

TO THE LIMIT pain or injury? page 74

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ACHES AND PAINS ARE NORMAL AS YOUR BODY ADJUSTS TO A NEW FITNESS ROUTINE. BUT COULD THEY SIGNAL AN INJURY? WE BREAK DOWN HOW TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE AND HOW TO STAY SAFE AS YOU GET FIT.

WORDS Rachel Lopez PHOTOS Tobin Bennett

HAVING AN ACCOUNTABILITY BUDDY DRAMATICALLY INCREASES YOUR CHANCES OF REACHING YOUR FITNESS GOALS. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT GETTING AN EXERCISE PARTNER INCREASES WORKOUT FREQUENCY AND DURATION, ESPECIALLY IF THE COMPANION IS POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE. IN FACT, ENCOURAGEMENT IS THE HIGHEST INDICATOR OF SUCCESS—AND IF YOU HAVE A BUDDY, YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE A SPOTTER TO HELP KEEP YOU SAFE. — UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND

FEEL THE BURN

It's normal to experience aches and pains when starting a new fitness routine, but no one wants to risk serious injury. Although anyone can sustain a fitness injury, beginners are especially prone because they often take on too much activity and their muscles aren't used to being pushed past normal thresholds.

Some soreness is a good thing. Muscles contract as they lengthen, resulting in tiny tears called microtraumas. The tiny tears rebuild while your body rests, developing greater strength and endurance. So aching muscles actually signal you're making progress. Beginners often want to take a timeout when they start feeling the burn of sore muscles, but experts advise to keep moving.

"Muscle soreness is a healthy and expected result of exercise, so don't panic," says Mary Meier, Ph.D., senior lecturer in kinesiology and assistant director of athletic training at Iowa State University. "Work through it. Continue to move the next day, maybe alternating activities. If you started out with running, the next day go walk in the pool, ride a bike, do the elliptical or lift weights."

It's important to recognize when NOT to work through the burn. If pain is acute and lasts more than a week, see your doctor and identify the source. If the pain comes from a serious injury, it's crucial to treat the area to avoid long-term damage, such as arthritis, scar tissue or reduced range of motion. "Listen to your body," Meier says. "And don't push through things that you shouldn't."

PAIN vs. GAIN

It's easy to confuse normal soreness for injury as you begin a new exercise program. Two primary factors differentiate them: severity and the time they last. Acute pain for more than 7 to 10 days is likely serious enough to require a doctor. An injury often begins during an activity as throbbing or stabbing in a specific location. You may experience difficulty breathing as if the wind got knocked out of you, or your joints may feel locked, limiting your range of motion.

Although experts say you should let some time pass to ensure it's actually an injury, medical attention is crucial to healing. Avoid working

Sources: health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/report/pdf/PAG_Advisory_Committee_Report.pdf www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/core-exercises/art-20044751 www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/10/161004081548.htm

It's easy to confuse normal soreness for injury as you begin a new exercise program. Two primary factors differentiate them: severity and the time they last. Acute pain for more than 7 to 10 days is likely serious enough to require a doctor. doct that area of your body; instead focus on other muscle groups if you work out. A physical therapist can help create an exercise regimen to set you on a path to healing and keep you moving toward your fitness goals.

> Normal soreness, which actually signals muscles are getting stronger, generally lasts only 24 to 72 hours and feels like burning or straining. Your muscles may feel weak, tight or fatigued. You may experience discomfort in regular daily activities, such as sitting or climbing stairs. Keep moving, and make sure to get plenty of rest, nutrition and hydration. And keep exercising!

"ADULTS AGES 85 YEARS AND OLDER WHO REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS HOME EXERCISE, GARDENING, CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING, DANCING, SWIMMING, BICYCLING OR GROUP EXERCISE FOR MORE THAN 60 MINUTES PER WEEK REDUCED THEIR RISK OF SUSTAINING A FALL-RELATED INJURY BY 63 PERCENT, COMPARED WITH NOT PERFORMING ANY OF THESE ACTIVITIES." - U.S. HEALTH.GOV PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

WARM IT UP/COOL IT DOWN

Warming up before and cooling down after a workout are key to reducing muscle soreness. Even if you cut the length of your primary activity, your muscles will thank you.

WARM UP

Static warm-up includes basic stretching exercises and yoga.

Dynamic warm-up includes jumping jacks, light jogging and biking

COOL DOWN

Stretch out with yoga, resistance bands or a stability ball.

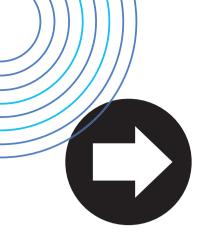
Roll it out with foam rollers (especially on sore spots).

"People sometimes worry too much about the distance [they run]. Don't worry about that. Concentrate on consistency and time. Improvements will come if you stick with it. Don't allow yourself to stop exercising hecause of muscle soreness. Think of all the positive benefits of exercise you'll see mentally, physically and emotionally if you keep qoing. And if you hate to run. don't run! Find an activity you enjoy doing and you're more likely to make it a habit." – Mary Meier, Ph.D., ATC, LAT

 Mary Meier, Ph.D., ATC, LAT Iowa State University



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IF YOU'RE MODERATELY SORE, EXERCISE ACTUALLY SPEEDS RECOVERY BY INCREASING BLOOD FLOW TO MUSCLES. LIGHT EXERCISE SUCH AS WALKING OR SWIMMING CAN PROVIDE LOW-**IMPACT RELIEF. CHECK WITH A HY-VEE PHARMACIST OR SPORTS** NUTRITIONIST AT SELECT STORES FOR TIPS ON INJURY RECOVERY.

WORK THROUGH IT

Staying active while injured can keep your fitness goals on track, help you rehabilitate and maintain your mental health. The amount of activity you attempt depends on your injury. Pain is subjective and genetic factors determine normal range of motion, so no two injuries respond to the same recovery methods. Seek advice from your doctor and visit with a physical therapist to determine what's appropriate for your fitness level and injury.

PLAY IT SAFE

To avoid injury, consult the professionals. Clear any activity with your doctor, who will intensity and duration over time. Once consider your personal health factors to guide your workouts. Lay out your fitness goals. Are you exercising for strength and conditioning? Weight loss? Decreasing blood pressure or cholesterol? Then share your goals with a fitness professional, who can teach you appropriate form. Many gyms offer a free consultation with a certified personal trainer for new members. workout routine.

Begin gradually, building frequency, you stabilize or reach a plateau, add resistance or weight training to build more muscle and endurance. It's especially important to build strength in your core, or middle section of your body. A strong core serves as the foundation for most physical activities and provides the stability you need to stay safe in any

STEP IT UP Three Steps to Prevent Injury

1 Begin your new workout at your current ability, then gradually increase frequency, duration and intensity.

2. Add strength and resistance training to your workout to build muscle and endurance.

3. Varv activities and incorporate warm-up and cooldown exercises into each workout.

IF YOU SUSTAINED **A PREVIOUS INJURY.** REGULAR PREVENTIVE STRETCHING AND **FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES** HELP STRENGTHEN SURROUNDING **MUSCLES AND** PREVENT **RE-INJURY.**



1 SHOULDER IMPINGEMENT (shoulder pain or numbness)

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(shoulder pain or numbness) Limit repetitive overhead activities (tennis, swimming, volleyball, weights). Stretch supportive muscles (deltoid, triceps) to improve flexibility.

2 WRIST TENDONITIS

(ache during movement) Limit repetitive movements, especially when beginning a racquet sport. Use supportive wraps.

3 LOW BACK STRAIN

Stretch hamstrings. Build core muscle strength (especially abs). Practice proper lifting form. Use appropriate mattress and sleep position (avoid sleeping on back or stomach).

4 PATELLAR TENDONITIS

(kneecap strain) Stretch upper leg muscles before and after activity. Correct foot alignment with orthotics. Limit jumping or pounding activities. Use knee strap or compression sleeve during activity.

5 IT BAND STRAIN

(inflammation on side of knee) Stretch and strengthen hip muscles. Use foam roller or tennis ball to ease tightness. Modify running gait. Correct foot alignment with orthotics.

6 ANKLE SPRAIN

Do strengthening and balance exercises. Stretch Achilles tendon. Wear proper shoes.

7 PLANTAR FASCIITIS

(pain on bottom of foot) Wear supportive, activityappropriate shoes. Stretch arches, Achilles tendon and lower leg muscles. Modify activities to avoid pounding.

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