

The Griffin Guide

to Being a Great Cross Country Runner



Coach Celestin
Los Alamitos High School
Cross Country

Los Alamitos High School The Griffin Guide to Cross Country

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Los Alamitos High School

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To be a Great Griffin runner:

To be a Great Griffin runner you have to be a we-bit crazy. Who else would push their body to maximum fitness? Who else would look forward to long runs and hill running, intervals and repetitions, fartlek's and more and more and more and more miles! Who welcomes the pain of training their body to run further and faster than it ever has gone? Faster than you were last year, last month, last week, and yesterday. Faster than your opponent. Who commits themselves to "Be the Pig" – to give everything you have to yourself and your teammates. To never miss a workout and do them all to the best of your ability. To eat and sleep well, to be a great teammate and to live to race. To embrace competition knowing it will bring out the best in you, your teammates and your competition. To do all of this well – you have to be a we-bit crazy! It will serve you well in Cross Country and more importantly in life. Glad to have you with us!

Coaches

Coach Celestin – Head Coach, primary focus is both varsity teams, top 15 runners on the boy's and girl's teams, and groups 1 and 2.

Coach Berryman – Assistant Coach, primary focus is both varsity teams, top 15 runners on the boy's and girl's teams, and groups 1 and 2.

Coach Mendoza - Assistant Coach, primary focus is the JV and F/S boys' team, and group 3.

Coach Riegert - Assistant Coach, primary focus is the JV and F/S girl's team, and group 4.

Coach ? - Assistant Coach, primary focus is the JV and F/S boys team, and group 5.

XC Coaches Philosophy

1. Develop competitive, well-trained runners
2. Team: Develop a "family unit" to support each other, everyone needs encouragement regardless of ability.
3. Develop fitness enthusiasts for life

Coaches Expectations

All team members will be expected to represent themselves, their families, their high school, and their team in a proud and positive manner while attempting to do the very best that they are capable of doing.

All student/athletes are students first and are expected to display the utmost respect and courtesy to all staff members and peers at all times and especially in a classroom setting. Please understand that if a staff member contacts the coaching staff regarding inappropriate behavior you may be unable to run in the next meet. This includes using any profanity at any time.

We expect our athletes to always compete with honor. Win or lose we expect our runners to hold their heads high and congratulate the victors. We will be proud that we have the opportunity to compete when so many others did not. Any student-athlete who is disqualified from a competition for unsportsmanlike conduct (bad language, intentional physical contact with another competitor, taunting, etc.) will be suspended from the next team competition.

Each Student-athlete is expected to report any and all injuries or illness immediately to your particular coach. Allergies, asthmatic conditions, etc. must also be made known to the coaching staff. All athletes must check with the trainer before telling the coach they will not practice. All injured athletes are required to check in with the coaching staff for an update on injury and rehab before missing a practice.

10 Keys to being the greatest runner and teammate you can be

Tip #1: Be consistent. If you make every workout you are already ahead of the 90% of your competition that won't.

Tip #2: Work hard, Rest hard. Some workouts are designed to be tough, others are designed for recovery. Both are vital to a great season. Training hard is not as important as training smart. **Run the workout as it is designed.**

Tip #3: Have fun – in running you will find your future. Initiative, persistence, dealing with victory and defeat, sportsmanship, being a team player – they are all important now and forever.

Tip #4: Be a Complete athlete – utilize cross training. Bikes and water workouts are excellent for general recovery days as well as useful for preventing injuries and recovering from them. Water workouts have a way of rejuvenating a tired body.

Tip #5: Nutrition – good meals provide the necessary energy for good races. On the other hand - junk in means junk out.

Tip #6: Know your Sport – know all the different types of training and workouts as well as stages of the season. Know why you are doing what you are doing – every workout has a reason. Eventually you want to have the knowledge to coach yourself even if you never will.

Tip #7: Get the most out of your coaches – Sit down with them and talk about your goals (both yours and theirs) and the necessary training that will take place to get you there.

Tip #8: Be a Great Teammate. There is no “I” in TEAM. The team comes first, you come second. Be a great teammate by being positive, working hard, encouraging your teammates by your words and actions. Show you care about everyone – not just yourself or the friends you normally run with. Cheer for everyone during tough workouts and especially at races. You can make a huge difference for your TEAM.

Tip #9: Be a Complete Person – don't neglect school, family or friends. A well rounded / happy athlete is a fast athlete.

Tip #10: Communicate with your coaches: If something is up with your training, or school, or whatever—that is negatively impacting you or your running—talk with your coach.

Planning for Practice

On a normal week during the season (starting in September) we will do the following: (the practice times below – are approximate). This is the “normal” schedule – but training days do change – due to an open weekend or the training phase we are in. All athletes will be given a monthly schedule listing all workouts.

To insure a great workout every day – 1. Get your sleep, 2. Food can be fuel or it can be junk, choose wisely. 3. Hydrate starting when you wake up and all day long (take a water bottle with you to class), 4. Post workout – re-hydrate and get some protein in within 20 minutes – a Clif bar or box of chocolate milk – especially on Mondays, Wednesdays and Race Days.

Monday – Hill day. (either Central Park or Signal Hill). We will take buses to these locations. These are our longest days 1:50pm – 5:00pm or 5:30pm for hill days. This is one of 3 most important days per week – and our longest day. No doctor’s appointments!

Tuesdays – Aerobic (easier) pace day – 3-7 mileage day - to rest up from yesterday and prepare for tomorrow! 1:50pm to 4:00pm.

Wednesday –Interval or Repetition Day – Fast paced, tough workout. 1:50pm – 4:00/4:30pm. May be AM workouts – if it is forecast to be too hot in the afternoon or if the team chooses to run early. This is one of 3 most important days per week. No appointments!

Thursday – Moderate pace day 4 - 8 mileage day. 1:50pm – 4:00pm

Friday – Either: **Aerobic (easier) Pace** – on Friday’s before a race. Just another day for 3-6 mileage or Pre-race day. 1:50pm – 3:45pm. This is our shortest day.

or

Long Run Day – when we do not have a race on Saturday. River trail toward beach. 1:50pm – 5:00pm - September 16th and October 7th. This is one of 3 most important days per week. No appointments!

Saturday – Race Day - Bright and early (usually around 6:30am bus – done around noon). Bus or parent home. All races are in September and October. If the varsity teams qualify (top 3 in league) they race into mid-to-late November.

or

Long Run or Hill Day – starting at 8:30am). This is another important training day. We only have 2 non-racing Saturdays. September 24th and October 8th.

AM workouts (rare but possible on Mon./Wed./Fri.) in extreme heat. This will be based on the all-knowing iPhone and may involve some or all athletes. There will be a 1:50pm option for those who cannot make the AM. Athletes who train in the AM may check out in Coach Celestin’s room between 1:30pm-1:45pm.

Races

This is why we train. We race on all Saturdays starting the first week of September through the last week of October with the exception of September 24th and October 8th). The varsity teams continue for 2-3 weeks into November (if they finish in the top 3 teams in league). If we have a Saturday off we have an optional (but highly encouraged) morning workout at 8:30am. Sunday's are off. **You must have 10 days of practice prior to your first race.**

Race Day Prep

1. Nothing new on race day – not a new meal, shoes, strategy or whatever.
2. Your sleep 2 nights before is most important, the night before is second.
3. When you go to bed the night or two before – visualize your race the way you want to run it. How do you want to start, what will be your mile time, see yourself working the hills moderately up and flying down them, see yourself using your arms in the last mile and passing runners to the tape.
4. Eat a simple breakfast – see the nutrition handout later in this guide for ideas.
5. Start hydrating at breakfast. Keep sipping up to your race.
6. Pack your gear the night before. Double check you have your uniform, sweats if cold, water bottle, running shoes and racing flats (if you have them).
7. When you arrive at some point or another: (1) check out the course & (2) use the bathroom, (3) get your timing chip and tie it on your shoe–so it CANNOT fall off. Continue to sip water.
8. 45 minutes or so before your race start your warm up with about 10 minutes of easy running. Do your dynamic warm up and any static stretching you like. Put on your racing flats if you have them and make sure your shoes are double or triple tied. Sip water. 10-15 minutes before the race – do 3-100 meter strides with your teammates. Besides a little jogging that is all you need before the start. If you find yourself waiting around – sit down and do some static stretching before you bounce back up to do a little jogging.
9. If it is a cold morning and you are wearing sweats – keep them on until the last possible moment. If your legs are warm – you will have a big advantage at the start over those runners who took their sweats off too soon. Have a friend or parent by the starting line and toss your sweats to them.

Race Strategies:

At the start – get out quickly for 100 – 200 yards (you have about 6 seconds of ATP to use – it does not hurt you to sprint - at about 90% effort - for about 6 seconds) then settle into your race pace, protect yourself with your elbows. If you fall – get up and SLOWLY catch back up over the next few minutes.

* Have a plan for your race.

* You know you need to get out fast and then settle down, decide who you will try to race with – if it is a teammate or who you will run right behind – if it is a competitor.

* Remember to keep the same effort (but not speed) up the hills, crest the hill (10 quicker steps) and let it go on the down hills – leaning forward.

* When you make your move to pass a runner – make it long enough to break them.

* Have an idea where you want to start your finishing kick and race through the finish line

Post Race

1. As soon as you finish – look back and cheer on your teammates as they finish their race.
2. Get something to drink / rehydrate.
3. Gather ALL of your teammates and warm down as instructed by your coaches. This might be a time we add a few easy miles – to keep our weekly mileage up. Just run easy with your teammates and talk. Maybe run to a place on the course you think would be a great place to cheer your teammates who will race next.
4. Get your sweats back on if it is cold. Get a Clif bar or chocolate milk, sit down and do some static stretching and relax – you earned it!
5. When you have recovered go cheer on your teammates.

Race Day Transportation

The booster club provides busses to all Monday hill practices and Saturday races. We have 3 Saturday races in September and 4 in October (all weekends except September 24th and October 8th – we have morning practices at 8:30am on these dates)

1. Generally 2-3 busses depart the school on Saturdays around 6:30am and return to the school around 1:30pm. Parents may drive their runners and teammates home (as long as driver related paperwork is in) after the races are complete. This paperwork is available online or in the Activities office and due before September 3rd or before a runner can ride home with another parent.
2. Although not encouraged - if there is an important event that causes a runner to need to leave the meet prior to the end parents can email the coach prior to meet day and then can take their own runners home (after the athlete warms down) by checking out with one of the coaches – assuming they have filled out and turned in the school’s driver information.
3. The two most important races runners are required to stay the entire time is for League Preview (September 21st) and League Finals (October 29th). We need everyone to support everyone – the League Championships are on the line! Parents may drive their runners and teammates home (as long as driver related paperwork is in) after the races are complete.
4. Athletes – all races are timed using “chips” that attach to your shoes. If your chip falls off – you DO NOT SCORE. This can really hurt your team – so double tie your shoes and turn in your chip to the “Chip Bucket” before you leave.
9. If you forget to turn in the chip – the race directors will charge you \$10.

2016 Season Schedule

Sept. 3	Great Cow Run Invitational – Cerritos
Sept. 10	Laguna Hills Invitational
Sept. 17	Nike Invitational (Concord Ca.) for Varsity / Woodbridge (Norco) for everyone else
Sept. 21	Sunset League Preview – Central Park – HB (tentative)
Oct. 1	Central Park Invite – Huntington Beach
Oct. 15	Orange Country Champs – Irvine Regional
Oct. 22	Mt. Sac Invite – Walnut (for 2/3 of the team)
Oct. 29	Sunset League Finals – Central Park - Huntington Beach

See website for times and locations

Nov. 12	CIF Prelims (Varsity only–top 3 league teams)
Nov. 19	CIF Finals (for those that qualify)
Nov. 26	State Meet (for those that qualify)
Dec. 6	XC Banquet, 6:00pm

Making the Team:

There will be a time trial on August 22nd at Central Park (our home course) at 5:30pm to make the team. Times are as follows:

Girls – Freshman < 28 minutes, Sophomores < 26, Juniors < 25, Seniors < 24

Boys – Freshman < 25 minutes, Sophomores <23, Juniors < 22, Seniors < 21

Making the Varsity Team

To make the varsity team – you must have one of the 7 fastest times* (based on the most recent race) and be a respectful runner and teammate. Freshman runners may earn a varsity spot due to their race times – but will likely be kept down at the Frosh/Soph level during the first half of the season – to do well in races and gain confidence. If their times stay in the top seven as the season progresses they will likely be brought up to run varsity for the second half of the season. *Coaches have the prerogative to set the varsity team based on subjective observations – to make the varsity team as competitive as possible. We will generally use the watch to decide the varsity team – but may change the top 7 if we believe this is best for the team.

Earning a Varsity Letter

To earn a varsity letter you must race in at least two varsity races during the season. For freshman – if they have 2 or more top 7 times – they earn a varsity letter.

Being a Great Teammate

There are so many ways to be a great teammate. Here are a few:

Encourage everyone – during workouts and races

Lead by example

When others are racing go to part of the course where you know that your cheering could make a big difference – like on a hill.

Help set up camp when we arrive at an invite. Help clean up.

Give a hug after a tough race

Give a high five after a great race

Notice when people PR and congratulate them

Be modest / humble

Run with the team flag

Praise effort

Encourage your training group to do the workout properly and completely.

Invite someone to train with you, go to a pasta party with you, go to the movies for fun...

Get your racing group to warm up and especially warm down together.

Get ice for an injured athlete and encourage them to cross train

Training Gear:

You really just need a few accessories to run:

1. A great pair of training shoes – try to get fitted and educated on the best shoes for your feet and running style – at a running store (not just a sporting goods store). This is the most important and only thing you must buy. Shoes are good for about 400 miles. A freshman can usually get by with one pair of shoes – unless they run varsity (though a second pair starting in September is ideal)
2. A water bottle for hydration.
3. Shorts, socks and shirt.

That's it!

Shoes

By far the most important thing – that protects your feet and helps you train properly. Buying the proper shoes is vital to your success. If possible purchase your shoes at a Running Shoe Store – where they can professionally check out your feet and fit you with the correct type of shoes (not just based on “they look good”). Training shoes last about 400 miles. For freshman runners on a budget you can probably get by with one pair. For everyone else it would be ideal to get a second pair once the season begins.

Snail's Pace Nights

We will have shoe nights from 5:00pm-7:00pm on the following (you can actually go any time on these days). All LAHS athletes get a 10% discount.

Taking your running to a higher level

These will help – but proper training and shoes are all that are necessary.

1. **A second pair of training shoes** for anyone running over 400 miles (all varsity runners)
2. **Racing Flats** – only worn on race days – very light, not much protection.
3. **GPS watch** (\$80 online – Garmin Forerunner 110) or new Soleus or Timex (\$80) at Snails Pace. This is for serious runners trying to get everything out of their training. We use this to give us feedback on distance and most importantly pace. Our daily workouts are often pace based – if you have a GPS you know you are on pace, if not you are guessing (or hopefully running next to someone who has one) If you cannot afford or just don't want to purchase a GPS watch – no problem – there should be enough in every group of runners.
4. **A less expensive choice is a wristwatch** with timer. (\$25). If possible every runner should have a watch.

Communication

Email

General team info will come to you by email at runnersworkshop@mac.com You can also communicate with the coaches at this email.

Remind.com

We will use Remind.com to communicate practice and race updates with athletes and coaches. Everyone should register by texting the message @lahsxc to 81010. For those running varsity @lahsxcvar to 81010.

Team Website:

Lots of great race, practice, gear, pasta parties, race directions... info on the team website losalxc.org

Doctors, Dentists...

If possible schedule appointments for any time from 4:15pm on – on Tuesdays, Thursday and most Fridays. If you have to go earlier – try to make it on Fridays (except September 23rd or October 7th).

XC Stats

XCStats.com is a website we use to log our workouts, find all our racing results and check out our competition. Please see the handout near the end of this guide to register. A big part of your grade is based on logging your workouts daily and establishing your race goals for each race.

Grades

- Athletes earn their grade as follows:
 - Daily workout – up to 2 points possible 1 point - Improper workout (examples - walking, cutting the workout, leaving practice before it is over, goofing around,...).
 - 0 points - if you do not workout unless excused absence or coach approved injury.
- Log your workouts – 2 points daily log on XC stats. Graded at the end of each week
- Race goals – log on XC stats prior to race 5 points
- Racing – 10 points for each race
- Weekly total possible:
 - Workouts = 10 points, Logging your workouts = 6 points
 - Race attendance – 10 points, Race Goals = 5 points
- Total per week 35 points

Parents viewing practice

We are on the roads and trails everyday except Wednesdays and Saturday race days. On most Wednesdays we are on the track for our Interval or Repetition workouts. Feel free to come out and sit in the stands and watch (quietly) and maybe bring a cooler of popsicle's.

Nutrition

As a runner, your diet is important not only for maintaining good health, but also to promote peak performance. Proper nutrition and hydration can make or break a workout or race, and also greatly affects how runners feel, work and think.

A balanced diet for healthy runners should include these essentials: carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals. Here are some basic guidelines for a nutritious, healthy balance:

Carbohydrates:

As a runner, carbohydrates should make up about 60 - 65% of your total calorie intake. Without a doubt, carbs are the best source of energy for athletes. Research has shown that for both quick and long-lasting energy, our bodies work more efficiently with carbs than they do with proteins or fats. Whole grain pasta, steamed or boiled rice, potatoes, fruits, starchy vegetables, and whole grain breads are good carb sources.

Protein:

Protein is used for some energy and to repair tissue damaged during training. In addition to being an essential nutrient, protein keeps you feeling full longer, which helps if you're trying to lose weight. Protein should make up about 15% - 20% of your daily intake. Runners, especially those running long distances, should consume .5 to .75 grams of protein per pound of body weight. Try to concentrate on protein sources that are low in fat and cholesterol such as lean meats, fish, low-fat dairy products, poultry, whole grains, and beans.

Fat:

A high fat diet can quickly pack on the pounds; so try to make sure that no more than 20 - 25% of your total diet comes from fats. Stick to foods low in saturated fats and cholesterol. Foods such as nuts, oils, and cold-water fish provide essential fats called omega-3s, which are vital for good health and can help prevent certain diseases. Most experts recommend getting about 3,000 mg of omega-3 fat a day.

Vitamins:

Runners don't get energy from vitamins, but they are still an important part of their diet. Exercise may produce compounds called free radicals, which can damage cells. Vitamins C, E, and A are antioxidants and can neutralize free radicals. Getting your vitamins from whole foods is preferable to supplementation; there's no strong evidence that taking supplements improves either health or athletic performance.

Minerals:

Calcium: A calcium-rich diet is essential for runners to prevent osteoporosis and stress fractures. Good sources of calcium include low-fat dairy products, calcium-fortified juices, dark leafy vegetables, beans, and eggs. Your goal should be 1,000 to 1,300 mg of calcium per day.

Iron:

You need this nutrient to deliver oxygen to your cells. If you have an iron-poor diet, you'll feel weak and fatigued, especially when you run. Men should aim for 8 mg of iron a day, and women need 18 mg. Good natural sources of iron include lean meats, leafy green vegetables, nuts, shrimp, and scallops.

Sodium and other electrolytes:

Small amounts of sodium and other electrolytes are lost through sweat during exercise. Usually, electrolytes are replaced if you follow a balanced diet. But if you find yourself craving salty foods, it may be your body's way of telling you to get more sodium. Try drinking a sports drink or eating some pretzels after exercise. If you're running longer than 90 minutes, then you should need to replace some of the electrolytes you're losing through sweat by drinking sports drinks or taking in salt during your runs.

What to eat before practice or the day of a Competition

When you begin a run, you should feel neither starved nor stuffed. You don't want to eat immediately before running because it may lead to cramping or side stitches. But running on an empty stomach may cause you to run out of energy and leave you feeling fatigued and lethargic during your runs. Your best bet is to eat a snack or light meal about 1 1/2 to 2 hours before you start running.

Your choice of pre-run meal is important, as eating the wrong foods could send you looking for the closest bathroom during your run. Choose something high in carbohydrates and lower in fat, fiber, and protein.

Some examples of good pre-workout fuel include: a bagel with peanut butter; turkey and cheese on whole wheat bread; a banana and an energy bar; or a bowl of cold cereal with a cup of milk (better yet – apple juice instead of milk). Stay away from rich, very fatty, or high-fiber foods, as they may cause gastrointestinal distress.

FOODS TO AVOID BEFORE RUNNING

It's important to eat before running to make sure you're properly fueled. But if you've had issues with gastrointestinal distress (also known as runner's trots) during or after your runs, the foods you're eating in the 24 hours before your runs may be the culprit. Here's a guide to what you should and shouldn't eat before your runs.

Try limiting or eliminating some of these foods before running to see if it makes a difference:

1. High-fiber foods: Whole-grain foods, vegetables, legumes, and fruits that are high in fiber can cause gastrointestinal distress or diarrhea. While those foods are excellent, healthy food choices for runners, they may cause digestive issues in runners who consume them the night before or morning of a long run.

2. High-fat foods: Foods with a lot of fat -- such as fried foods, cheese, hamburgers, or bacon -- digest slowly and will feel like they're sitting in your stomach.
3. Caffeine: Coffee or other caffeinated beverages can cause stomach issues or diarrhea. (Although some runners, especially regular coffee drinkers, can tolerate it without problems.)

SAFE PRE-RUN FOODS

These are the best types of pre-run foods to help avoid gastrointestinal distress during or after running:

1. Refined Carbs: Processed white foods, like regular pasta, white rice, and plain bagels are good choices. Although they're not as nutritious as whole grain and unprocessed foods, they're easier on your stomach because the whole grain is already broken down. A plain bagel with some peanut butter (& a glass of water) would be a safe choice before a long run.
2. Low-Fiber Fruits and Veggies: If you really want to eat fruits or vegetables before runs, zucchini, tomatoes, olives, grapes, and grapefruit are all low in fiber.
3. Safe Dairy: Some people have issues when they consume dairy products before runs.
4. Soy, rice, and almond milks generally don't contain the sugar lactose, which can be tough to digest. You can also try acidophilus milk and yogurts with live cultures, which contain bacteria that help with digestion.

What to eat after a workout or race

After running, especially a long run, you want to replenish energy as quickly as possible. Studies have shown that muscles are most receptive to rebuilding glycogen (stored glucose) stores within the first 30 minutes after exercise. If you eat soon after your workout, you can minimize muscle stiffness and soreness.

You'll want to consume primarily carbs, but don't ignore protein. A good rule of thumb for post-run food is a ratio of 1 gram of protein to 3 grams of carbs. Nutrition bars, such as Clif bars or Power bars, are healthy options. Other examples would be a bagel with peanut butter or a smoothie made with fruit and yogurt.

If you feel like you can't stomach solid food immediately after a run, try drinking some chocolate milk. Chocolate milk provides plenty of protein, carbohydrates and B vitamins — - making it a great recovery drink. And cold chocolate milk tastes pretty refreshing after a run.

Don't forget to rehydrate with water or a sports drink after your run. If your urine is dark yellow after your run, you need to keep rehydrating. It should be a light lemonade color. While it's important to eat something and replenish fluids after a run, be careful that you don't overindulge and consume way more calories than you need.

Injuries

Soreness is a natural part of the training process as you stress muscles to build fitness. **Injuries** on the other hand are damage to muscles, joints and other parts of the body.

If you believe you have injured yourself – see one of the coaches in room 816 between 1:30pm-1:45pm. Your coach may have you do a lighter workout, or skip the workout – in which case you should see Mr. Hanson in athletic training either during 6th period or right after. He will check you out and let you know what you should do to re-hab as quickly as possible. After you find out what to do – let your coach know what Mr. Hanson suggested. If you are going to miss more than 2-3 days – it is likely a pretty significant injury and you should consider seeing a doctor familiar with sports injuries as soon as possible. After 4 days of not working out you will quickly lose your fitness. With Mr. Hanson or your doctor's permission we want to get you cross training as soon as possible – to keep your fitness and make your return quicker and less painful.

Most running injuries are caused by muscular weakness and overuse. As part of the weekly training program we include dynamic warm ups, core work and strength training to improve training and racing, work on muscle strength and prevent injuries.

Dehydrating is another major concern for runners especially on hot days. It can impair an athlete's performance and lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Athletes should carry a 16-32 oz. bottle of water with them EVERY day they train or race. Every morning should start with 2 – 4 glasses of water. Athletes should sip water all day long during school days. Between lunch and 1 hour prior to practice athletes should drink between 16-32 oz. of water. On race day athletes should drink between 6-8 oz. of water just before going to the starting line.

Common Injuries

Side Ache - Muscle spasms caused by the conflicting movement of internal organs and the diaphragm while running.

Treatment – don't eat for 2-3 hours prior to running. Breathe from your belly – not chest. Exhale when landing on the left foot. Sometimes exhaling forcefully helps. Core work also helps prevent.

Shin Splints - is a generic term for pain in the lower leg. Often caused by poor running posture, running on hard surfaces, muscle imbalance, fallen arches and overuse.

Treatment – Warm up by walking on toes, heels and both the inside and outside of the feet. Pull a weighted towel toward you with your toes. Consider arch supports. Recommended therapy includes 10 minutes of ice massage or warm-moist heat prior to the start of the workout and 15 minutes of icing afterward. Severe cases may require icing several times each day.

Achilles Tendonitis – inflammation causing painful swelling of the Achilles tendon. Overstretching the tendon, increased speed work, running hills, can aggravate these problems or wearing shoes without heels (spikes).

Treatment - Daily stretching can prevent most Achilles injuries. Tendonitis usually is not serious unless untreated or ignored until it becomes chronic. A foam or felt heel lift can take stress of the tendon and reduce inflammation. Training should be restricted to level surfaces and all speed work eliminated. Gradually increase stretching before and after workouts.

Planter Fasciitis – the connective tissues that run from the bottom of the heel bone to the ball of the foot. Pain in this area may indicate Planter Fasciitis.

Treatment – Rest and good running shoes are the best ways to heal PF. Cycling and pool workouts will allow you to continue training without further injuring the foot. The arch can be taped to reduce pain while running. Other methods of treatment include icing, analgesics, anti-inflammatories, deep massage, or a heel cup. In persistent cases consult a doctor familiar with running injuries.

Blisters – caused by excessive friction between running shoes and the foot. Be sure your shoes fit properly & are not bought to “grow into.” Training shoes should only be used for training – not casual wear. Keep your shoes dry and wear clean, dry socks that fit snugly.

Treatment – Never intentionally remove the skin. You may want to remove the fluid by perforating the skin with a sterile needle, and then pressing the skin back to the foot with a Band-Aid. Prevent infection and promote healing by applying an antibiotic ointment such as Neosporin before covering the blister with a bandage.

Chondromalacia – runner’s knee

Stress Fractures

Strains

Sprains

How to Ice an Injury

Ice is one of the athlete’s best friends; it is especially effective treatment for most of the injuries that Cross Country runners experience. Ice alleviates muscle strain spasm, prevents hemorrhaging, and reduces swelling of many injuries. Using ice improperly (or for too long) can aggravate an injury or cause frostbite. Apply ice to an injury for 10 minutes – followed by a 30-minute break – followed by another 10 minutes of icing. This procedure can be repeated as often as possible for the first 24-48 hours following an injury, then 3-5 times a day until an injury is healed.

Alternatives to Running While Injured

If you cannot workout for more than a couple of days – try to see a doctor deals with sports injuries. The doctor can check you out and set up your re-hab and let you know how long until you can return to training and how much you can start out with.

Aqua joggers: One of the best workouts for an injured athlete is to Aquajog in a pool. Aqua jogging helps you simulate the running motion with light resistance but no pounding. See your coach for an aqua jogger if you have access to a pool.

Bikes and Elipticals are also great / non-pounding workouts