

So you are done!! The Dual has been and gone, but the memory remains and I'm sure you are all looking forward to next year already. Some of you may have come away with a great sense of achievement, a bit of a tan and a few sore muscles. Some of you may have come away with a bit more than just sore muscles – you may have taken a wee spill on the way and are now nursing the after effects. If that is you then this is important.

Any injury significant enough to make you alter your gait, slow down, walk or have to be “attended to” after the event should not be sneezed at. Whilst it may seem relatively transient and just a matter of letting the body heal, the lingering effects of these ‘minor’ ailments can become more serious down the track. Let's take a twisted ankle or sprain as an example – perhaps the most common of the musculoskeletal injuries in this sport, although these principles can be used for most injuries. The immediate attention provided to the injury works well. **Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation.** This is the most effective way to reduce the acute symptoms and should be continued for the next few days until the pain and swelling has subsided. But this isn't a license to get back out there and start where you left off!! The damage sustained to the ligaments, muscles and proprioceptive nerve fibres in and around the ankle is likely to make the area weaker, thus increasing your risk of further injury later down the track – often these recurrent injuries are a step worse than the original. This is a frustrating process indeed and can really affect your overall enjoyment of the sport. So my recommendation to you (you know who you are, the ones pretending not to limp) is to get some advice from the people who know. Start strengthening the parts that were injured once the acute symptoms have settled and you will be back at it in a much better way.

On another matter, footwear....

I made a decision the day before the race to wear normal road running shoes – they were a lightweight, low profile shoe to keep the centre of gravity lower. The compromise of these is the lack of support they give when on the very rocky, unstable scourier. There were a number of times where I felt that I would have been better off in an off-road shoe, however once on the more friendly surfaces I was enjoying the lightweight and flexible nature of my road shoes.

These sorts of decisions plague us all. And I think it is one that needs to be taken seriously in preparation for next year's event and other upcoming Total Sport races. You need to take into account your goals

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and expectations for the day. If you want to be up the front contending with the leaders then perhaps you are better off in the lightweight road versions, but be prepared to give up a bit of time in the rocky/technical sections. A great alternative would be to wear one of the new generation off road shoes which are light and flexible like a road shoe but tough enough in the toe box and the outsole to take a beating when on demand. If your day is more about completing the event and making it out on your own two feet then a conventional off road running shoe that is suited to your foot type will be more than capable. And as always, different styles of shoes suit different runners, and this is just as significant in off-road as it is in road running. An incorrect wrong shoe for your foot type can be a definite cause of injury, so don't let the wrong let you down.

If you have any questions you would like to ask one of our Sports Podiatrists regarding your foot wear or injury concerns feel free to email us at info@foottraffic.co.nz

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"Strength is built from the ground up"

