Want to avoid injury? Take your time when lifting. Studies have shown that after participating in six weeks of eccentric strength training, runners became stronger. This tactic, which entails slowing down the lengthening phase of a movement, puts greater stress on muscles to help them grow more powerful and resilient, says study author Fernando Sanz Lopez, Ph.D., of San Jorge University in Spain. Below are five exercises to help strengthen muscles and avoid injuries.

**Single-Leg Squats**
Stand with your left foot on a box, right leg hanging off to the side. Bend your left knee to slowly squat down. Pause, then rise back up to the starting position. Engage your core, keeping belly button to spine. Do six to 12 reps on each leg.

**Calf Raises**
Stand with your heels off a box edge. Lift up on your toes (use a wall for support). Take your left foot off. Lower your right heel slowly. Pause; return to start. Do six to 12 reps on each leg.

**Woodchop**
Squat down and bring a medicine ball toward your right knee. Engage your core as you stand up and bring the ball diagonally across your body. Do both phases of the movement slowly so you move with control in both directions. Do six to 12 reps on each side.


**Deadlift**
Stand with dumbbells. Hinge forward at your hips, keeping your back flat, to lower the dumbbells just below your knees. Rise up slowly to stand straight. Pause, then lower back down and repeat. Engage your core, keeping belly button to spine. Complete six to 12 reps.

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**Single-Leg Bridge**
Lie on your back with knees bent and arms at your sides. Extend your right leg out. Lift your hips slowly into the air. Pause, then return to start. Engage your core, keeping belly button to spine. Do six to 12 reps on each leg.