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Debunking Medical Myths: Building Wellness Without Breaking Down Joints

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DOES RUNNING INCREASE THE RISK OF OSTEOARTHRITIS?

Building Wellness Without Breaking Down Joints

Though a common misconception, there is NO evidence that recreational running raises the risk of developing osteoarthritis (OA) in the legs. In fact, recreational running may play a role in promoting joint health!

One study found that overall prevalence of hip and/or knee OA was:

3.66%

in runners

vs.

10.58%

in sedentary individuals

3.5%

in recreational runners

vs.

13.3%

in competitive runners

A second study found that runners had approximately a 50% reduced odds of undergoing surgery due to OA.

A third study found that recreational running has been shown to reduce the risk of undergoing a total hip replacement.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Recreational running is associated with a lower probability of hip and knee OA and there is, thus, a decreased need for surgical treatment. Additionally, frequent running does not change foot and ankle cartilage long-term and does not cause new damage. After a run, the joint cartilage recovers quickly and, in fact, adapts to withstand the physical load of future runs. As a whole, running is a widely recommended, healthy form of exercise for lower limb joints!

TIPS FOR THE ASPIRING RUNNER:



Set a goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (e.g. I want to run 2 miles without stopping in 3 months).



Stretch to warm up before starting your run.



Start slow. Alternating walking with running is a great, healthy way to begin!



Stay hydrated by drinking water before, during, and after your run.



Wear comfortable clothing and supportive footwear.



Build in rest periods in between runs.



Finally, consult your doctor if you have any concerns!

In addition to reducing osteoarthritis risk, recreational running promotes cardiovascular health, cultivates healthy coping skills, and fosters outdoor exploration. All in all, running is multidimensional medicine for the body, mind, and soul. Happy Running!

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