

## Do you make these mistakes?

Many runners falsely believe these problems will go away on its own and then stop running when they can no longer tolerate the discomfort. Others make things worse by ignoring the problem and trying to run through the pain

The mistake is that these problems are *mechanical* and largely an expression of the way you are built. The problems do not go away on its own and should be addressed by a health care professional who specializes in running and gait issues.

As a rule, if you experience significant pain while running, stop and walk it off. If the pain returns or does not lessen stop running and visit a health care professional who specializes in runners.

**The body does not tolerate asymmetry well**, especially when it comes to runners (usually one foot flares out more than the other affecting how your pelvis and leg works when you stride). It is therefore vitally important that people who are built asymmetrically wear shoe inserts that help improve symmetry and wear the running shoe most appropriate for their body style. If you look at your shoes and see the two sides having significantly different wear patterns, this is a strong indicator of gait asymmetry.

A full service running store can help you select the right type of shoe for you by assessing your running gait (some stores have treadmills and record your gait) and many can offer basic advice for off the shelf inserts as well. In general, those who have flat feet, foot flare or both should have a straight last (bottom of shoe is straighter).

**Plantar Fasciitis** –The pain on the bottom of the foot, commonly by the heel, arch or ball of the foot- described as walking on stones.

**Shin Splints** –The shins become very sore when you run. The pain is sharp and intense and is commonly caused by flat feet, feet that turn out or a combination of both.

**Calf Cramps and Achilles tendon-** If you suffer from calf cramps, you likely have a foot that flares out and you are short striding on that same side. This can cause intense knee pain and a painful scarred and brittle Achilles tendon that can rupture when suddenly loaded.



**Knee Pain** –The kneecap acts as a pulley providing leverage for your leg. If your foot turns out and the knee rolls in, you can experience knee pain, cracking of the knees and in some cases, a dislocated knee cap.

If you experience aching under or in front of the knee or feel a deep ache which *seems* to be inside the joint you may have adhesion formation in the knee tendons and a shortening of the musculature.

If your pain is chronic or you experience a sudden force knee trauma, the knee joint may be damaged and require an MRI to effectively evaluate it. However this type of diagnostic evaluation is only used if internal damage to the knee is the suspected cause of pain.

**Iliotibial Band Syndrome** – The Iliotibial or IT band is located on the lateral side of the upper thigh. It is a fibrous band that stabilizes the knee and upper leg and attaches to a thin muscle called the tensor fascia lata that tightens up on people who significantly under and over stride.

**AND is a symptom** of a larger problem in the gait cycle. This can be quite painful and debilitating and prevent you from running. Often a tight IT band will feel like your quadriceps are tight resulting in upper and lower back pain.

**Lower Back Pain** – Is another symptom of gait issues that usually include over and under striding. Often, people who get lower back pain also get many of the other conditions listed in this brochure as well as experience upper back pain.

**DO NOT...** ignore pain, other than normal soreness from training.

**Pain means something is wrong.**

**DO...**

1. Use foam rollers to loosen your legs and core while training.
2. Seek the help of a qualified health care provider who understands gait mechanics.
3. Ice areas that are very sore. If the problem worsens, see an appropriate health care provider.
4. Wear custom *or* off the shelf foot orthotics if you are built asymmetrically and your shoes wear unevenly.
5. Wear the right shoes. People who over pronate should wear shoes with a straight last for the best support.

## About the Author

Dr. William Charschan does extensive work with track and field athletes and is the current medical director of USA Track and field.

A specialist in gait problems and trained in Myofascial Release Technique by Michael Leahy D.C., C.C.S. P., founder of Active Release Techniques®, Dr. Charschan also uses Graston Technique, a tool-based method that very efficiently improves muscular and tendon function.

Dr. Charschan practices in both Scotch Plains and North Brunswick NJ, presides at many track and field events throughout the tri-state area and works with runners at all levels of competitiveness to safely enhance their performance without harmful medication.

**Have a problem, pain or question and not sure where to go or what to do?**

**Ask Dr. Charschan.  
Call (732) 846-6400 or e-mail  
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**Helping NJ athletes since 1988.**



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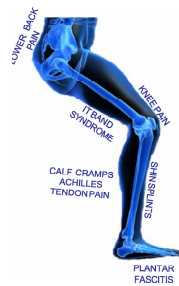
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**Running** is a fantastic and inexpensive sport enjoyed by millions around the world. You start running as a child soon after you learn to walk, then in school. Later on you run for competition, and of course to stay in shape and at the top of your game- to relieve stress and plain beat the blues. When you're used to running missing even one day is torture.

**Like any sport, running has its bumps and bruises, its injuries, aches and pains.** And sometimes the pain seems to come right at you out of nowhere. Diagnosed and treated correctly, it's not a big deal and you're back in action in no time. Misdiagnosed and mistreated... the pain worsens. And eventually, you either stop running or really hurt yourself.

**Are you built to run?** Not everyone is. After all, our bodies are different shapes and styles. Fortunately, if you learn to understand *your body*, and what the pain from running really means, *you can deal with it effectively.*



## Body Style and Gait

Your body style and inherited body mechanics can result in problems with the way you walk and run- your gait. These gait problems can result in foot, leg; lower and upper back soreness and pain.

A series of connecting joints that includes the ankle, knee and hip work from the ground up to form our foundation. This series of joints is called a kinetic (motion) chain. Many runners get frustrated because of so-called 'overuse syndromes' due to a breakdown in the *kinetic chain*.

# Five Simple Answers to 7 Painful Running Problems



**Don't Get Stuck Sitting  
On The Sidelines.**