



# General Exercise Safety

## Did You Know?

Stretching should be done after the muscles have already been warmed up. If you stretch when the muscles are cold it's both less effective *and* potentially harmful.

Being physically active and exercising have many health benefits, but taking proper precautions to stay safe is important. Follow these tips to prevent injury and have the best experience being active!

- **Use equipment properly.** Most gyms will include instructions on how to use their equipment, but if you are using equipment at home, be sure that you read the manufactures instructions. Using equipment for other purposes than intended or in the wrong way may cause injury.
- **Hydrate.** Staying hydrated is important all the time, but is especially important to fuel physical activity and exercise. Drink fluids before, during, and after activity to ensure proper hydration.
- **Start off slow.** Whether you're exercising for the first time or have been for many years, it is always important to start off slowly and build up to your goals. Consult your physician if you have concerns.
- **Warm up and cool down.** Doing a brief warm up and cool down can help prevent injury and enhance exercise. For example, warming up before a jog could be a brisk 5 to 10 minute walk, and cooling down after a jog could be a slow 5 to 10 minute walk.
- **Be careful in hot and cold weather.** Exercise can be dangerous in both hot and cold temperatures, so it is important to take safety precautions. In the heat, be sure that you're properly hydrated, wearing the right clothing, and avoid intense aerobic activity to prevent heat stroke. In cold weather, wear appropriately warm clothing for the activity, and be careful on ice to prevent injuries.
- **Rest.** Be sure to get adequate rest. This will help prevent injury and keep you feeling healthy and happy!
- **Know when to stop.** Knowing the warning signs is important when exercising. Dizziness, shortness of breath, and pain are all signs to stop. Be aware of your limits and don't hesitate to quit when necessary.

Following these tips and knowing your body will help you have the best and safest exercise experience possible.