

Steppin Out

Is the Okanagan sunshine beckoning you out of doors? Sunny days are one of the best motivators of physical activity. Now is a good time to get ready for the wonderful outdoor activities the Okanagan will be serving up all summer long. Runners and cyclists are on the streets and as the fields dry out they too will be filled with recreational athletes working on getting 'in shape' for the up and coming leagues and summer sports.

Beware Hibernators

If you have been in hibernation this past winter, spring can often bring with it aches, strains and pains as you try to get yourself in outdoor shape. It is not uncommon to find those inspired by sunshine pushing too much too soon and too fast. The result—injury! Starting early and progressing gradually is the way to avoid set backs and ensure you stay injury free all summer long. This is also true for you treadmill trekkers who now want to feel the wind on your back. The outdoor terrain can cause you possible grief, so head this advice.

Hit the roads

Walking or jogging for fitness requires only your running shoes. However, not just any shoes will do if you think you will use this mode to 'get into shape'. Proper footwear is key in preventing common foot, knee and hip injuries. Seek a reputable retailer who will set you up in the shoe that is appropriate for your specific needs. Good footwear will do you no justice if you go from doing very little to daily jogging. Start with two or three days of walking or jogging for 20 to 40 minutes. Increase your time no more than 10 percent every couple of weeks. Your body needs to adapt to this new demand. Simply walking, if done, in excess can cause ailments. Persistence and patience will bring you success and if you start now you should be ready to tackle the local races set for June.

Cycling

One of my favourite activities; however although it has the potential to be more forgiving than running because it is not an impact sport, too much time in the saddle too early in the season is a sure fire way to having you sitting back in the recliner. Tune the bike, assess the saddle height and bars and make a plan to keep progressively increase your riding time. If you have not been on your ride since last October, keep your time under an hour, travel flat terrain and get on your bike alternate days. Gradually increase either the length of the rides or the number of days but not both at the same time. Shorter rides more frequently will have you enjoying your workouts and help motivate you to increase the challenge in the rides as you adapt to the cardio and muscular work and.....the adjustment to the saddle!

Tennis anyone?

This sport often comes with tennis elbow, sprained ankles, shoulders and backs. Sound familiar? Like any sport that has been dormant for months, preparing the muscles before the games begin will keep you injury free. Easy rallying and light serving should be the majority of your play in the early weeks of the tennis season. Aswell, building some upper body strength in the weight room and some interval sprinting on your jogs will help get you to the ball without straining your groin. Pre season preparation allows you to have fun and go the distance when the friendly competition starts.

Ski to Sea

This exhausting yearly event is always a reminder that it is time to trade in our snow skis for water skis or wakeboards. Many skiers do not realize that water skiing is one of the most challenging water sports your body will undertake. Interesting that the skis get checked out, the boat gets a tune up, even the rope is inspected for wear. Unfortunately the body is left neglected and far too often ends up with a tear, a break or a blown gasket. Many are under the impression that upper body prep will see them through the season. However, a full body-conditioning program is best to ensure the trunk and legs can handle the demands of the sport.

When you do come across a nagging pain or full-blown injury, stop assess, repair and restart with a new plan. Finally, exercise makes all these fun things better. Get in shape and stay in shape to play and you'll be having fun all summer long.

If you are inspired to take your workout to the outdoors, register for Team Fitness Learn To Run Clinic, Weekend Warrior, Spring Yoga Group Programs. You will soon be setting new goals and feel levels of motivation you never thought you would possess.

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