

Flexing hips is the best way to avoid injury

By Eric Bernstein, Outside

Your running regimen isn't going to make up for your workday nine-to-five. All that sitting causes serious problems with hip mobility, which are only exacerbated by the repetitive movements of endurance training.

"Running and cycling combine to make some of the tightest, shortest hips on the planet," explains Kelly Starrett of MobilityWod.com. And it's not poor form that's causing the problems. The repetitive movements of endurance training—coupled with the sedentary lifestyle most athletes lead outside of their sport—restrict range of motion.

Forget about posture: This is bad news for any athlete hoping to maximize efficiency and avoid injury, Starrett says.

For runners, tight hip flexors prevent full rear extension of the leg. To compensate, stiff runners achieve extension by arching their back and tilting their pelvis forward; this shifts the foot strike forward, in front of the runner's center of mass, and creates an inefficient braking force, as well as a heavy foot strike that takes its toll on ankle, hip, and knee joints, explains USA Triathlon performance adviser Bobby McGee.

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