

Get excited about preparing your body for activity this summer!

As winter winds down and that first hint of warm weather hits, many of us have the same reaction. The reality of realising it's time to ditch the layers and see what's happened to our bodies in the last few months. Don't panic! There's still time to get in shape, not just to look good, but to tackle all those warm-weather activities you'll be doing.

Gym training

Strength training is a crucial factor in losing fat. Not only does it make your body and bones stronger, it also helps to raise your metabolism so you burn more calories all day long.

Strength training is also important for getting your body ready for summer activities like gardening, swimming, golfing, tennis, hiking, bike riding or any number of things we often don't do in the winter. If you haven't been exercising this winter, you set yourself up for injury when you jump into summer sports with little preparation. Even a simple total body workout twice a week can help you get strong, even better is a sports-specific program.

Our physiotherapists can assist you by designing an appropriate exercise regime, giving advice on your gym program, and by educating and supervising you at the appropriate levels for your individual needs.

Cardio

Cardio, like weight training, is crucial for losing fat as well as building endurance and making your heart strong for summertime activities. Choose activities you enjoy and make sure you get your heart rate up. If you are unsure as to an appropriate heart rate, ask your physiotherapist.

If you're just getting started, make it easier on yourself by:

- 1. Scheduling your workouts:** Treat them like any important appointment
- 2. Keeping track of your workouts:** Knowing you have to write them down is added motivation
- 3. Finding someone to workout with:** You'll be more likely to show up
- 4. Start at your level:** Don't start too hard too early. Ease into exercise and allow your body time to get into shape
- 5. Not giving up:** You may fall off the wagon. If that happens, don't waste energy kicking yourself. Just get back to your routine and know it happens to all of us
- 6. Doing things you enjoy:** There's no reason you have to do activities you hate, so find cardio exercises that are accessible and enjoyable for you

How can our physiotherapists help?

We can recommend exercises that are designed specifically for you to achieve your desired level of fitness. The more you repeat and become aware of an activity, the easier it becomes. Our practice looks at types of exercises/activities, specific workloads, durations of activities/sessions and intensity guidelines and can devise a plan to help you achieve your target fitness level, and get your body ready for activity this summer!

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Preventing Sport Injuries

Sport is a vital part of the Australian lifestyle - it promotes good health, stress relief and is fun. Sometimes injuries may occur through sport, but fortunately most injuries can be effectively treated by your physiotherapist. Physiotherapy treatment will enable you to return safely to your sporting activity more quickly than just 'rest and see what happens'. Your physiotherapist can also provide advice to prevent sporting injuries.

Most sporting injuries are a result of a direct blow (bruise or contusion) or an indirect force like a twist (sprains, strains, tears). Some injuries are due to over-use stresses (tendinitis, stress fractures).

One of the main things you can do to prevent yourself from getting any injuries is to warm up before you start playing the game. It is not a good idea to start exercising, or playing the game without warming up first. Warming up is very important because it helps get your body ready for activity. Warm ups include doing things such as taking a light jog to get loosened up and perhaps actively stretching important muscle groups. Warming up prepares your muscles for exercise and increases your blood flow and muscle temperature. That way, your body is ready to go; and it is less likely to get hurt.

Getting back into action

If you are really into sports, it might be tempting for you to jump right back into activity even after an injury. Playing if you are hurt or before an injury is fully healed is a bad idea. It can lead to an even worse injury, which will keep you from being active for even longer.

Before you can safely return to your sport it is essential to regain strength, mobility, balance and co-ordination. Your physiotherapist will assess these areas and show you how to improve them.

The physiotherapists in this practice are highly qualified and trained in the assessment and treatment of sports injuries. As they have comprehensive knowledge of biomechanics, tissue injury and healing, many physiotherapists are appointed to sports teams to monitor the rehabilitation of injured players and assist with preventing injuries.

How can you minimise injury?

- **Correct** warm up and warm down procedures.
- **Protective** strapping or bracing.
- **Correct** footwear and sporting equipment.
- **Specific** conditioning for your particular sport.
- **Good aerobic** fitness.
- **Good muscle** control and reactions.

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