‘Weekend Warriors’ of Fitness

“Demanding jobs and busy lifestyles leave only large blocks of time to exercise on the weekends, making the ‘weekend warrior syndrome’ a hard one to avoid,” says Cathy Moxley, M.A., a wellness coach and personal trainer. “The problem is people who play 18 holes of golf or three sets of tennis on a Saturday without doing any exercise throughout the week run a higher risk for joint and muscle injuries than folks who squeeze in two or three midweek workouts as well.”

With a little planning, you can reduce your risk for pain and improve your overall fitness. You won’t have to give up your Saturday softball game or long Sunday bike ride.

Before and After

“Always warm up before and cool down after working out or playing a sport,” Moxley says.

A basic warm-up should include at least five minutes of walking or light jogging. Follow that with sport-specific stretches to loosen up the muscles you’ll be using for your sport.

“Just remember, cold muscles don’t like being called into action suddenly and are more likely to be pulled or torn if they are,” Moxley says.

Variety of Exercise

Cross-train by doing various types of exercise during the week. By not working the same muscle groups continuously, you can improve your all-around fitness and prevent overuse injuries.

Expert Advice

One way to prevent injuries is to schedule a few sessions with a personal trainer. A trainer can give you a short but specific set of stretches and strength-training exercises you can do several times during the week. These quick, extra workouts can prep your muscles for your weekend activities. They help you maintain your strength and flexibility for all of your daily activities, including yard work and running for the bus.

“The fact is, most weekend warriors can avoid many of their injuries, aches and pains by committing to a brief 15 to 20 minute stretch and strengthening session every other day,” says Moxley. “Doing so will create a muscle memory that will boost performance and have a protective effect.”

Fitness Tips for Weekend Warriors, Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Hey ‘Mister!’

Unless you’re using measuring cups and spoons, it’s hard to get a handle on the dashes and drizzles from a vinegar bottle. RealAge has the solution: use a mister. You can purchase a see-through bottle so you know what is in it and how much, along with a screen filter so it doesn’t clog. Great for a variety of vinegars, or even for olive oils and dressings. Spray away!

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Don’t Hurt Yourself Wearing Wellness Shoes

Wellness shoes, sometimes referred to as toning shoes or shaping shoes, are raking in millions for shoe companies. But are they actually firming thighs and buttocks, and making people fitter as promised? The answer is yes and no. And what you don’t know about them could leave you in a lot of pain, physically and financially.

Do they work?

According to podiatrist Jeffrey Ross, MD, spokesman for the American College of Sports Medicine and assistant clinical professor at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, the answer is yes-sometimes. “They work, but what you have to remember, because they have a rocker bottom and negative heel (lower than the toe), if you have a tight heel cord or Achilles tendon, it can put tremendous strain on muscles,” Explains Dr. Ross, “You have to be really flexible, or do stretching, when you wear these types of shoes.” He also warns that people would take care to avoid the infomercial knockoffs that are springing up, since there’s virtually no research on their effectiveness. Many wellness shoes, such as those made by MBT, are known as rocker-style shoes because the negative heel and curved bottom results in a gait that, the companies claim, improves posture and creates a natural instability that forces your buttocks and thighs to work harder.

You can save money and tone your backside without special footwear by incorporating balancing exercises into your day. If you are dead-set on buying wellness shoes, be sure that you incorporate daily stretching into your life, or you’re likely to be sidelined with pulled muscles rather than rocker-walking your way to firmer thighs.

Lea Zerbe, Rodale News

Bulletin Board – tip of the month

Rinse canned vegetables to remove the salt.

Lemon-Balsamic Vinaigrette

Perfect with salad, pasta salad, or as a light marinade for fish or chicken.

Ingredients:
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon fresh-ground pepper
1 clove garlic, crushed
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Directions:
To make the dressing combine lemon juice, vinegar, salt, pepper and garlic in a medium bowl. Whisking constantly, add the oil in a thin stream. Remove the garlic and serve or store refrigerated for up to 1 week. Yields ¾ Cup

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