

Are You Running Too Much? Find out!

In other words, we are only concerned with how far and how fast we are running. We are not concerning ourselves with how well we are running.

Firstly, running as an exercise or an activity is meant to improve health and fitness. That being the case, it is very important to ensure that any progression results in making us fitter and not the other way around. A lot of runners consider increased mileage as the primary progression metric. They want to run more every week and their primary goal is to run longer. This also happens when training for races and runners end up clocking in way too many miles even if it means their joints ache and muscles cramp.

While a linear progression of running longer week after week is logical, it is not optimal. It is very important to run better before we run longer. Without better, longer will be short lived as the body won't be able to handle the extra volume without better mechanics and stronger muscles.

When we run, each step is a repetition. A runner takes 1200 to 1400 steps to complete each kilometer. And every single one of these steps is a real rep. So, when you run 10 kilometers you are effectively doing 12,000 to 14,000 reps of an exercise called running.

Like any other exercise (squat, pushup, press) running also involves technique and it comes into play during every rep. Yes, we were all designed to walk and run. But we have long forgotten that. Our lifestyle choices of sitting and slouching have made our bodies unsuitable for natural running. That is, we need to relearn how to walk and run. Don't believe me? Check your posture now as you're reading this. Did you have to fix it? So, think about it - if your sitting or standing posture needs conscious correction, why would your walking and running posture not need it?

The good news is that most of us do most of the things right when running. But the bad news is that that's not enough. Even if our technique is 10% wrong, that 10% adds up over these thousands of repetitions and presents itself as tightness, pain or injury. What is the solution?

1. **Manage volume.** Running more and more every week is not necessarily making you fitter or healthier. It is simply putting more load on your body. And without sufficient rest, recovery and maintenance, your body will just not be able to handle that for too long. So next time you hear someone say 21kms for 21 days, ask yourself if that is going to make your health better or worse.
2. **Learn to run better** as you strive to run longer. Treat running like you would treat any other exercise - learn proper form, start low on quantity (distance) and gradually increase quantity without compromising on quality.