

Weekend Warrior

By, Dr. Susan Locke

Weekend warriors, beware! For those of you who spend the week mostly sedentary and then plan to make up for lost time by exercising excessively on the weekend, know that sports injuries frequently occur. Nonprofessional sports injuries are the second most common reason for doctor visits, with the average cost of more than \$18 billion a year.

Sprains (stretching or tearing of a ligament) and strains (stretching or tearing of a muscle or tendon) are the most common sports injuries. The areas of the body that seem most susceptible to sprain or strain include the ankle, groin, hamstring and lower back.

So, what can be done to prevent these types of injuries?

- Warm up and stretch first.
- Start slowly and increase activity gradually by no more than 10 % per week.
- Spread out your exercise. Do not try to make up for a week's worth of inactivity in a day or two. Ideally exercise at least three days a week.
- Listen to your body – stop when it hurts, see a doctor if it doesn't stop hurting.
- Recognize that for most people, what you could do at age 20 is not the same as what you can do at age 50.
- Before starting an exercise program, educate yourself and develop a balanced program, or hire a professional trainer to customize a program to fit your needs.

In addition to sprains and strains, several other injuries are frequently experienced by the weekend warrior. "Shin splints" present as tenderness, soreness or pain along the inner part of your lower leg., most commonly brought on by running. Additionally, sudden stops or turns can cause a strain or a tear of

the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) of the knee. A tear is usually heralded by a popping sound. Patellofemoral also causes knee pain but it results from repetitive movement of your kneecap against your thigh bone. Iliotibial band syndrome is the cause of lateral knee pain common in long distance runners and cyclists. Tennis elbow (epicondylitis) usually presents as pain on the outside of your elbow into your forearm and wrist with pain also occurring when you extend your wrist.

Most sports injuries are mild or moderate and can be treated with the *PRICE* therapy method.

P – Protect from further injury by using splints, pads, or crutches if necessary.

R – Restrict activity.

I – Ice the injury immediately after it occurs. Use ice for 20 minutes every one to two hours for the first 48 hours after the injury.

C – Compression- applying compression with an elastic bandage will reduce swelling.

E – Elevate the injured area to reduce swelling.

Seek medical attention if you suspect a serious injury. Signs of serious injury include deformities in the bone or joint, excessive swelling, changes in skin color beyond mild bruising, inability to bear weight on the limb without it giving way, or no signs of improvements after a few days of *PRICE* therapy.

Supplementing a sedentary week with highly physical activity on the weekend is tempting. Just remember, the drastic change of physical stress on you body can come with a hefty *PRICE* tag. If you have questions about sports medicine or if you are interested in scheduling an appointment with an orthopedic specialist, contact Healthnetwork.

One Call Starts It All: 440-893-0830, 866-968-2467
or email help@healthnetworkfoundation.org

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