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3 bad habits that hurt your knees

Tuesday, April 23, 2013

Surprise! Running isn't one of them (as long as you strengthen first).

At my gym I'm known as "that lady who runs." I live in a popular retirement area so if you visit my gym you may think you've stumbled into an AARP meeting especially if a "silver sneakers" class is about to begin.

Everyone is very welcoming and friendly, but I often hear warnings about how my running will hurt or even ruin my knees. I accept the advice as well intentioned and usually respond with the well documented studies that statistically runners have fewer problems than non runners.

Perhaps it's because of the websites in my search history, but knee articles always find their way to my mailbox.

So the bad habits are

1) Overeating leading to obesity which increases the risk of osteoarthritis "because it speeds the breakdown of cartilage." Then there's the extra pressure on your knees. Each pound of weight puts 3 pounds of pressure on your knees when walking and 10 pounds when going down stairs or running. So I took 250 pounds of pressure off my knees when I lost the weight?

No wonder I went faster and the hills seemed easier. I can understand how someone with a LOT of weight to lose would be advised to postpone running until further along toward their goal.

2) Too much time on the couch since lack of exercise causes muscles to weaken and joints to lack support. Strengthen with low impact activities. This is great advice. I can understand how jumping right into running without first building strength could result in injury.

3) Avoiding "slump" while standing or sitting. Mom always said "stand up straight." In that case at least she knew what she was talking about.

The full (very short) article is here.

www.realage.com/joint-pain/bad-habits-that-hurt-your-knees-are-you-guilty-of-number-3?eid=1010682241&emberid=27586903&cbr=oak_tip

I believe in gradualism in weight loss, strength training and running. I'm also grateful for the medical advancements that have made knee replacement surgery so routine. Many at my gym are rehabbing after such surgery (all non runners I must add), but I would really like to keep my original knees.

So I will only increase my speed or distance slowly or even just keep it constant. At my age if I can't turn

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back time, maybe at least I can slow it down a bit. Maintaining my goal weight is a big part of that.

Note: I should add that if you have a knee problem already or just don't like running, DON'T. There are plenty of other low impact activities that are just as valuable. Do what you enjoy. Movement should make you happy not be something you dread.

Edit: Thanks to the comments, I want to emphasize the importance of stretching in avoiding injury. I ALWAYS conscientiously stretch after running using the routine suggested by my orthotics guy decades ago. I make sure to hold each move to the required number of seconds and NEVER cut it short. Being OCD about this is a good thing.

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AUSFAM

I'm emailing the article to my parents--they're always worried about my knees. I don't think non-runners realize that runners are overprotective of their bodies and won't do anything that will prevent us from running! :)
2973 days ago



CD8066537

THANKS! I needed this re enforcement to get this weight off!
2974 days ago



CAALAN23

I'd love to run but weight keeps me from it. I have jumped into c25k many times and always sidelined myself due to injury and then took longer coming back to fitness due to the discouragement. I am pulling back the reins hard to keep myself from jumping into running too soon again. Walking...walking with hills...strength training. Then...when I'm lighter...I'm going for it.

Thanks for sharing the article. Good blog!
Tina
2974 days ago



CD12377922

One thing not mentioned here is biological... women are built in such a way that they have more pressure on their knees already. I am also knock knee (think opposite of bow legged) This puts pressure on my knees. I had trouble when I first started running seven years ago. But, wearing a brace and adding some cross training (biking, hiking, lifting) took care of the knees trouble. As long as I run less than 6 miles or ride less than 15 I don't feel my knees. Keep moving...We can do it. Thanks for sharing this...
2974 days ago



AKATHLEEN54

Thanks for this blog and the article. I already have arthritis in my knees (age 54) and want to run but was always afraid of making it worse. I have been doing some short sprints during my walks and have notices that as I am losing weight and am getting stronger they don't hurt as much as they used to. If I am not going to damage them further I would like to try to run farther. Also going to take LEWILL's advice to remember the stretching. That's one thing a lot of us take for granted thinking it isn't necessary but I have learned from Coach Nicole how important it is to

prevent injury. Thanks for sharing.
2974 days ago



KANSASROSE67

I had knee pain for years (starting when I only in my 20s) but since losing the weight (even though just 25 pounds) it's been almost non-existent. When I started running I increased my distance gradually and also I've done strength/circuit training 2-3 times a week. I would have to agree completely with your blog, based on my experience. Thanks!
2974 days ago



DESERTJULZ

Excellent blog, thank you!

Also of interest: I asked my Chi running instructor whether running on concrete or asphalt is damaging and she said, "If you are using proper running form, you should be able to run on those surface safely. Take it slow, focus on form, not speed or distance."
2974 days ago





BOOKAPHILE

All the consequences for the bad habits make sense. I'm not a runner, but I, also, want to keep my knees. I still have to work on that "slumping." Heavy chest load makes slumping easy when tired!

2974 days ago



JOYNEW

Great info - thanks for sharing. My knees are not the best, but I keep on running. I wonder if I have bad running form or something....

2974 days ago



LEWILL1982

Thanks for sharing! I started running and slowly worked my way up. I also had severe knee pain and ended up taking almost a year off after my first half marathon. I ended up with MRI's and a summer of physical therapy. When I started running again (because I was stubborn and determined not to be sidelined forever), I remembered my PT exercises, incorporated them, started stretching (who'd a thunk it!?) and I haven't had a problem since, knock on wood! I ran most of last year, took some time off (read: got lazy) and have picked it up again this year, incorporating stretching and it truly makes all the difference. I love how running makes me feel, I love how it leans me out and I love the sense of empowerment. Have to take care of those knees!

2974 days ago



CD13136117

Great advice, and great plan on keeping your own knees!!

2974 days ago



CD13541355

great advice and great blog!



2974 days ago



CD6236308

very encouraging thank you!! I am a walker, and reading this gives me hope as long as the weight keeps coming off , I will eventually have less pain in my knees and legs and the walking will get easier!

2974 days ago



MZLADY77

Thanks for sharing!

2974 days ago



CD13099273

Good article -cycling and speed walking for me , a combo - the slouching was cured at a young age . When my sister and I were young we participated in Wendy Ward how to be Lady - Charm School :) - I was such a Tom Boy that what I was best at was posture - walking balancing a



book on my head. LiL Racer

2974 days ago



WILSONWR

I definitely agree. Do what you're happy with. If you don't enjoy running, you won't stick with it!

2974 days ago



CD12557708

Thanks girl! I love running, but after some recent knee aggravation (even more than the general pain I've learned to live with) I have decided to pick running back up after I drop enough weight to be under 200 lb. It's amazing how much stress extra weight puts on your knees, I will feel lucky if I'm not permanently affected.

I also hear the "its too bad on my knees!" all the time. I think it's just an excuse to not do something difficult. Once I was in a grumpy mood and shot back "its better for your knees than sitting on your rear" and received a very guilty look from the person I was addressing. Oh well.



2974 days ago

Comment edited on: 4/23/2013 9:39:47 AM



COCK-ROBIN

Very good!

2974 days ago





DOVESEYES

THANK YOU!

2974 days ago



CD13167855

I have strong knees, but I don't like running because it's high impact and I feel that in my hips and back. I use an elliptical machine or take exercise classes to get a sweat going. Walking is great exercise, but it doesn't have the intensity that I now crave. According to the test on that page, I have the joints of someone under 30. Very cool.

2974 days ago

Comment edited on: 4/23/2013 8:30:49 AM



CELIAMINER

Glad your knees are in good shape. I ran mine out and stopped running after knee surgery, only to gain and gain. So I try again off and on, even though I believe I am not built to run.

2974 days ago



SATCHMO99

Great article, thanks for sharing. Well done on the weight loss, and the running. I had to stop running for a few years when three discs ruptured in my back because I listened to someone else, and not to my body.

I'm back into running now, and it's fabulous. I've always known that it's good for my mind, body and soul. Now I'm running with a purpose - to raise money for World Vision, for children, for change, for good.

I've shed 22 lbs in about 18 months, and have gone from being "pre-diabetic" to back in the "normal" range. I'm very susceptible to low blood sugar slumps, so a low carb way of life is just that, not a diet, a way of life. Happily, my DH is a firm believer in low carb, which makes life a lot easier.

2974 days ago



AZMOMXTWO

thank you
2974 days ago



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