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## Proper training helps keep the “spring” in your step

*By Mark J. Triffon, M.D.*

After an unusually cold winter, most people are itching to get outdoors and start shedding those winter blahs and the extra pounds that came with them. Sports medicine experts urge athletes and active adults not to work their bodies too hard or too fast.

Whether you are a professional athlete or just trying to stay in shape, remembering the fundamentals of proper training will not only improve athletic performance, but also prevent injury.

Consider these helpful training tips as you recommit to be fit this spring:

- Warm up with 10-15 minutes of stretching and flexibility exercises. Most injuries result from inadequate warm ups and improper technique.
- Return to running programs gradually. Begin walking and then introduce short running intervals.
- Adopt a balance of strength, flexibility, speed and agility exercises to increase your strength and endurance.
- Beware of boredom – the most common culprit of failed exercise programs. Rotating your routine enhances performance and keeps you on track.
- Don't be a weekend warrior. Exercising daily is less stressful on the body and offers better results than weekend “binge exercising.”
- Use good judgment if exercising through soreness. If pain is significant or does not resolve after 48 hours, contact your physician before jumping back in.
- Review eating and social habits. Fuel your body with healthy meals and plenty of water before and after workouts.
- Cool down, stretch and ice sore spots to enhance your performance.
- Exercise with a partner, and have fun!

Remember to consult your physician before starting any exercise program, especially if you have a medical condition. For more information about proper training techniques, seek guidance from a sports medicine physician or athletic trainer.

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