



Eastern Sports & Spinal Care

'Performance Focused Physio'

Are You the Weekend Warrior?

You shouldn't be because it can damage your body!

Many of us have grown up with an appreciation for professional athletes and the way they play the game which has inspired us to take part in some form. Unfortunately, unlike these supreme athletes who spend hours every day fine tuning their bodies, we are often stuck behind a desk and very rarely move from it, let alone stretch and move about.

So rather than be the Weekend Warrior and damage your body in the social setting we suggest you follow these 5 simple steps to help improve your chance of success and reduce the chance of injury.

Generous warm up

When muscles are cold, they are less extensible which means that they are more resistive to stretch. In situations where the body is required to stretch beyond the muscle limit, the muscle can tear. This can be prevented by an adequate warm up. Here is a basic warm up program that takes approximately 10 mins. Start by jogging slowly one lap around the perimeter of your sporting pitch (this is a good indication of the warm up required for your sport as the pitch perimeter is relative to the distance covered in the sport).

On the second lap around the pitch incorporate some short sprints by sprinting a quarter of the pitch then jogging a quarter, sprint a quarter and jogging a quarter.

Follow this by slow jogging one more lap of the pitch.

It is also important to practise some specific aspects of the game, whether that is passing the ball between players, goal practice or defence work for 5mins.



Hydration Is Essential

Hydration begins prior to the game even starting. The best fluid to drink is water. Remember that caffeine drinks (tea, coffee, energy drinks) and alcohol are dehydrators so if you have had any prior to sport you need to compensate by having two glasses(250mL) of water for each dehydrating drink drunk.

Ensure that you have plenty of water available to drink for the game and drink during the game even if you don't feel thirsty. The thirst reflex kicks in after you are already dehydrated, which means by the time you feel thirsty it's already too late. Continue to drink following the game to replenish your water stores that will have been depleted from your sweat glands during the game. During strenuous exercise you can lose up to 2L of water via sweat.



A little water can go a long way!

Use Protection

Use recommended protective equipment and equipment correctly fitted to you and appropriate to the sport. Protective equipment is there for a reason, so if your sport includes these, use them. For example if you play squash, ensure you wear protective eye wear, if you play soccer, wear shin guards. As important, is that your gear is sized and appropriate for you, don't attempt to use your sister's hockey stick that is too short for you or wear skate shoes to play football. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail!

Being fit for the sport

Don't be a weekend warrior! This means don't expect to go out hard once a week for your sport but do nothing for the rest of the week. Injury is more likely to occur when you are unfit for your sport. Remember that sports require multiple aspects of fitness, these include endurance running versus short sprints, balance, strength and power and it is important to practice all of these.

Stretching following sport

There is evidence to suggest that stretching prior to sport can cause microtears in the muscle making your muscles more vulnerable to injury during the game. However, stretching following sport, when the muscles are warm, can lead to flexibility increases and help prevent delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS). It is important that you stretch the main muscle groups used in your sport and that you maintain each stretch for 30seconds to one minute for the stretches to be effective.

Disclaimer: This resource is designed to support physiotherapy management at Eastern Sports and Spinal Care as it is a guide only. This is for personal use only since this resource may not be applicable to your condition and we do not guarantee its success in your rehabilitation. We strongly encourage you to consult a health professional for accurate diagnosis and management