

## Yoga for Runners

**Christine Felstead**

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*Deftly organized, this guide to yoga provides runners with thoroughly explained methods for avoiding injury and improving health.*

Runners are prone to a wide variety of injuries, and Christine Felstead, runner, yoga teacher, and facilitator of “Yoga for Runners” workshops, offers her advice in the book *Yoga for Runners* to give this ever-growing population the tools to alleviate, if not eliminate, all that ails them. The fifteen chapters are cleverly organized to build increasing interest in the benefits of starting a yoga practice. The first chapter reminds runners of the multitude of life-enhancing reasons why they run and finishes up with the caveat that running injuries are ubiquitous, agonizing, and, with a regular yoga practice, mostly preventable. Felstead lists more than a dozen of the compelling physical, mental, and running-performance perks of practicing yoga, such as greater strength, improved breathing, and post-race recovery.

Beyond the physical benefits, yoga can open up a vast world of deeper gains, and Felstead shares these with a secular finesse. She explains the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations and shows that developing a mind-body connection through mindfulness and meditation can be a priceless enhancement to one’s exercise routine and quality of life.

A chapter on running injuries includes a comprehensive chart listing the fourteen most common injuries, how and why they happen, what yoga can do to minimize their occurrence, and specific yoga poses that maximize healing.

Working from the ground up, Felstead begins with the feet, ankles, and knees as she gets to the meat of how yoga and running are a match made in heaven. Easy-to-understand anatomical sketches and explanations segue into a series of yoga postures skillfully chosen to offer that body part the greatest benefit. Each posture is illustrated with a photograph of a model demonstrating proper form, a detailed description of how to execute the pose, and a bulleted list of benefits. For example, downward dog, one of the most practiced poses in yoga, stretches almost the entire body from the arches of the feet to the spine and to the wrists and is, as Felstead emphasizes, “an absolute must pose for runners.”

Felstead wisely concludes by reminding the type A ultra-marathoner and the too-busy-for-anything-else three-mile-a-day runner to take their time, listen to their body, and avoid turning yoga practice into another opportunity to compete.

PATTY SUTHERLAND (Winter 2014)

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