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No effect of a graded training program on the number of running-related injuries in novice runners: a randomized controlled trial.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Although running has positive effects on health and fitness, the incidence of a running-related injury (RRI) is high. Research on prevention of RRI is scarce; to date, no studies have involved novice runners.

HYPOTHESIS: A graded training program for novice runners will lead to a decrease in the absolute number of RRIs compared with a standard training program.

STUDY DESIGN: Randomized controlled trial; Level of evidence, 1.

METHODS: GRONORUN (Groningen Novice Running) is a 2-armed randomized controlled trial comparing a standard 8-week training program (control group) and an adapted, graded, 13-week training program (intervention group), on the risk of sustaining an RRI. Participants were novice runners (N = 532) preparing for a recreational 4-mile (6.7-km) running event. The graded 13-week training program was based on the 10% training rule. Both groups registered information on running characteristics and RRI using an Internet-based running log. The primary outcome measure was RRIs per 100 participants. An RRI was defined as any musculoskeletal complaint of the lower extremity or back causing a restriction of running for at least 1 week.

RESULTS: The graded training program was not preventive for sustaining an RRI ($\chi^2 = 0.016$, $df = 1$, $P = .90$). The incidence of RRI was 20.8% in the graded training program group and 20.3% in the standard training program group.

CONCLUSIONS: This randomized controlled trial showed no effect of a graded training program (13 weeks) in novice runners, applying the 10% rule, on the incidence of RRI compared with a standard 8-week training program.

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