

10 Ways to Prevent Exercise Injuries

1. Have a Clear Exercise Plan

- Most injuries are caused by unrealistic goals and poor planning. If you haven't run more than a mile in the last 6 months, maybe a marathon is not a realistic short-term goal. Try a 7-week plan toward that 5k instead.

2. Start slow and build slow

- Most injuries occur because of inadequate joint stability or muscle flexibility. Start w/ a beginners aerobics class and stay in it for at least 2 weeks longer than you think you can progress to the intermediate class.

3. Have a workout partner or group

- Usually a partner or group will support your common sense. Try to pick partners that have similar fitness levels to yourself, and don't be too spontaneous.

4. Start w/ Form, then move to Strength

- Before jumping into a cross-fit routine (carrying tires, squatting w/ weights, etc) invest in a preliminary class to learn proper form. Your body will thank you!

5. Stay away from Machines

- Use your whole body. Our bodies were not designed to sit while we push and pull weights. These often result in a weak "core" and create many imbalances in the body. Stick to complex movements that involve the core.

6. Remember that Muscle builds faster than Joints

- Honor your joints! The stronger the muscles, the more stress on our joints. We have to give our joints time to catch up to the new demands placed on them. Tip: increase your resistance by only 10% per week to prevent tendon or ligament damage.

7. Take Care of Past Injuries

- An old injury is usually more likely to re-injure if not properly corrected and rehabilitated. The weakness remains years after the pain "goes away."

8. Don't Ignore Pain

- Pain is the body's natural way of telling us something is wrong. "Normal" muscle soreness is common with exercise, however joint pain is not "normal" and is a clear sign that something needs to be fixed.

9. Don't Forget to Rest

- Many injuries occur due to a lack of rest. Give at least one day of rest from exercise to allow your body to rest and recover and repair.

10. Maintain Body Balance

- Body imbalance will cause abnormal stress and strain in the entire body, setting you up for chronic injury. The neck, shoulder girdles, spine, and hips and knees all develop increased stress and are more prone to injury when misaligned. Start your exercise program by getting checked for Body Imbalance with a NUCCA doctor. You will be glad you did!

Dr Giancarlo Licata, D.C. specializes in Chronic Pain, Injury Recovery and Performance in Arcadia, CA. He is one of only 250 doctors specialized in NUCCA Spinal Care. You can learn more at www.licataclinic.com