

# Exercise is medicine: take it properly

The following column discusses various aspects of getting in shape for spring. It is written by Dr. Ronald S. Cirone, an emergency physician at Kingswood Urgent Medical Center in Bloomfield Hills. He has been practicing emergency medicine in the great Detroit area for eight years.

Exercise is America's favorite pastime and spring is a time when many try to reacquaint themselves with a favorite sport or trim down to fit into last year's bathing suit.

Whatever reason, do it wisely and you can reap the benefits without undue pain and suffering. If done properly, regular exercise will increase muscle strength, help you lose weight, increase your breathing capacity, increase your heart strength, lower your cholesterol level, and decrease the likelihood of developing osteoporosis. It also improves sleeping habits, gives you a better psychological outlook, reduces stress and tension, and increases energy.

## PREPARATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS:

- Get medical clearance if necessary. Anyone over 35 and sedentary should consult a physician, as should anyone with past heart problems or several risk factors (i.e. smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol etc.).

- Use proper gear and clothing. Wear the correct type of shoes; clothing should be non-restrictive and comfortable. As you complete a workout, cover up and cool down gradually.

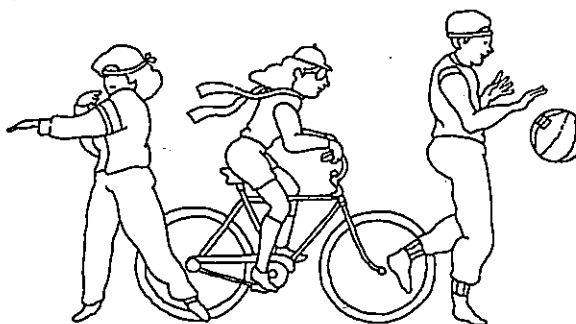
- Stretch out and warm up all the necessary muscle groups before you start to work out. Do not bounce; this creates sudden tensions and can be injurious to muscles.

- Know your limitations. Miracles don't happen overnight; even experienced athletes should be aware of overexertion. Be attuned to your body; it will be the best gauge of your limitations. Don't try to "keep up" with others when your body says "slow down."

- Know your training heart rate (70 percent of your maximal heart rate), learn to take your pulse, and try to maintain this rate for about 20-30 minutes during the peak of your exercise. This rate is calculated by subtracting your age from 220 and multiplying by 70 percent. Thus, the training heart rate for a 40-year-old person is  $(220-40) \times 70$  percent equal 126.

- Cool down gradually. Don't stop exercising instantly. Let your heart rate slowly come back to normal.

- Rest. Ideally you should work out every other day, three times a week. This gives your body a day to recuperate.



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