



Sports Injury Prevention Tips to Keep You Moving through 2021

We don't need to tell you it's been a stressful year. Maybe you've been looking forward to 2021 as an opportunity to commit - or recommit - yourself to getting out and moving more.

(And if so, don't forget to drop plenty of wishlist hints for the gear you might want. You're running out of time!)

Whether your goal is playing a sport, working on improving your personal bests, or just getting away from the rest of life for a bit, we want to make sure you keep moving as well as you can. Physical activity is a great way to tend to your physical, mental, and spiritual health, and few things are more demoralizing than having your ambitions grind to a halt thanks to a [sports injury](#).

While it's impossible to reduce the risk of injuries such as ankle sprains and Achilles tendinitis to zero (accidents do happen, after all), there are many easy steps you can take to lower your chances as much as possible – and they're well worth considering!

Equip the Right Footwear

It can be tempting just to wear standard sneakers for every activity, especially if you're trying out a new sport or exercise routine for the first time. However, not wearing the right shoes for your activity can leave you more prone to injury.

Sports shoes are not just a gimmick. Different activities place different demands on your feet, from the repetitive impacts of running to the side-to-side motions of tennis or basketball. Shoes for each sport are designed to better accommodate these demands with cushioning, support, and control in the right places. Not having them can place more stress on areas of your feet and ankles, which increases the chances of something giving way.

In addition to fitting well, shoes should also accommodate your specific foot shape and gait. A trained associate at a sporting goods store should be able to help you find the best shoes for your needs, so don't be afraid to ask them!

Warm Up Dynamically

When many people think of stretching as a warm-up, they often imagine holding poses that stretch the muscles. That's not bad, but it's also not enough.

Warming up before a run or other activity is important, but it should also involve dynamic stretching. These are warm-up exercises that incorporate more motion and help the body better prepare for the more intense paces you'll be putting it through. Keep it light, but keep it moving.

A few examples of dynamic stretches include:

- A minute or two of light jogging.
- Knee-ups
- "Buttkicks"
- Walking lunges

Build a warmup routine that targets the areas you need most, but also gets you more excited to start.



Pace Your Progress

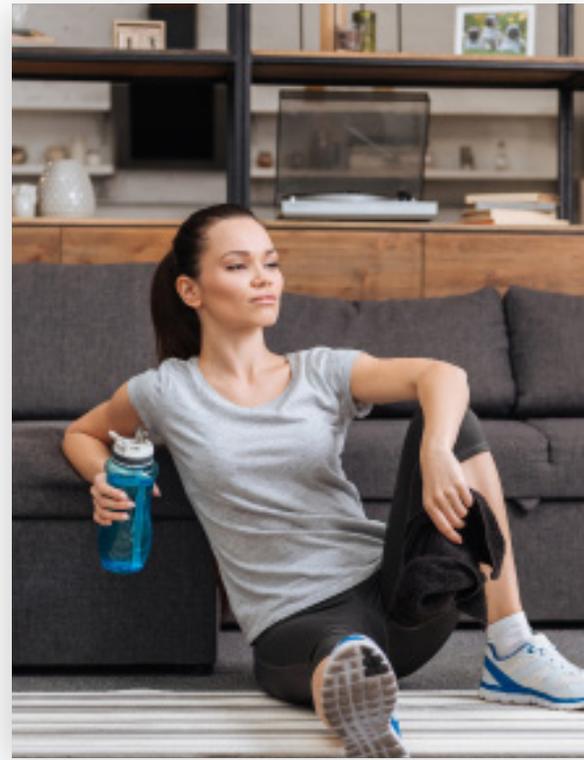
If your new year's "couch-to-5K" program involves you trying to run a 5K after only a week or two of training, you're going to find yourself back on the couch much sooner than you anticipated.

We become stronger by challenging our bodies, breaking them down on a cellular level, and then allowing them time to rebuild themselves stronger than before. That's the magic of exercise in a nutshell!

However, our bodies aren't designed to withstand huge increases in demand or intensity all at once. The breakdown overtakes the recovery, and injuries such as stress fractures and plantar fasciitis can be the result.

Be patient with your body and give it time to work toward a goal. Begin new exercises at a low intensity, then gradually increase it – no more than 10 percent more time, weight, or distance per week.

And any time your body feels like it's not handling what you're giving it, never hesitate to dial back to something that's more reasonable while still giving yourself a workout. It's always better to achieve a goal more slowly than you anticipated than to not achieve it at all thanks to an injury.



See Us About Current and Past Sports Injuries

You can't outrun your past. If you have a history of foot or ankle trauma, it can still have consequences for your workout plans if you don't address potential weaknesses.

We can review your foot or ankle history, discuss any problems you may be currently having, and make recommendations about the best ways to pursue your physical goals. Our priority will always be to help our patients stay moving and do what they love whenever possible. We never want you stuck on the bench if we can help it.

And if you have met your deductible for the year, getting an appointment in before your plan turns over can also be great for your bottom line!

Get Set and Get Going!

From all of us at Southern California Foot and Ankle Specialists, we wish you and your loved ones a beautiful holiday season and an inspired, active start to our journey through the new year.

Should an injury happen, though, do not delay seeking the treatment you need! The faster you do, the faster you can recover and get back into action.

Call us at **(949) 364-9255** (WALK) to schedule an appointment whenever you need us!

