



Weekend Warrior Syndrome

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Now that spring is here it is time to shake the dust off of your bikes, softball gloves/bats, tennis rackets and golf clubs in preparation for the new season. For many of you, the one day a week spent playing tennis, league softball, golfing, etc. will be the only exercise you receive all week. If you happen to fall into this category you can put yourself into the weekend warrior category whether your day to exercise falls during the week or on the weekend.

These activities, though not necessarily aerobically challenging, do require strenuous effort. If this is the only exercise you receive all week, then you are significantly increasing your risk of developing sports-related injuries and overuse strain injuries such as: hamstring/groin pulls, ankle sprains, shoulder strains and plantar fasciitis (to name a few). If you decide to continue playing through these injuries, they can continue to worsen to the point that you will have to discontinue your desired activity.

Prevention is always easier than recovering from an existing injury. There are some simple steps that you can take to reduce the risk of developing sports-related injuries.

- ✓ First, you should always warm-up before and cool-down after exercising: walking or jogging for 5 minutes and performing stretches specific to your sporting activity will help prepare your muscles for the demands of your sport. Trunk rotations are a good exercise to perform prior to golfing and batting in softball.
- ✓ Cross-training: try exercising an additional 2-3+ times a week performing different activities to avoid working the same muscle groups in the same way every time you exercise. (e.g. swimming, Pilates, aerobics, biking). By doing this you can improve your all-around fitness and avoid overuse injuries.
- ✓ Proper rest will help improve your performance and reduce your risk of injury. If you are overly fatigued, your muscles will not respond as well to strenuous activity and will be more susceptible to injury.
- ✓ Proper hydration is also very important in preventing injury and improving your performance. This is especially important when participating in activities of long duration (e.g. golfing 18 holes, tennis, long runs or bike rides). Dehydration can lead to muscle cramping and injury.

If you have questions about starting an exercise program or progressing your activity level, you should consult an exercise professional (e.g. personal trainer, athletic trainer, or physical therapist).