

THE RUNNER'S TOOLBOX



I like to call these items your **first line of defense in dealing with and preventing those little issues** that can crop up for runners.

The good news is that all of these items are relatively inexpensive and easy to use.

I make sure to keep them around the house and they've come in handy in helping me work out the stiffness and niggles of over 35 marathons.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Angie Spencer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Angie Spencer, RN

Anti-chafe product

This can be a spray, gel, cream, or roll on. Find a product that works for you and apply it to any chafe prone areas before long runs and races. Finding the right product can be a long process for some of us who deal with horrible chaffing. My current go-to products are: Trail Toes and Monistat Chafing Relief Powder Gel. I've also used



Body Glide.

Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate)

In addition to taking an ice bath post-long run, an Epsom salt bath within the first few hours of a long run or race or while you're dealing with soreness or injury can be a huge asset. I dissolve 2 cups of Epsom salt in a hot bath and soak for 20-30 minutes. Many athletes are magnesium deficient and soaking in a bath may have several benefits including relaxation, reducing inflammation and muscle cramps and soreness.



Disposable ice packs

Keep them in your freezer to have on hand for icing sore or swollen areas post-run. Keeping a disposable plastic water bottle frozen can be a great way to ice the bottom of your foot for plantar fasciitis.



Lacrosse ball

This is a dense rubber ball roughly the same size as a tennis ball and it works great for releasing tightness in the muscles and fascia, particularly if you deal with piriformis or hamstring issues.

I used mine recently on a long car drive to alleviate the hip pain that I normally have.



Foam roller

A dense foam roller is an important tool for alleviating tight muscles and soreness and improving blood flow and flexibility. I use my foam roller after long runs and whenever I feel tightness in my quads, IT bands, hamstrings and glutes. It's uncomfortable but definitely worth the time.



Stability ball

This is one of those large inflatable balls that have become popular to sit on instead of a regular office chair. But they also have benefits for your cross training and are a good tool for increasing abdominal and core strength. There are many exercises that you can perform with a stability ball which require more coordination because you need to balance on an unstable surface.



Compression garments

Compression socks have been used in the medical community for a long time to improve circulation to the lower legs.

Although there isn't conclusive evidence that wearing compression gear will improve your performance during a race, using compression socks, sleeves or tights can be a great way to recover more quickly in the post long run/race period. Many studies have shown improvements in muscle fatigue and perceived soreness from wearing compression socks.



Recovery Foods

There are a variety of sources of anti-inflammatory foods that are important for runners to include in their diets. Foods to *avoid* include: refined carbohydrates and sugars, trans-fats, fried foods and preservative laden meats. Focus on eating the following foods to lower inflammation: tomatoes, olive oil, green leafy vegetables, almonds, walnuts, fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, sardines), strawberries, blueberries, cherries, oranges, apples and coffee. I've also found that taking an anti-inflammatory supplement like Tissue Rejuvenator from Hammer Nutrition has helped me avoid injury and recover more quickly.