

Physiotherapists can help runners recover well after a race



By Kim Sénéchal

This weekend is the highlight of the year for many Winnipeggers and not only those that are fathers. The Manitoba Marathon is an event that many runners look forward to and train diligently for over many months. Many will run their first marathon on Sunday, achieving the goal of a lifetime. Pushing the boundaries of your physical potential can give you an immense feeling of accomplishment, but once those endorphins wear off, you may find your body needs some special care and attention to recover well. This is where a physiotherapist can help.

Following a marathon or running a race of any distance, it is important to pay as much attention to your recovery as you did to your training. In fact, intentional recovery is part of your training, especially if you want to continue on to run another day. During a race, your muscles, joints, bones, connective tissue and fascial system become stressed and possibly inflamed. Taking a few days off after the race will allow your body to start rebuilding and repairing from that stress. Active recovery techniques

such as walking, cycling and swimming can be very useful in the first week post-race.

When you resume running, take the time to check in with your body, paying attention to any signs of potential injury. If you suspect you might be injured, consult a physiotherapist sooner rather than later. They will assess your strength, flexibility, alignment, movement patterns and may even include a running gait analysis to get a better idea of the technique, cadence and stride with which you run. They will talk to you about your training, your goals for the rest of the season, and develop a plan to help you achieve those goals with a strong, pain-free body. Your plan may include stretching, strengthening muscle imbalances, manual therapy and soft tissue techniques. More importantly, it will include advice on self-care at home, cross training and guidance on when and how to resume running.

Early intervention and some good advice can get you back to running and pain-free life efficiently and

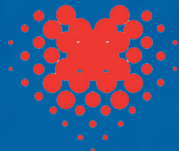
sustainably. Ignoring an injury and continuing to run through it can be very dangerous and just isn't wise. You will inevitably change your gait pattern and start compensating, which can lead to injuries in other areas of your body over time. This can also be the start of some poor habits that become ingrained in your biomechanical picture which are very hard to change later. A physiotherapist can provide you the skills, support and insight you need to continue to run as the best version of yourself. There is nothing more rewarding for a physio than helping a runner continue on to achieve new goals!

You have invested a lot of time and energy into training for your race. After the race is over, taking the time to also invest in a healthy recovery will pay you large dividends as you continue to run throughout the rest of the summer.

Kim Sénéchal is a physiotherapist at Pan Am Rehabilitation. You can find Kim and many other great physiotherapists in the Find a Physiotherapist section at www.mbphysio.org.

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