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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

With Spring Weather Comes More Exercise

With the warm weather comes the urge to get outside and start exercising more often. However, if not done properly and slowly at first, you may be vulnerable to an injury. Even with seeing your chiropractor regularly to help maintian proper joint mobility and muscle flexibility, you still have to be realistic about how to approach increasing your physical activiy. If you don't, your chances of becoming frustrated with a lack of progress, or even injured are significant. To prevent this from happening to you, have a look at the following tips:

Don't do too much too soon!
Often we want to quit exercising because of the negative consequences (ie. Pain) of trying to train too hard too soon. Your enthusiasm can seduce you to think that the harder I work out, the better I will be, and the faster it will happen. The reality is:
• The strength and endurance you once had can be regained. But the significant gains you made in strength and endurance are lost after 6 to 8 weeks of inactivity.
• An effective training program starts slowly and builds gradually.
• You can get overtired or injured if you try to do too much too soon.
Doing too much too soon can lead to failure to improve, fatigue and overuse injuries such as tendonitis and stress fractures to bone. These setbacks may cause a prolonged delay in training while you deal with the pain and other symptoms of an overuse injury.

The "no brain" in "no pain, no gain"
Some people think that we have to experience pain during exercise in order to gain fitness. This boot-camp mentality is probably the greatest barrier for people new to exercise who are trying to launch themselves into fitness. Gradual introduction of exercise at an easy, comfortable pace is the best way to start.

One-tenth rule: your brain will fool you!
After a period of inactivity or injury, everyone overestimates their ability to exercise. Our miscalculation leads to renewed injury and failure to respond to training because the exercise load is damaging. That's why the one-tenth rule was devised. It says that slowly graduated loads of exercise should happen on alternate days, about 3 times per week. For example, the first time you exercise, you should do one-tenth of what you think you can do. If you used to be active but haven't trained during the past 8 weeks, and you

thought that 30 minutes of running would be about right, divide that target time by 10 and begin with 3 minutes. During your first week, you would run 3 minutes on Monday, 6 minutes on Wednesday and 9 minutes on Saturday. During the second week, you would continue increasing by one-tenth of your target running time per session, so that in week 2 you would run 12 minutes on Monday, 15 minutes on Wednesday and 18 minutes on Friday. In week 3 you would run 21 minutes on Monday, 24 minutes on Wednesday and 27 minutes on Friday. By the beginning of the fourth week the program you would be running your target time of 30 minutes on alternate days. This may sound conservative, because it is!

The one-tenth rule provides time for your muscles to recover and adapt to exercise so that you avoid overuse injury. It applies to all forms of exercise, including weight training, where you would increase your weight by one-tenth your target each time you lift weights on alternate days.

Use it or lose it

The body's capacity to work rises and falls in response to the demands put on its systems. If we are forced to be physically inactive either because of injury, illness or a poor choice of lifestyle, then our bodies respond by reducing their capacities. The muscle cells shrink, losing their power and endurance in a process called atrophy. Bones become thinner and weaker. We become "out of shape". This loss of conditioning can be reversed. If training is interrupted, always restart your activity using the one-tenth rule.

Form follows function

If we expose the body to the stimulus of exercise followed by a period of recovery, we experience a training response. An appropriate level of exercise followed by an adequate recovery will build strength and endurance by creating cellular changes in your muscles and in your heart and lungs to increase their work capacity. The form or shape of your body changes based on how much training you do. This response is the basis of all improved ability to work or play games that require speed, strength and endurance. But you have to keep it going. Your fitness level is based only on your physical activity during the past 6 weeks. If fitness is not renewed, atrophy follows within weeks.

Listen to your body

If your body hurts after exercise, pay attention. Pain after exercise should not be ignored. Our bodies can mislead our perception of pain during exercise by producing endorphins, a natural painkiller that often masks overuse injuries. After exercise, the endorphins dissipate and we feel the pain. If the pain begins after weight-bearing or impact activities such as running or aerobic classes that contain jumping and landing activity, substitute non-impact exercise such as cycling or swimming. If pain persists more than a day or so, see your chiropractor.