

SPRINGTIME INJURY PREVENTION

With the warmer weather upon us we are all excited to get out there and enjoy outdoor activities and sports again. Unfortunately, this means that you could be putting yourself at risk of injury. The good news is that a little bit of knowledge can go a long way in the prevention of injuries.

VARY YOUR EXERCISE OR ACTIVITY

Performing the same type of activity repeatedly strains the same tissues and will lead to break down and injury. Cross training can help balance muscle development and prevent overuse of muscles. If you lift weights today, go for a run tomorrow. If you lift weights several times per week focus on different body parts each day – legs today, shoulders tomorrow. If you're gardening, mix it up with activities that do not involve lifting or bending.

WARM UP BEFORE ACTIVITY

Evidence suggests that a good active warm up can reduce the risk of injury. Warm up with exercises that raise heart rate, such as fast walking, running drills, lighter weights or skipping. After 5-10 minutes of this, perform active/dynamic stretches such as walking lunges, twisting, heels to bums, hip swinging.



STAY LOOSE

A regular stretching program after activity can help to prevent injury. Be consistent or your body will gradually tighten up making you more susceptible to injury.

Chose stretches that target the main muscle groups: Lower body: calves, hamstrings, quadriceps, IT band and piriformis (buttocks); Upper Body: pects and shoulders; Side stretches to get your trunk muscles.

Hold your stretches for 30 seconds each. To avoid tearing the muscle, do not bounce—hold the static stretch.

A stretch should never be painful. Stretch until you feel a comfortable tension, but not pain. [Click here](#) for more on stretches, including detailed instructions for all body parts.

DON'T OVERDO IT

Many people have lots of enthusiasm when starting a new activity, and go too hard, too soon. Begin with moderate exercise of about 20 minutes, 3 times a week and build gradually. If you're a runner the rule of thumb is a 10% increase in mileage per week. You can still challenge yourself, but be patient and build gradually to avoid the pain and frustration of an injury. Follow high intensity training days with a lower intensity day or give yourself a day off to help promote recovery. Be sure to get enough rest and sleep.

TREAT YOUR FEET RIGHT

Replace your shoes regularly. A shoe loses arch support and it's ability to absorb shock before the sole shows significant wear - so it's important not to use the wear on the sole as the main indicator when to replace your shoes. If you're a runner it's best to have a pair of shoes designated only for running because your wear pattern when running is different than when you walk.

Wear the right kind of shoe for your foot. If you over-pronate (flat footed) you need stability; if you have a high arch you need extra cushioning.

Wear the right kind of shoe for your activity. Don't wear a running shoe for tennis.

Consider custom made orthotics. Abnormal foot mechanics can cause misalignment in the lower limb that contributes to wear and tear in the foot, knee, hip and back. Orthotics can correct these issues and prevent the wear and tear that leads to overuse injuries.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Do not exercise through pain - it is an indication that something is wrong. If you do feel pain apply ice and rest the area for 2 -3 days. If the pain returns or persists see a health professional as soon as possible. Early treatment can help to prevent ongoing damage that leads to chronic pain and overuse injuries.

**If you do suffer an injury seek out help as soon as possible.
Early assessment and proper treatment can go a long way in
preventing chronic damage and pain.**

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