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### RETURN TO RUNNING

**Goal:** To get back to running outside with no pain or swelling in the knee.

**Process:** Like it or not, running is an aspect of almost all activities, so you must practice it, just not to excess. Remember that treadmill speeds are individualized and depend on stride length and running experience. Make sure you are familiar with the machine before pushing any buttons. When in doubt, proceed at a slower speed. You can perform the following running workouts 3 days per week, staying at each level for a *minimum* of 1 week. You can also be doing some of the other Return to Sports programs while you are progressing in this one. If you have pain or swelling: RICE and back down one level until the swelling resolves. This is another opportunity to tell you that running is not the only path to fitness. In fact, long distance running i.e. more than 3-5 miles, 3 days a week, is probably not the best thing for your joints. Addicted runners should make an effort to include some soft workouts such as cycling and water in their repertoire. Marathons might best be experienced as a course marshal. Again, let's review our ballpark numbers for Return to Running, knowing there are some of you who will be earlier and some later:

**LEVEL A:**

<b>PURPOSE</b>	Build off the treadmill walking program. Introduction to jogging.	
<b>PROTOCOL</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time</b>
	Warm-up with sit-ups or upper body weights.	
	Find a road or smooth trail with a slight uphill.	
	Walk at brisk pace.	4 min.
	Jog at slow speed.	1 min.
	Repeat 4 more times.	<b>Total = 20 min.</b> (Jog = 5 min.)
<b>COMMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideally are comfortable with Level C of the Treadmill Walking program (see chapter 8).</li> <li>• Jog UP the any incline, walk DOWN.</li> <li>• If possible, spin (low resistance) on a bike for 5 minutes after jogging.</li> <li>• Ice the knee and stretch the entire lower extremity when done.</li> <li>• If using a track, try jogging the straight and walking the curve.</li> </ul>	

**LEVEL B:**

<b>PURPOSE</b>	Building on efficient movement patterns plus endurance	
<b>PROTOCOL</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activity</b></p> <p>Warm-up with sit-ups and a brisk walk.</p> <p>Walk at brisk pace.</p> <p>Jog at slow or medium speed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Repeat 4 more times.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 min.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 min.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Total = 20 min.</b> (Jog = 12 min.)</p>
<b>COMMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save time for a good cool-down in the water or on the bike followed by stretching and ice. Remember, you may not be stressing your cardio system, but you are stressing your knee.</li> <li>• After doing this for the first time, plan on a “soft” workout tomorrow, preferably in the water.</li> <li>• Treat yourself to a professional massage.</li> </ul>	

**LEVEL C:**

<b>PURPOSE</b>	Building endurance and coordination	
<b>PROTOCOL</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activity</b></p> <p>Warm-up on the bike or with a brisk walk (5% incline still if using a treadmill).</p> <p>Walk at fast pace. Stop and stretch quads and hams.</p> <p>Jog at a medium speed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Repeat 3 more times.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 min.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 min.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Total = 28 min.</b> (Jog = min.)</p>
<b>COMMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to avoid going downhill if running outside.</li> <li>• If you don't spin on a bike or get in the water after jogging, at least cool down walking.</li> <li>• Stretch, emphasizing the quads and hamstrings.</li> <li>• Ice the knee and give it a good massage.</li> </ul>	

### **Progression beyond Level C for the Running Addict**

Once you are doing something similar to the Level C program most of you serious runners will be keen to get back to your normal routine. RESIST THAT URGE! Continue on a gradual program similar to the one below and use the things that should now be habits: warming up, stretching out, cooling down, hydrating, etc. Be methodical, but do not be afraid to miss a day. Spend anywhere from one to two weeks at these levels.

Level D: Jog 5 min **up** easy grade, walk down and repeat once or twice. Start with 3 days a week.  
(If using a treadmill, increase the incline to 10% while jogging, and drop it to 5% during recovery walking. Once outside, it is worth the effort to find a cooperative hill.)

Level E: Jog 15 min one day, 25 min the next. At least one day a week off.

Level F: Jog 20 min one day, 30 min the next. At least one day a week off.

Level G: Jog 20 min one day, 35 min the next. At least one day a week off.

Level H: Jog 20 min one day, 40 min the next. At least one day a week off.

After following a program such as this you can work back into your usual training. This weekly progression would be common for an arthroscopic meniscus operation, but might have to be stretched out for anything more complicated, such as an ACL reconstruction. Again, listen to your doctor and your knee. TKR patients should never run aggressively on the road.

Do not hesitate to repeat a week and progress only to a level where you feel comfortable. Pay close attention to the things we've discussed plus: proper running shoes, adequate orthotics (shoe inserts), warm clothes (what is it with runners in shorts in the middle of winter?), etc.

*Make a weekly plan to schedule your runs and exercise. That's what Sunday night is for!*