

# Good Samaritan physician advises runners on common overuse injuries

By Jennifer Williams

*jwilliams@catholicreview.org*

Long before Derek Papp became an orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore, he was running cross country at Knox College in Galesburg, Ill. While today the 34-year-old parishioner of Holy Cross Church in Federal Hill focuses on lifting weights as his main form of exercise, he knows plenty about issues that can plague runners training for a marathon, half-marathon, relay race or 5K.

**Below he shares a list of common injuries participants in the Baltimore Running Festival may face.**

1. **Plantar fasciitis.** The plantar fascia is a band of tissue on the bottom of your foot, which can become tight, Dr. Papp said. “If you’re increasing your mileage and you’re doing it in too many leaps, you can start having pain in there. It’s a very annoying problem that you can get rid of with stretches and therapy or night splints.”
2. **The knees.** “In the knee, there are really two flavors of what are called runner’s knee. Pain can come from behind the kneecap (Patellofemoral syndrome) or outside of the knee (IT band syndrome). With the IT band, a band of tissue can rub over the outside of your knee and over time that can become inflamed and you tend to see that if you go up in miles and you’re not used to it,” Dr. Papp said. With the other, there is inflammation underneath the kneecap. “The way you make that better is engage in

exercises that increase your quad strength such as squats or the leg press,” he said. (Dr. Papp does tend to tell people not to do leg extension exercises if they are just getting over an injury). Dr. Papp said that with these two particular injuries, there is no structural damage, so runners could run through the pain. “You’re just not going to get better until you rest,” he said. He said RICE (Rest, ice compression and elevation) is a good way to basically treat any type of orthopedic injury. “It’s hard to rest when you’re training though,” he noted.

3. **Shin splints or a stress fracture.** These are the only really bad things that can happen, Dr. Papp said. With a stress fracture, “you’re running so much that your bones don’t have time to repair themselves from all the little microtrauma every time you run. So that’s something you should see a doctor about and that should be treated with rest. “

Next up will be his tips on preparing for race day.

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