



Physiotherapists:
The Body Specialists

Physio Tips

**GETTING
FIT**

Physiotherapy Association of BC

Physiotherapy Advice for Fitness Fans!

Enthusiasts are in a big hurry to get trim and they don't always take the time to make sure they are exercising properly. Fitness is a journey and not a destination. Working out and expecting to look better than last year in two or three weeks is unrealistic, and can lead to overtraining, burnout, and/or injury.

Physiotherapists recommend these fitness tips to reduce the risk injury:

- Start slowly if you've been sedentary or if you are trying something new. Doing too much too soon can increase your risk of injury;
- Be realistic when setting your goals;
- Exercise does not have to be done at the gym. It can be a "lifestyle" activity such as going for a brisk walk or hike, gardening, or using the stairs;
- Choose an exercise activity that you enjoy. Avoid obsessing over which exercise burns the most calories. The one you like doing is the one you'll stick with;
- Your fitness program is a gradual process, not a crash course. A minimum of 30 – 60 minutes of daily activity interspersed throughout the day, will achieve and maintain mobility and develop a healthier physique;
- When you are ready for a total fitness program it should include aerobic conditioning, muscle strengthening, and flexibility training on most days of the week;
- When you are ready to increase your activity, start with 10%, and don't add more than 2 or 3 exercises in one session.
- Warming up before exercising and cooling down afterward will help to prevent injury, especially as your exercise program becomes more vigorous;
- If you are overweight, consider beginning with low-impact activities such as swimming, cycling, or walking. These activities put less strain on joints. Consult a physiotherapist for a therapeutic exercise program.

- If you are in an exercise program and not losing weight, don't get discouraged. There are other health-related benefits associated with physical activity even when weight loss does not occur;
- If you are fatigued, lower your intensity regardless of whether or not you are fit. Listen to your body – it will tell you if you are working too hard.
- A monitored program may begin with non-weight-bearing exercise, such as swimming or cycling, to minimize the impact on joints. It will also include stretching to increase flexibility, and education about injury prevention.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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