

## Running Injuries Survey 2008 by Jenny Greenwood

Thanks very much to everyone who took part ☺

**Here's a quick summary of (some of) what you said – good stuff, Tod Harriers could write the text book ☺ :**

- The body-part most injured is the knee (25% of all injuries) - and that includes ITB friction syndrome, damaged ligaments (knee sprain), damaged meniscus ('cartilage'), patellar mal-tracking damage, arthritis, etc...
- Niggles often turn into worse pain that you can't run through...
- Some of the things that lead to injury are: running in old shoes, not warming up as much as usual, going out / carrying on when you're tired or achey...

### **Niggles & Over-use injuries - a bit of the science to answer some questions:**

**1.** Most fell-running injuries are 'over-use' injuries: the muscle fibres / ligament / meniscus (cartilage) becomes 'frayed', little bit by little bit. You don't feel it 'go', there's no one moment when the injury 'happens', but it can take longer to heal than a straightforward 'tear'. A bit of microscopic wear-and-tear damage is 'normal' and can often be repaired within 24hours. If you really go for it, there might be more damage than will mend in one day. If you run again too soon, new microscopic damage happens on top of the old not-quite-mended damage from before. And so on, until it's a niggle you can't ignore..... *You need to rest it until it's properly mended.....and if your resting-pulse is raised, that's a sure sign you're over-training...*

**2.** Another kind of niggle is when the fascia (rhymes with 'rasher') gets stuck together and pulls on something somewhere. Fascia is the thin layer covering every muscle, organ, blood vessel, nerve...plus there's also a complete under-the-skin 'body stocking' of it. The whole lot is made out of one continuous sheet - totally amazing! Whenever there's ever been any inflammation, the fascia can get 'stuck', one layer sticking to another... *The treatment for this is 'fascial release'. You can help it along at home by using heat followed by gentle stretching – this helps the layers of fascia to 'melt' and slide apart again...(hold these stretches for at least 45 seconds)..* .... ironically, using ice on your injury ('cryotherapy' - the right thing to do if you've just injured yourself), also makes the layers of fascia stick together unless you keep the joint moving while you're icing – eg bending and straightening a knee ('cryokinetics') .... *So jump in that icy stream and keep moving! ☺ ....*

**3.** And yet another kind of niggle is caused by 'knots' ('trigger points') in a muscle. It's 'normal' for short sections of muscle to be left in a kind of mini-spasm after intense effort. The after-exercise stretching Gareth wrote about last month straightens all this out (a bit like combing the knots out of your hair after you've been out in the wind). If you don't stretch your muscles out, some of these 'knots' might get 'set' in. Then they make you a bit stiff, a bit achey, and eventually they can cause a lot of pain.... *The remedy for this is heat and massage – get out the hot water bottle and the tennis ball. A bit of gentle stretching of a 'knotty muscle' is ok – but you can't stretch out a knot, and if you try too hard you risk tearing the muscle.*

### **'Traumatic' injuries - 'Pulls', tears, sprains and strains:**

If you run when your muscles have knots in, you risk tearing something.

If you run when you're already tired, you risk tripping up – and tearing something.

If you've ever been injured before (eg ankle sprain), you've a higher risk of getting injured again – it might be fully healed, but your balance ('proprioception') doesn't come back unless you train it – *so practice standing on one leg, with your eyes shut.*