



10 Tips to Injury-Free Training

1. **MUSCLE BALANCE:** Include strength training for the opposing muscle groups – and don't only work the muscles that you can see, as that can lead to muscle imbalances and eventually injury.
2. **NO BELT:** Train without a weight lifting belt (unless you are attempting a 1RM – one-rep-maximum -- in order to develop your body's natural belt consisting of the muscles in the abdominals, obliques, and lower back.
3. **NEOPRENE:** Consider wearing loosely fitting neoprene elbow or knee sleeves in cold weather to help keep tender muscles and tendon complexes warm between activities.
4. **ADVICE:** Develop a good friendship with a knowledgeable athletic trainer or physical therapist who can provide you with trustworthy advice.
5. **BASELINE MEASUREMENTS:** Take your resting heart rate and body temperature for one week straight, first thing in the morning, to provide you with baseline measurements; if your temperature ranges more than .5 degrees or your resting heart rate more than 10 beats from baseline, it may be an indication that you are overtraining or getting sick. Rest!
6. **NUTRITON:** Include a good source of carbohydrates and protein following any strenuous high-intensity intervals or strength workout to help your body replenish its glycogen stores and start repairing any damage done during strength training. That could be as simple as a piece of fruit and some non-fat yogurt, or a turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread.
7. **STRETCHES:** Learn a series of good stretches specifically chosen for your body's needs and do them regularly, particularly if you've been injured in the past.
8. **FORM:** Maintain proper form at all times and concentrate on the muscles you're targeting – even one slip in breathing (i.e. while you're lying or standing under a heavily loaded barbell) can lead to injury if you're not paying attention to what you're doing.
9. **GOALS:** Have a goal and a periodised workout plan to get you to that goal; be sure the plan varies from week to week to avoid getting stuck in a plateau that leaves you frustrated and unhappy with your progress. Frequently starting and stopping a program without establishing any regular consistency is one of the big causes of injury!
10. **GEAR:** Be aware of your training surroundings, gear, and the equipment you're using, all the way down to your running shoes, and replace anything that looks like it's starting to wear out. As an example, improper footwear can lead to a change in gait and compensation by other muscles that can then lead to injury weeks, months, or years down the line!