



Prevention of Injury

by Clare Robinson



After Christmas and New Year how many of us rush down to the gym or start running as the pounds have piled on and we feel lethargic and unfit. Exercise is good for the body both physically and mentally, but if you are not careful you can end up with injuries.

You must have a longterm plan of how you will improve your fitness. Simply stated, start with what you can already do and what you want to do, and then improve it. Fitness includes cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, power endurance and flexibility.

There are some basic rules that you should apply to prevent injury.

Progressive Overload

There must be a structured gradual safe increase in training loads and progression in a proper sequence - a good rule of thumb is 10% per week increase. So start slowly and then increase intensity.

Set Goals

Have an overall yearly plan, with both weekly and daily plans.

Warm Up

This consists of a group of exercises performed immediately before an

activity and provides a period of adjustment from rest to exercise. Start with mild aerobic repetitive exercises, then progress on to some static stretches held for 30 seconds. It is important to prepare muscles and joints for movement and stability. Warm muscles increase elasticity and proficiency. A 2% increase in muscle temperature can give an increase in elastic properties of 15% to 20%.

Warm Down

These are exercises that clear lactic acid and other waste products from the muscles to help prevent delayed onset of muscle soreness and residual muscle tension. These should be done straight away, and include gentle winding down exercises and then some slow static stretching. Stretching is important as short and stiff muscles and tendons do not allow for freedom of movement and therefore they perform poorly.

Rest

You should have regular days off so that your body can recover and avoid carrying fatigue into the next training session.

Correct Clothing and Equipment

This must be comfortable, protective and suitable for your activity.

Learn from your mistakes

Listen to your body, it tells you when you have overdone it. It is very important not to train when injured or sick.

Energy Source and Hydration

Try to eat something with protein and carbohydrate about three hours before exercise as your body cannot run on "empty", so to speak. Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise to keep the physiological processes working efficiently.

Signs of Overtraining

These are excessive soreness and stiffness of muscles and joints.

If you stick to the rules you should be able to really enjoy getting fitter with the satisfaction of feeling better within yourself both physically and mentally.

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