

personaltrainer

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Feel the burn – even when injured

Cross training will allow you to continue exercising after being hurt

IF YOU move, sadly at some point you will get injured. Whether you are a competitive athlete or someone who exercises just to stay fit, injury will surely interrupt your routine at some point. If you are a newbie a sudden injury may make you want to throw in the towel because “exercise is too dangerous, I’m better off on the couch”. And if you are a fitness fanatic an injury can cause a lot of stress, exercise can be addictive and when you miss your fix you start to feel irritable and frustrated.

When you get injured it is vital to know what to do and how to maintain fitness while you’re out of action.

The good news is there is no reason why you have to stop exercise completely; you can still exercise while recovering, maintain your fitness level and enhance healing at the same time.

It is essential, however, that whatever mode of exercise you choose is pain free.

The key to a fit, safe and active rehabilitation period is cross training. This simply means adapting your workout so that you use different muscles than those that are injured.

Even if one body part or joint is immobilised, there’s usually no reason that you can’t use other muscles to stay fit while recovering. Be sure to get clearance from your physio of course before you do any sort of exercise.

When you get injured it can be a real let-down, especially if you enjoy

being active. First things first, try to be as positive as possible. Injury can actually force you out of your comfort zone which sounds scary but is in fact a good thing.

Many of us have the same exercise routine and rarely sway from this. We go to the gym at the same time for the same duration and more than likely we train the same muscles.

When you do the same thing day in, day out, you are conditioning the same area of your body. After a while of doing the same movements over and over, your body becomes extremely efficient at those particular movements. But it limits your overall fitness. Eventually you may stop seeing any improvement in your fitness levels, shape and/or ability.

Change it up, do something else. Injury forces you to do this. Whether you got your injury from running or yoga it is always good to try new forms of exercise. When you do this, you are still working out but you are probably challenging the body more than normal as you are using muscles that may have been resting all this time.

Performing different activities requires you to use your muscles in different ways. For example, if you play a lot of “start, stop” sports like basketball try doing a steadier cardiovascular workout like a spinning class or jogging.

If you already do a lot of cardio try doing a couple of circuit classes or a Pilates class each week which focuses less on cardiovascular activity and



more on toning and stretching. You’ll be surprised at how you can still work out while injured and still feel the burn.

Cross training is also so good for you because it varies the areas of your body that you place stress on when you do your usual workout or play your specific sport which can actually reduce risk of injury from repetitive strain or overuse.

Cross training is great not only for injury but for the following reasons also:

- It reduces boredom.
- You gain a higher level of overall fitness.
- It conditions more areas of your body.
- It improves a variety of skills such as agility and balance which are useful in every day life and not just in the gym.
- It reduces your risk of injury.
- It allows you to actively recover; you are resting some muscles while others work.
- Cross training will allow you to train while injured.

The most important thing to remember when you are injured is that time heals so give yourself enough time to fully recover.

If you try to come back from an injury too quickly you risk developing a secondary injury trying to make up for lost time or by compensating for the injured area by overusing other muscles.

Always be careful of using poor technique. If you are starting something new, be sure to get help from fitness professional.

Starting any new exercise requires proper instruction. Without this you can do more damage than good. Learn the proper techniques and develop good form right from the start.

Irish Independent
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