Keeping on the right track
- *Some helpful hints to keep you injury free when training*

The first rule is: Remember that you have to walk before you run! We've all been guilty of throwing ourselves into a new exercise regime whole-heartedly only to over-do it and pick up an injury in no time.   While it is very tempting to just go out and run as fast as you can for as long as you can, you will ultimately run longer, feel stronger, and stay injury free if you start by adding short runs to your regular walks, and then gradually increase the amount of time you spend running.

SSE Airtricity Dublin Marathon publishes a 22 week training programme contains specific weekly advice on how to build running. Your main goal is to get fit without getting injured and going too far and too fast before your body is ready is one of the most common causes of injuries.
The training programme plans focus on how best to get you to the starting line on October 29, no matter you are a beginner or an advanced runner, so follow the weekly guide – it's been developed to help you get fit steadily.

So when should you stop and when do you need to keep going?
It's very normal to feel some low-level aches and pains when you first start the programme but it is really important that you listen to your body and don't ignore pain that continues. Persistent pain or pains that worsen and persist while you walk or run are signals to rest, attend your physiotherapist or get medical advice.

Rule number 2: Run efficiently. Find a running stance that suits you. Every runner has a different style that works for them and there are lots of advice pieces on good posture – find the one that works for you and remember to listen to your body, if you are suffering from niggles or aches then something isn't working correctly so talk to a professional for advice.

Rule number 3- STRETCH! - Stretching will help to strengthen the muscles particularly the quadriceps, abdomen and muscles of the lower legs. Many injuries are caused by incorrect or inadequate stretching so it's an important part of your fitness programme and you should make sure you do this properly before setting off.

The end? One final piece of advice for runners - consider incorporating a 20 minute walk after you run a longer distance or participate in a run. When you run, blood gets re-directed to your legs, away from your internal organs. A gentle walk afterwards is a great way to return your body to its normal levels. This is to prevent postural blood pressure drop that will result in you fainting.