



It's no secret that I think strength exercises, core routines, and dynamic flexibility are critical for running success. One of the most valuable pieces of advice I can give you is to do a flexibility routine before your run and a core/strength routine post-run. That simple act will dramatically improve your running.

How?

First, you're preparing your body to work hard. By doing 5-10 minutes of flexibility work before you run you're increasing your heart rate, increasing blood flow to your muscles (great for warming up before heading outside in the cold, too!), and lubricating your joints.

After you run, strength work will loosen your muscles from running and serves as a great warm-down. It also helps you build functional and general strength that enables you to run more volume and handle more intensity. A stronger body stays healthy and avoids injuries.

I can go on and on about the benefits of ancillary work, but instead I want to show you specific exercises and routines that can help you run injury-free. Save this message because I'm going to provide every resource that I know of that can help you get stronger. If you're unsure what to do after your next run, look no further.

My hope is that this email will be massively helpful to you. If it is, please forward it to your running friends.

Warm-ups, Dynamic Flexibility and Mobility Routines

[Cannonball Routine](#) - The Cannonball routine can be done before or after a run. When you first start, do it after running so you can adapt to it. This workout is the most comprehensive flexibility routine I know. I use it before all of my hard workouts and races.

[Myrtl Routine \(Hip Mobility\)](#)- The Myrtl Routine targets your hip area, but is also great for general flexibility. Like Cannonball, start doing this after your run until you're comfortable doing it pre-run. Myrtl can help with relieving ITB tightness.

The Standard Warm-up

1. **Walking Deadlifts** – 10 reps. Take a step forward with your left leg, bend down and touch your toes with both hands with your right leg lifted off the floor. Keep your left leg slightly bent and your right leg parallel to the floor. Repeat on your

other leg.

2. **Assisted High Knees** - 10 reps. Take a step forward with your left leg and then lift your right leg up in the air. Grip your right leg with both hands right underneath the knee and lift up to your chest.
3. **Groiners** - 20 reps.
4. **Donkey Kicks** - 10 reps.
5. **Mountain Climbers** - 20 reps with legs in, 20 reps with legs out.
6. **Leg Swings** - 10 reps.
7. **Lateral Leg Swings** - 10 reps.
8. **Iron Cross** - 10 reps.
9. **Lunge Matrix** - abbreviated version, 4 reps per lunge type.

Core & Strength Routines

The Standard Core Routine

This circuit is fairly comprehensive and targets your obliques, upper and lower abdominals, lower back, hamstrings, and glutes. I go through the exercise for one minute and immediately transition to the next. I like to do 2-3 sets and take about two minutes of rest between each. In order, the circuit is:

1. **Modified Bicycle:** lie on your back and hold one leg up in the air. Your thigh should be perpendicular to your body and your shin parallel to the ground. Hold your other leg 2-3 inches off the ground. Hold for several seconds and switch legs. Make sure your lower back is in a neutral position during the entire exercise.
2. **Plank:** lie on your stomach and prop your weight on your forearms and toes. Keep your back straight and hold this position for the entire exercise.
3. **Leg Extension:** lie on your back with your feet flat on the ground. Lift your hips so there is a straight line from your shoulders to your knees. Extend one leg straight out, hold for several seconds, then put it back down on the ground and repeat. Make sure your hips don't dip or your butt sags.
4. **Side Plank:** on your side, lift your body so your weight is on one forearm and the side of one foot. There should be a straight diagonal line from your head to your feet. I usually do 10 lateral leg raises during this exercise but that's advanced.
5. **Modified Bird Dog:** in a table position, lift your left arm so it's parallel to the ground. At the same time, lift your opposite leg (your right) so your thigh is parallel to the ground and your shin is perpendicular. Your knee should be bent at 90 degrees and your glute muscle activated. Hold for several seconds and switch sides.
6. **Supine Leg Lift:** lie on your back with your weight on your elbows and heels, lift your hips and keep a straight line from your toes to your shoulders. Lift one leg about 8 inches off the ground, hold for several seconds, and repeat with the opposite leg.

The ITB Rehab Routine

This routine targets (you guessed it) the ITB and surrounding area including the hips and glutes. After being unable to run for six months after my 2:44 marathon at New York, I developed this routine that got me healthy.

1. **Lateral Leg Raises:** lie on your right side with a theraband around your ankles. Lift your left leg to about 45 degrees in a controlled manner, then lower. I do 30 reps per side.
2. **Clam Shells:** lie on your right side with your knees together and a theraband around your lower thighs. Your thighs should be about 45 degrees from your body and your knees bent at 90 degrees. Open your legs like a clam shell but don't move your pelvis – the motion should not rock your torso or pelvic girdle. Keep it slow and controlled. I do 30 reps on each leg.
3. **Hip Thrusts:** lie on your back with your weight on your upper back your feet. Your legs will be bent at the knee. Lift one leg so your weight is all on one leg and your back. Lower your butt almost to the ground and thrust upward by activating your glutes. This exercise is great for glute strength and hip stability. I do 25 reps on each leg. 50k American record holder Josh Cox demonstrates this exercise in [this video](#) (right after pushups).
4. **Side-Steps:** with a theraband around your ankles and knees slightly bent, take ten steps laterally. The band should be tight enough so it provides constant resistance during all steps. Still facing the same direction, take another 10 steps back to your starting point. That is one set. I like to do 5 sets. This exercise will look like a slow-motion version of a basketball "defense" drill.
5. **Pistol Squats:** These are simply one-legged squats. The key to a successful pistol squat is to not lean forward, keep the motion slow and controlled, and make sure your knee does not collapse inward.
6. **Hip Hikes:** Stand on your right foot. With your pelvis in a neutral position, drop the left side so it is several inches below the right side of your pelvic bone. Activate your right hip muscle and lift your left side back to its neutral position. I do 20 reps per side.
7. **Iron Cross:** this exercise is in the Cannonball video and helps you increase mobility in your hip, glute, and hamstring.

[Back Routine](#) – The back routine is a simple routine that primarily strengthens your lower back. Its complementary workout is the Pedestal Routine (below).

[Pedestal Routine](#) – The pedestal routine is similar to yoga and uses plank exercises to build a strong core.

[Lunge Matrix](#)– The lunge matrix is a series of 5 different lunges that strengthen your legs in three planes of motion. The video takes you through 10 reps per lunge type, or 50 total lunges, but I recommend starting with 2 or 4 to prevent unnecessary soreness. Start by doing this after your runs, then once you can do it without getting sore, do it before.

[Beginner Strength Circuit](#) – If you're new to body weight exercises, start with this circuit from Steve Kamb of [Nerd Fitness](#).

[Advanced Strength Circuit](#) – Once the beginner circuit is easy, progress to this (much) more advanced circuit. Thanks to Steve again!

[Medicine Ball Circuit](#)– This is a great strength routine using a medicine ball that builds general strength. It can get a little salesy, but the exercises work.

[Athena Med Ball Circuit](#) - Another classic from Jay Johnson. I have just started doing this routine and it is a *full body* workout - legs, abs, and upper body, plus several exercises near the end add a proprioceptive element to the circuit. (The Athena Circuit starts 4:45 into the video)

[Rebel Fitness Guide](#)– For the beginner who wants to commit to an entire program. This guide includes videos of every exercise, workout progressions, and even a food guide.

[Running DVDs](#) - For those who like having a DVD of your workout handy. There are two volumes and the routines are organized into three categories: Preventative Routines, General Strength, and Warm-ups. A few of the routines are demonstrated by 2008 Olympian Christian Smith.

[Core and Drills for Distance Runners](#) - Coach Greg McMillan offers several DVD's on core strength and running drills for the beginner - advanced runner. These DVD's are comprehensive and presented in a very clean way. Big thumbs up.

Now a challenge: pick 1-2 routines to learn every week. Choose a workout that gets you out of your comfort zone. Having trouble? Just [email](#) me and I can help you through whatever problem you're facing.

It's easy to read through a resource-packed email like this and say, "Cool" and then go back to not doing anything. I want to motivate you to change your training and actually DO these exercises. Let's get you strong.

Thanks for being part of the Strength Running family. If you think this information is valuable, I'd appreciate you sending it to your runner friends. Let's prevent as many injuries as possible and get people running faster! There's a "forward to a friend" link at the bottom of this email.

To your running success,
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