

FITNESS TIPS

Tips For Injury Prevention

(NAPSA)—Exercise is one of the best things that you can do for yourself and one of the most important parts of any exercise regimen is preventing injuries.

Here fitness expert Denise Austin answers questions on how to work out safely:

Q: I'd like to start a workout program, but I haven't exercised regularly in years. Where should I start?

A: If it is a new activity, it is always a good idea to get a complete physical examination and let your doctor know what exercise or sport you plan to start. Also, make sure you select the proper equipment, including the proper footwear. Don't forget to warm up before any activity and cool down when you are finished. It is not uncommon to experience some muscle aches and pains at first. If you do, a non-prescription pain reliever such as Advil will help alleviate muscle pain and soreness and let you get on with your day.

Q: Although I exercise several times a week, I seem to keep getting muscle injuries. How can I prevent this?

A: Don't get discouraged. Before any exercise, always warm up for at least 10 minutes. Heat generated by preliminary exercise will improve elasticity and joint mobility, so it is important to stretch all of your muscle groups. Start slowly and gradually build in intensity and duration of activity. This will prevent you from doing too much too soon. Make sure you allow your body to cool down after any activity—one good way is to walk slowly until your heart rate drops below 100 beats per minute and stretch.



America's leading fitness expert, Denise Austin on muscle injury prevention.

Q: I just started my new exercise routine and have been waking up very stiff and sore. Should I continue my routine?

A: Absolutely. Exercise is such an important part of your mental and physical health—stick with it. After normal exercise activity, some stiffness and soreness is to be expected, especially if you are doing a new activity. Try a non-prescription pain reliever, such as Advil, when soreness sets in. However, if you suspect your injury may be more serious—such as a sprain—make sure to visit your doctor before exercising again. He or she will be able to determine the nature of your injury and help you evaluate your workout routine.

The most common exercise and sports-related injuries are sprains and strains, which usually result from imbalances in muscular strength and endurance, so you want to be sure you are exercising properly.

For more tips, visit Advil's Learning Center at Advil.com.