

THE WEEKEND WARRIOR

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AS WE AGE there is an unfortunate decline in our musculo-skeletal durability. Not only do we seem to fatigue faster but there is also an increase in athletic recovery time. Instead of feeling rejuvenated after a weekend of sports and fitness, Monday mornings often leave us feeling punished. Is there a solution?

While there is probably no way to prevent all joint and muscle soreness after every activity, a well regimented exercise program with emphasis on cross training and core strengthening may help improve performance, reduce recovery time and prevent pain and injury. The health benefits of regular exercise at any age on physical and mental health continue to be realized. Exercise is an integral component of any weight loss and maintenance program, improves cardiovascular health, reduces stress, increases mental awareness and cognition, reduces fatigue, and prevents osteoporosis and multiple medical conditions such as diabetes. A consistent exercise program is the foundation of injury prevention and physical well being.

So why doesn't everyone do it? The evidence is compelling, but there is no quick fix. What is regular exercise? There are many definitions, but generally it is between 30-60 minutes of aerobic and anaerobic exercise 3-5 days per week. That is a lot of time especially with today's busy schedules. One needs to make a commitment and start slowly with a gradual increase in frequency and intensity of your work outs. For working moms and dads, try working out in the mornings before work. At-home moms should schedule time while the children are at school or choose a club with day care. If you have never used a gym, work with a personal trainer or ask someone at the facility to help show you the equipment and plan a routine. If you are training for a particular sport ask a staff member for assistance in a planning sport-specific program. The goal is to improve your fitness and durability so you can enjoy your weekend activities and awake on Monday feeling happy and healthy.

As always be safe. No your limits and if you have a pre-existing medical condition you should see your internist before starting any sport or exercise program. ■



WHAT IS SPORTS MEDICINE?



AS OUR KNOWLEDGE of orthopaedics has advanced the field has become more and more subspecialized with orthopaedic surgeons dedicating themselves to specific areas of interest. By doing so, they can deliver modern, state of the art treatment to their patients. Within orthopaedics there are 8 specialties including Hip and Knee Replacement, Pediatric Surgery, Hand Surgery, Trauma Surgery, Foot and Ankle Surgery, Tumor Surgery, Spine Surgery and Sport Medicine which includes primarily arthroscopic surgery of the knee and shoulder.

A Sports Medicine physician generally treats sports related conditions occurring in team and recreational athletes of all ages and all levels. This not only involves caring for acute and chronic injuries, but also focuses on injury prevention and organization of team athletic care consisting of the athletic departments, coaches and athletic trainers. Injury prevention focuses on the preseason physical examination, sport specific training and conditioning, protective equipment and professional supervision. Many sports related injuries do not require operative care and are treated with rest and rehabilitation designed to meet the needs of the individual athlete. For example, the in season varsity soccer player has different recovery goals than the recreational athlete and treatment is tailored accordingly.

Unfortunately, some injuries such as knee meniscal or ligament tears, shoulder tendon and labral tears, and elbow ligament tears require surgery to restore function. The goal of sports medicine surgeries is to return the athlete to their pre injury level of play and this is often successful. Sports medicine specialists are experts in arthroscopic surgery of the knee, shoulder, elbow and hip as well as in ligamentous reconstruction and shoulder and knee replacement surgery.

At Danbury Orthopaedics, our fellowship trained Sports Medicine Team includes Dr. Michael Brand, Dr. Craig Foster and Dr. Ross Henshaw, physician assistants, physical therapists and athletic trainers. This comprehensive team provides supervised medical care for The Danbury Trashers, Western Connecticut State University, Danbury High School, Ridgefield High School, Immaculate High School, and Newtown High School.

Our team has specialty training in cartilage preservation techniques including cartilage and meniscal transplantation in the knee, complex knee and elbow ligament reconstruction, and hip arthroscopy. We perform the most arthroscopic rotator cuff surgery in the region and treat complex shoulder cartilage and ligament reconstruction with minimally traumatic arthroscopic techniques. We perform the largest number of total shoulder replacements in Connecticut under the direction of Dr. Foster, a nationally recognized shoulder expert. Hip arthroscopy is a new technique that allows us to successfully treat cartilage injuries young patients without arthritis. Working together these skill sets deliver comprehensive and expert care to the regions athletic population young and old. ■