

To Be One **Step** Ahead

We welcome all the benefits that exercise has to offer but definitely not the injuries, and we know for sure that there is always a chance of getting injured while exercising.

So, the question is, how can you prevent yourself from these unwanted injuries that hinder us from engaging in the sports and exercises that keep you going?

Consider the following tips from Mr Lim Hun Teck, Principal Physiotherapist, Raffles Physiotherapy Centre, before you re-engage in your favourite workouts.

Increase time and intensity gradually

Due to different health conditions and age, everyone's fitness level differs from person to person. We usually find ourselves beginning an exercise programme with lots of enthusiasm, and may go too hard and too fast. Identify the weak areas of your body and avoid the type of activities that place too much stress on them.

Therefore, it is wise to begin with moderate exercise of about 30 minutes, three times a week and gradually build on it. If you experience pain and discomfort during a workout, stop and rest, don't work through the pain. Most importantly, be patient and listen to your body.

Get the right gear

Wearing the correct attire or additional support for different types of activity is important. This can enable you to carry out your workout more smoothly and enhance your performance. If required, additional support such as knee bands can help prevent recurring sports injuries.

Hire a pro

More often than not, we learn better through demonstrations. When starting a new activity, it is advisable to learn the right techniques from a certified and experienced trainer. It is also one of the best ways to prevent an unwanted injury when you receive proper guidance and attention while working out.

Have a mix routine

Add variety and fun to exercising by having a mixture of two or more types of physical activity that include aerobic exercise, strength training, stretching, core stability and balance training elements in your routine. This not only makes exercising interesting, you also get to work on different muscle groups and prevent overuse injuries.

Warm up and stretch

We have been taught that stretching and warm-up exercises prevent injuries. However, there is little scientific evidence to show that they can improve exercise performance, reduce delayed-onset muscular soreness, or prevent injuries. On the other hand, many experts in health and athletics have had positive clinical and practical experiences with stretching, and have thousands of anecdotal reports of injuries that occurred on the rare occasions when previously injury-free athletes neglected to stretch before exercise.

In addition, multiple studies have shown that this decreases the injury rate, especially in females.

Controversial as it may seem, what's notable is that these warm-up routines do help to put people in the right frame of mind to begin and relax after an exercise session, thus benefiting them in staying focused and alert during workouts. **HN**

