

A photograph of two women running in a field. The woman on the left is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and dark shorts. The woman on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and pink shorts. The background is a blurred field with trees.

# RETURN TO RUN

// Post Injury Training Plan - By Sasha Gollish //



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## REST ASSURED, WITH A LITTLE PATIENCE, IT ALL COMES BACK.

***Coming back from injury can be frustrating and humbling for all of us - we may lose fitness and some efficiency when we take time off from running. Even when cross-training during an injury (if safe to do so) we still lose that 'sharpness' from not doing the specific motion of running. Rest assured, with a little patience, it all comes back. And if we're diligent, we can actually come back stronger and faster than pre-injury!***

— Sasha Gollish // Pro Runner, Performance Engineer, Educator



### THE PROGRAM

It's essential to not rush the first 3 weeks, to give yourself your best shot at an uncomplicated return to running. You should be able to walk for 60 minutes without any injury pain before you start your return to run calendar.

### THE HOP TEST

The hop test is like it sounds: testing how your injury feels by hopping on one foot. Since running is essentially a series of hopping or jumping from one foot to the other, this test is a good self-screening tool to assess if it's safe to start running again. Standing on your non-injured leg, hop or small jump 10-15 times. Use this as your benchmark (and hopefully you don't find a new injury here because this hurts in your healthy leg!)

Standing on the recovered leg, again hop or small-jump 10-15 times. Compare how it feels to the other leg. Assess for any pain. 1 or 2 out of 10 pain might just be some healing tissue around the injury 'talking' to you. As long as there is no increasing pain, and your pain stays between 0-2 out of 10, you can proceed to the return to run program.

## THE RETURN TO RUN PROGRAM

The return to run program is a series of intervals of running and walking. The run or jog portion is to cause just a little bit of stress to your body. The timed running sections should be your recovery jog or slower pace. (Faster running = bigger forces)

*Jay Dicharry sums this up well in Podium Runner: "Think about this for a minute. If you stand up on both legs, you have half your body weight on each leg. And if you stand on one leg, that's 100 percent of your body weight on one leg. Now take a barbell, add about 150 percent of your body weight to it, and hoist the load up and onto your shoulders; then stand on one leg. ... If anything, we could say that running is large stresses acting on our body for a long time."*

[www.podiumrunner.com/training/real-load-running/](http://www.podiumrunner.com/training/real-load-running/)

The walk portion is a time for you to assess the injury area and check in anywhere else that might be compensating. The walk is a chance for you to 'unload' the injury to allow it and other parts of your body to give you feedback. The walk section also helps ease you back into running, because no matter how aerobically fit you are there is an efficiency to running that you need to develop again.

## BLENDING THIS IN WITH CROSS-TRAINING

If you have an allotted amount of time (i.e., one hour) for all your physiotherapy exercises, icing or contrast, returning to running and cross-training, make sure to prioritize the exercises and icing or contrast. As you transition from the weeks when there is minimal running to more running, you can adjust your cross-training as required. For instance, in weeks 1-2, if you're not bound by time, you might continue to do the full cross-train you had planned (i.e., bike, swim, elliptical, aqua run, etc for 60 mins). In weeks 3 and moving forward as the amount of running increases you might decrease your cross-training time. You also don't need to have a cross-training plan. For a variety of reasons you may not have run during your time 'off' while injured. If this is the case, use the prescribed run program below and do not augment with any additional cross-training.

## ICING + CONTRAST // IF RECOMMENDED BY YOUR PT

**ICING:** Placing a cold ice pack or similar on the injured area for 15 minutes. Avoid direct contact with the ice pack on your skin. Use a towel to place between the ice pack and your skin. Direct skin exposure to ice can cause frostbite.

**CONTRAST:** As it sounds, this is alternating between heat and ice therapy. Using a heating pad or hot water bottle alternate 90 seconds of heat with 60 seconds of an ice pack (or similar) on the injured area.

Repeat 4 to 5 times, always ending with the cold treatment.



### A QUICK NOTE ON ACUTE VS OVERUSE INJURIES

Acute injuries are those single, identifiable events that cause injury - like stubbing or dropping something on your toe, crashing into the coffee table, rolling an ankle. Overuse injuries are the gradual onset of an injury caused by repeated micro-traumas or micro-injuries; there is no single, identifiable event to cause the injury but usually a single, identifiable moment where you have to stop because it's so painful. For instance, these are shin splits, stress fractures, stressed tendons, or burnout. Either type of injury can cause a cessation in your regularly scheduled programming and some time away from running. While you may be tempted to quickly jump back into your former training (especially if you've maintained your aerobic endurance and strength), you've still lost your running efficiency and the training effect of running. Patience will help you here! The time will pass and before you know it, you'll be back to full running and feeling healthy!

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## IMPORTANT //

1. Before every run trial do the "Hop Test", activation exercises (like the LittleWing warmup), and any specific exercises assigned by your Physical Therapist.
2. During every walk break, check in with the injury spot to make sure it is not progressively getting more sore.
3. After every run, do specific exercises assigned by your Physical Therapist, and ice if recommended.
4. The best time to assess how your body tolerated the run is the morning of the day after. If you have worsening of symptoms, that means you need to scale back your progression.
5. Certain soft-tissue injuries may respond better to a 72-hour cycle of returning to running. If you consistently notice any symptoms even on 2nd day after run trial, try spreading out running to once every 3 days for the first 2.5 weeks.

# RETURN TO RUN - TRAINING PLAN

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
<b>WEEK 1</b>	WALK 10 MIN WARMUP, 10 X (60 SECOND JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	ASSESS HOW INJURY AREA FEELS IN AM, IF WORSE GIVE YOURSELF ANOTHER WEEK AND START BACK AT DAY 1	WALK 10 MIN WARMUP, 15 X (60 SECOND JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	ASSESS HOW INJURY AREA FEELS IN AM, IF WORSE GIVE START BACK AT DAY 1	CROSSTRAIN OR OFF DAY	WALK 10 MIN WARMUP, 10 X (2 MINUTE JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	DAY OFF
<b>WEEK 2</b>	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 8 X (3 MINUTE JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 7 X (4 MINUTE JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	CROSSTRAIN OR OFF DAY	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 6 X (5 MINUTE JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	DAY OFF
<b>WEEK 3</b>	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 3 X (10 MINUTE JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 2 X (15 MINUTE JOG, 60 SECOND WALK), 10 MIN WALK WARM-DOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	CROSSTRAIN OR OFF DAY	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 30 MIN JOG, 10 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	DAY OFF
<b>WEEK 4</b>	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 30 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 10 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 30 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 20 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	DAY OFF
<b>WEEK 5</b>	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 30 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 30 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 45 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	WALK 5 MIN WARMUP, 30 MIN JOG, 5 MIN WALK WARMDOWN	ASSESS AND RECALIBRATE AS NECESSARY	DAY OFF
<b>WEEK 6</b>	RETURN TO NORMAL RUNNING PLAN WITH OVERSIGHT!						