINE

Keck School of
Medicine of **USC**

Shoe wear

Running shoes should be changed every 3 to 4 months due to the loss of the shoe's shock absorbing capacity. Proper fit and support is important in minimizing leg injury. Talk to your physical therapist if you have questions regarding your shoe wear.

Adapted courtesy of Dr. Tom Gill.