

How To Run Like A Ninja

To become a life-long runner takes more mental than physical changes in your life. Running should be FUN or you will find reasons to avoid it- or at least will start slipping into unhealthy “plodding”, possibly leading to pain and injury. Always run with a smile and embrace the “ninja mentality”: stay light on your feet, constantly engaged, flexible, and bouncy!

Run With Pride Ninjas look and move with confidence! Stay in your “happy zone” and don’t make the mistake of running harder or longer than you are ready for. If you are breathing hard, flopping around, or fighting pain, slow down or walk until you recover. Forcing yourself can lead to a breakdown in your form, increasing the chance of injury and developing bad habits/form. Always run upright, with pride and confidence, and keep your leg turn-over at a cadence of about 180 steps per minute.

Run Slow to Build Endurance Ninjas can run effortlessly for hours. Build your endurance and increase your speed by spending the majority of your time running slowly. Running for 30 min 5 times a week at a low aerobic heart rate (180 minus your age, in beats per minute), muscles build more capillaries and their cells grow more power-producing mitochondria. With time, your body will become more efficient, increasing your ability to run faster for longer distances. Running slowly is also easier on the body, which can lead to better form and lessen the likelihood of injuries.

Run Silently You never hear a ninja coming until it is too late! When you hear someone clomping or slapping along in back of you, you can be sure their form is suffering. Try to run in a relaxed, quietly, and smooth fashion... you waste less energy and look more impressive as you silently flit by!

Run on the Trails or try “Urban Trail Running” Ninjas are equally comfortable running down the road, through the woods, or even across the ceiling! Running repetitively for miles down a flat, straight road can lead to fatigue and risks slipping into bad form and injuring yourself. Running on rough ground takes more energy, but every step is a little different from the last. This tends to make you less sore the next day, improves your balance, and increases your core stability... while getting you out into nature, which can be really fun and inspiring! In town, try occasionally veering into the grass, up and down curbs, etc.

Try Training in Japanese Slippers When is the last time you saw a ninja creeping up on someone in heavy high-top shoes? Running barefoot (in an area free of sharp objects!) teaches you to run with a more natural, quiet, and efficient stride, while strengthening your feet. There are also a variety of light-weight, flat, thin, “minimal” shoes on the market that will help you awaken your inner ninja... just make sure you start with only running 100 yards, and increase slowly to allow your feet time to adapt.

Take Charge of Your Body and Reduce Your Chance of Injury Ninjas move efficiently, build a strong body to avoid injury, and learn to heal themselves. You only get hurt when you increase the load on your body faster than it can adapt. Muscles heal most effectively when used, so steady progression back to full activity (while avoiding acute pain) will help the tissue to heal in a more productive way.

My web site has lots of self-treatment techniques for injuries. Always mobilize ASAP (without causing sharp pains). Progress to resistance exercises, drills to mimic the action of running, walking, walking up-hill, and finally running for short distances (in perfect form!). Progress at a rate that you can tolerate!

Finally, after you return to running, focus on improving your form or training routine so you won’t get injured again!!!



Russell Seguin

Natural Running Coach &
Orthopedic Massage Therapist

reduce.your.pain@gmail.com

<http://reduceyourpain.weebly.com>

