

Strength Training for Runners

4 Day Split:

2 – 3 Sets with 10 – 12 Reps for Each Exercise

Monday – Upper Body

Tuesday – Lower Body

Wednesday – Off

Thursday – Upper Body

Friday – Lower Body

Sat. & Sun. Off

(Core exercises are done during both upper and lower days)

Lower Body Exercises

- Squats or Leg Press
- Calf Raise
- Leg Curl
- Lunges
- Straight Leg Deadlift

Upper Body Exercises

- Chest Press
- Dumbbell Rows
- Shoulder Shrugs
- Bicep Curls
- Tricep Extension

Core Exercise

- Superman
- Hip-ups
- Sit-ups or Crunches (Sit-up Board)

Why Weight Train If I'm a Runner?

There are three good reasons why those who consider themselves distance runners to obtain a sizeable level of general strength in both the legs as well as the upper body.

1. A longer run, or a more difficult run, can be managed easier with sufficient strength throughout the body.
2. Greater muscular strength decreases the risk of joint injury or overuse strain by minimizing stress of the bones, ligaments, tendons, or cartilage.
3. A progressive resistance exercise program helps strengthen these connective tissues, making the entire support system more durable.

Studies have recently shown that a strength training program of at least six weeks can significantly reduce or completely relieve kneecap pain or “runner's knee.” Strength training can also reduce the recurrence of many other common injuries, including hip or lower back pain. With the addition of weight training to a runner's workout, when injuries occur they are often less severe.

Important Tips

1. Work the muscles throughout their full range of movement so that strength gains occur in the full range of motion.
2. Allow adequate time between training sessions for recovery and physiological adaptation to occur.
3. Challenge your muscles! You must place greater than normal demands on the existing musculature for desired increases in strength to occur.

Lower Body Exercises

Leg Press



The leg press when performed properly will strengthen most of the major muscles of the legs. Concentrate on proper form by placing your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight forward, and knees in alignment over your toes. When lowering the weight, keep your head and chest up (during the squat), and keep a tight stomach and lower back. When extending the weight back to the starting position, do not forcefully lock out the knees.

Calf Raise



This exercise can be done a number of ways. Standing on a step in the Smith Machine, or using some sort of platform and a dumbbell as shown above, are just a couple that I find to work well. Lower your heel until fully extended on the way down, and then slowly raise your heel up by pushing off of your big toe.

Leg Curl



Place your ankles behind the roller pads. Raise the roller pad by fully flexing your legs, while keeping your hips pressed firmly against the pad in which you're lying upon. There are handles under the pad for you to grasp with your hands.

Dumbbell Lunge



Stand with one leg in front of you and one leg behind you. While holding a dumbbell in each hand, slowly sink your hips straight down towards the ground and keep your head and chest up with good posture. Make sure you don't lean forward placing pressure upon the front knee. Raise your body back to the starting position when your lower knee reaches a few inches above the floor.

Straight Leg Dead Lift



Stand tall with a dumbbell in each hand. Lower the weights as if you are going to touch your toes with them while keeping legs straight, but do not lock out your knees! You should feel a good stretch in your hamstrings. Go down to about the middle of your shins and then raise your upper body back to a standing tall position.

Upper Body Exercises

Dumbbell Bench Press



Lying flat on a bench, evenly lower the dumbbells to a point slightly above your chest. Then slowly press the dumbbells straight up in a controlled lift.

Dumbbell Row



Holding a dumbbell in each hand, bend forward at the hips while keeping your back straight. Pull the dumbbells up to the torso level squeezing your shoulder blades together and then slowly lower the dumbbells back down.

Machine Shrug



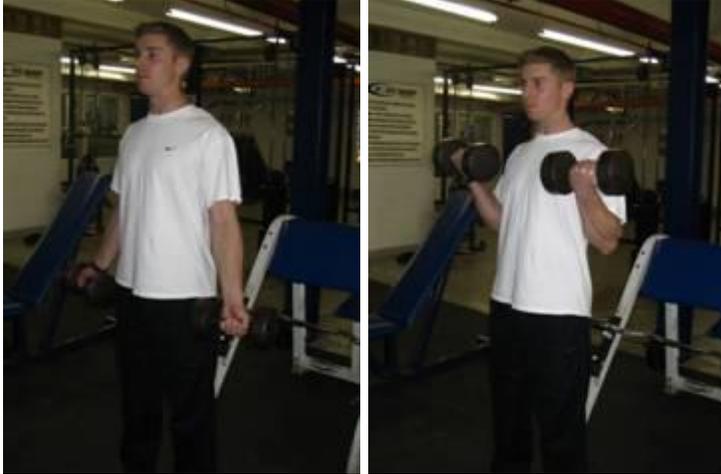
This exercise can be done with dumbbells, a straight bar, a cable, or on a machine as shown. Start by relaxing your shoulders as much as possible. Then raise your shoulders up as high as possible while keeping your arms straight. Imagine trying to pinch your ears with your shoulders. There is no need to roll your shoulders forward or backwards.

Dumbbell Upright Row



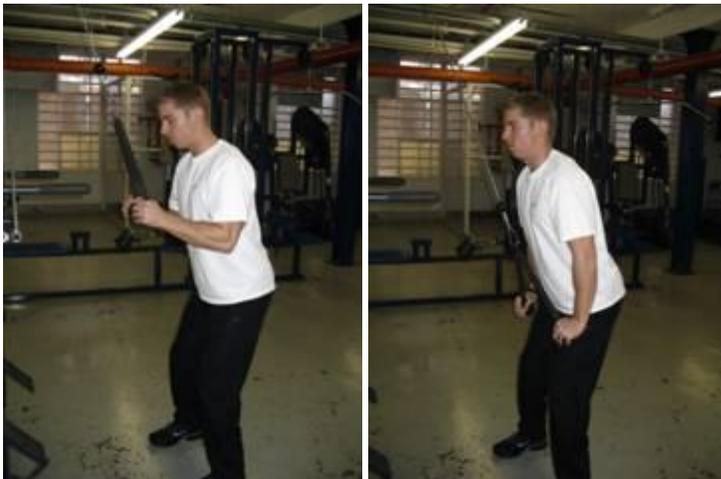
Standing tall with a dumbbell in each hand, raise the dumbbells by pulling up with your shoulders. Keep your elbows out and the dumbbells close to your torso. Pull the dumbbells as high as your collar bones, and then lower the weight back to the starting position.

Dumbbell Bicep Curl



Stand up or sit on a bench with a dumbbell in each hand. With your palms facing forward curl the dumbbells at the same time or one arm at a time, you choose. Keep your elbows stationary against your side. Do not sway your upper body to assist with the curl. Then lower the dumbbells slowly to the starting position.

Cable Triceps Extension (Rope)



Stand with your feet shoulders-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Your upper body should be parallel with the extended cable, so bend forward at the hips slightly. Keeping your elbows stationary against your side, extend your arms to a straight position. Return your arms back the starting position but do not let your elbows move away from your sides.

Core Exercises

Superman



While lying flat on your stomach, raise one arm up towards the ceiling and at the same time raise the opposite leg towards the ceiling. Alternate each arm and leg as if you're swimming in a pool. This exercise will strengthen the core from the upper back to the lower back.

Hip-Ups



With your feet over your hips, slowly raise your feet in the air using your abdominal muscles. Try not to use momentum to lift your feet up. Also don't let your feet get over your face, your hips will roll off the mat without the use of your abs (this takes the purpose out of the exercise).

Sit-ups or Crunches (Sit-up Board)



With your feet stationary under the roll pads, crunch your torso towards your knees as with a full sit-up, or raise your torso towards the ceiling if doing a crunch. The full sit-up will strengthen the hip flexors in addition to the abdominals (strong hip flexors are very important to those who run).

Created by Jim Benson