

MEDICAL & TRAINING



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Sleepy Feet

Q: My feet fall asleep when I run more than 3 miles at a time. This only occurs during distance runs, not speedwork. Any idea what could be causing it?

T.F., MONTROSE, COLORADO

A: You're probably experiencing a temporary nerve-compression condition called *transient parasthesia*. It can occur during longer runs because of a gradual buildup of fluids in your feet. As your feet swell, blood-flow decreases and your nerves become compressed. At the same time, the swelling starves the nerves of oxygen-rich blood, causing numbness or tingling.

What might cause transient parasthesia? Some possibilities are tight shoes and laces or a structural problem in the foot (such as a bone spur pressing against a nerve). A heavy, pounding gait could also be a contributing factor. I'd suggest having your running mechanics evaluated or changing the surface you train on. Also, experiment with wearing different types of shoes and arch supports.

Finally, if time allows, I recommend dividing your long run into two sessions—morning and evening. This will minimize the accumulation of fluids in your feet. Of course, if your problem persists, contact a sports podiatrist for an evaluation.

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