

The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

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The Hazards of Weekend Warrior Syndrome

Presented by:

Are you planning to shoot hoops this weekend? Spike a volleyball down at the beach? Or wack a tennis ball across the court? If so, is your body prepared for intense physical activity like this?

With time a precious commodity in our busy lives, millions of us cram all exercise and sport activities into the weekend. Referred to as weekend warriors, our philosophy could be "some exercise is better than no exercise." Sadly, this is the wrong attitude to take.

Your chiropractor wants you to know that saving all your physical activities for the weekend boosts your risk of injury and does little to improve your fitness.

The Damage of Weekend Only Workouts

We often hate to admit that our bodies aren't as resilient as they were in our teenage years. But as you age your ligaments and tendons get stiffer. If you suffer from osteoarthritis, your cartilage may be worn and weak - exposing you to an even higher chance of damage.

Without preparing your body for exercising, you suffer delayed onset muscle soreness, usually appearing within 36 hours of intense exercise. You feel pain and stiffness in many parts of your body.

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Frequent injuries from weekend warrior syndrome include knee, back and neck pain; ankle sprains; tennis elbow; golfer's elbow; and rotator cuff problems. While some soreness is normal in frequent exercise (due to lactic acid buildup), there should be minimal effect on joint motion

Better Strategies for Weekend Warriors

Ideal physical conditioning includes flexibility, cardiovascular exercise, and strength training. By including all three each week, not all do you get the overall benefits associated with physical fitness, but you also reduce the risk of injury when you participate in weekend sports.

So now that you know the hazards of living the weekend warrior approach to fitness, what should you do to change things for the better? Examine your weekly routine. Where can you include small amounts of exercise in your weekly activities? Take a brisk fifteen minute walk during your lunch breaks so your muscles, joints and heart get more accustomed to movement and exercise.

Exercise of the Week

Standing TFL Stretch

Difficulty: Moderate

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

Start: Standing behind a chair, turned sideways. Lean against chair to maintain balance.

Exercise: Place foot closest to chair behind other. Keeping hind leg straight, slide foot further away from chair - until you feel a light pull on outside of hip. Hold for 30-60 seconds. Switch sides and repeat 2X per side.



After warming up your muscles with some walking, take five minutes to stretch. While there are many types of stretching styles, the most widely known are static stretching and dynamic stretching.

Dynamic stretching involves moving your body while doing the techniques, and it's generally recommended for warming-up before extended physical activity. Try this: As you walk swing your leg up to your mid section, hold for a second, and then release. Repeat with your other leg.

Static stretches are particularly good for cooling down after exercise. With these stretches, your aim is to stretch the muscle (or group of muscles) to its farthest point without causing pain. Aim to hold a static stretch for about 30 seconds. If the muscle is particularly stiff, work your way up to 60 seconds.

Strength training not only builds muscle mass but also speeds up your metabolism. This can help drop any extra weight that's putting stress on your body. Remember, strength training is not just lifting weights. If you can't get to a gym, you can try other techniques that build muscle through tension, such as push ups and pull ups. Ask your chiropractor for advice on strength training exercises to make sure they're appropriate for your current state of health.

Another way to increase your conditioning and save time is to incorporate interval training. This type of a workout involves stepping up your exercise intensity for short bursts, then returning to a more reasonable pace. You implement these short sprints several times during your exercise routine. It works for almost all types of cardiovascular exercise, including walking. Try a few minutes of strolling, and then increase your walking speed for 15 to 30 seconds before returning to a regular pace. Alternate between sprint speed and moderate speed throughout your walk. Another advantage of interval training is it lessens the effects of muscle soreness.

Always use proper equipment for your physical activities. This is especially true of the right footwear – don't use tennis shoes for your Saturday hike into the mountains! You also want to vary your exercises so you're not limiting muscle and joint health in other areas of your body. Try alternating the types of sports in which you engage.

Keep your chiropractor informed on your exercise activities, so he or she can help assess and monitor their effects on your musculoskeletal structure and overall health.



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Quote of the Week

“Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being, while movement and methodical physical exercise save it and preserve it.”

- Plato

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