

The Wellness Express™

Jump on the train to good health

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Common Exercise Mistakes (& How to Avoid Them)

Presented by:

Introduction

Exercise is an important ritual that keeps you strong, healthy and ready to meet the challenges of everyday life. When approached and performed properly, exercise can help protect you from many kinds of health problems, everything from osteoporosis to high blood pressure to depression.¹ It is easy to overdo it, though. According to a study published in the journal *Research Quarterly for Exercise & Sport*, sport and exercise related injury represents a significant portion of all injuries sustained, especially among males.²

It's important to understand what constitutes a safe and effective approach to exercise and how you can avoid exercise-related injuries or problems. Your chiropractor understands the physical demands exercise places on your body and he or she can help you develop the best possible exercise plan for you. Your chiropractor can also counsel you on how to avoid the common exercise mistakes discussed in this edition of The Wellness Express. It is important to always discuss your exercise plans with your chiropractor before starting your training program.

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Mistake #1: Doing Too Much Too Soon

Doing too much too soon is one of the most common exercise mistakes made by exercise newcomers and veterans alike. Past participation in a regular exercise routine is not necessarily a guarantee that a person will perform the proper volume or intensity of physical activity the next time around. It is easy to be overzealous in the early stages of training but measured participation and moderate intensity efforts will help keep you safe, healthy and motivated to continue your program.



Putting excessive demands on your musculoskeletal system in the early stages of your exercise regimen may lead to injury. For certain activities, especially cardiovascular exercise, the health benefits begin to taper off after 60 minutes. When it comes to exercise, less, in some cases, is more.

Exercise of the Week

Abdominal Crunches on Exercise Ball – Reach for Ceiling.

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before engaging in this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie on back over exercise ball so lower portion of ribcage is positioned over center of ball. Let head rest on ball, and relax hips. Keep knees wide apart, and position arms stretched out overhead.

Exercise: Engage inner abdominals first by bringing belly button inwards. Then, curl body forward on ball. As you curl forward, reach hands for ceiling. Return to starting position. Repeat 5-15 times.



Building your fitness gradually and progressively, participating in exercise classes and getting a fitness tutorial from a certified expert - such as your chiropractor - are three ways to reduce your chances of exercise-related injuries or problems, states the Mayo Clinic.³

Mistake #2: Performing Injurious Exercises

Not all exercises are safe. Some exercises, including exercises that have been part of common exercise routines for decades, may be injurious and increase your likelihood of muscle or ligament damage. Other exercises may be safe only when they are performed with flawless technique. Technique used and the load involved are two key factors to consider when determining if an exercise - a resistance exercise, specifically - is safe for you. Your fitness status and injury history also play a role in deciding what risk specific activities carry. In general, it's advisable to avoid or modify exercises that cause you pain or discomfort. Reducing the speed of a given exercise may lower your risk for injury, too. Consider working with your chiropractor to come up with a fitness routine that involves only safe movements for your spine and other joints and soft tissues.

Mistake #3: Becoming Dehydrated

Maintaining proper hydration and electrolyte levels is an important exercise consideration; though failing to do so is a common exercise mistake that can have significant consequences on both health and performance. According to a study published in the *Canadian Journal of Applied Physiology*,

exercise-induced dehydration reduces aerobic endurance performance and leads to increased body temperature, elevated heart rate and increased perceived exertion.⁴ It is important to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after your exercise bout and not wait until you are feeling thirsty before consuming fluids. The American Academy of Family Physicians states that staying hydrated during exercise helps lubricate joints, transports nutrients to your cells for energy and health and helps reduce your chances of fatigue, muscle cramps, dizziness and more serious symptoms.⁵



Mistake #4: Choosing the Wrong Activities

It's important to sample a variety of exercise activities so that you can find the activities that best suit your interests and aptitudes. A common exercise mistake - and one that can keep you from experiencing the true physical, mental and social health benefits of exercise - is choosing exercise activities that are not sustainable or enjoyable for you. Knowing your physical activity preferences - whether you like to exercise alone or with friends, enjoy team sports or individual athletic pursuits, prefer casual approaches or a competitive environment, etc. - is the key to choosing the activities through which you can get the most out of exercise. Mixing it up, combining two or three different activities that you enjoy, can be another way to keep your training sessions fresh and invigorating and your motivation high.

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Quote to Inspire

"It takes less time to do a thing right than it does to explain why you did it wrong"

Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow

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