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## LIFE HEALTH

# Mitigate Vancouver training injuries

By Melissa Carr, Special to 24 hours  
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The Vancouver Marathon is just one of many summer events to take part in. (File photo, 24 hours)

If you are thinking about participating in any of the many sporting competitions and events this spring and summer, then you are hopefully already training in preparation. Vancouver was recently noted as one of the world's healthiest places to live. It's no wonder, considering how many active outdoor offerings there are in and around our city.

Events include the Sun Run, Vancouver Marathon, and the Tough Mudder. We have a wide range of challenging active events, races, and fundraisers from which to select. The challenge is that the events themselves and the training leading up to them can result in pain and injuries.

Injuries can be classified as either traumatic or cumulative. Traumatic injuries happen suddenly, like falling off your bike and hitting your head, or spraining an ankle when running. Cumulative injuries occur over time, often as a result of repetitive strain from incorrect movement patterns, poor posture, or weak tissues.

There are many steps that can be taken to avoid injury. The first step is to know yourself. Know your current abilities, your areas of weakness, and your goals. Increasing training intensity gradually is key. Jumping up the intensity too quickly in order to catch up on a training schedule may result in an injury that can put a halt to the whole thing.

Make sure that you have the proper equipment. Get your shoes properly fitted and choose them based on your body's specific challenges, not picked for style and colour. If you have any sporting gear like a bicycle, make sure that it is appropriately fine-tuned. Wear applicable protective gear — helmets and padding.

Getting in enough active training time is obviously important, but don't underestimate the need for rest and recovery. Your body needs sleep in order to heal damaged tissues and assemble new healthy cells.

Of course, getting help from fitness trainers and health professionals can also help you complete your athletic goals without suffering from lasting injuries. Athletes around the world, both amateur and professional, recognize acupuncture as a treatment that will help them get back to their activities faster. Acupuncture improves blood flow to speed tissue healing, relaxes tight muscles, and releases feel-good endorphin hormones.

Even individual sports can use a team approach to help you achieve your activity goals this year.

**Dr. Melissa Carr is a registered doctor of traditional Chinese medicine, caring for patients in an integrative medicine clinic in Vancouver.**

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