

# Stay Injury Free This Spring!



It's finally looking like spring in Chicago, and that means it is time to dust off the running shoes, tennis rackets, golf clubs, bikes or whatever equipment your favorite sport requires. Jumping back into your favorite sport on that first beautiful day can also bring on a sports injury. Follow these tips to ensure an injury free spring and summer!

- **Stretching:** before you start on any activity make sure you have taken the time to stretch. Visit our Moves of the Month page for some great ideas for stretching.
- **Warm-up:** take some extra time before you get started to do a proper warm-up. Warming up gradually revs up your heart rate and increases blood flow to your muscles. Choose a warm-up activity that uses the same muscles you will be using during your work-out. Walk or slowly jog before you begin to run. Bike at a moderate pace before you begin a harder ride. Take the time for some practice swings with the golf club or tennis racket.
- **Build up slowly:** unless you have been training indoors during the winter for your favorite sport, you will need to build up slowly. A lot of the injuries that we see happen when people overdo it on their first day out. You need to rebuild muscle strength and endurance so that strains and tears aren't caused from overuse or being unprepared.
- **Weight training:** regular weight training is a great way to stay injury free. A weight training routine can be designed to target and strengthen the specific muscles used in whatever activity or sport you participate in.
- **Fuel and hydrate:** proper nutrition and hydration are crucial for preventing injuries. Remember to drink lots of fluids and properly fuel the body before, during, and after your work-out.

- Check your equipment: before you head out check to make sure that all of your equipment is in good working condition.

Now get out there and enjoy some beautiful spring weather after another long Chicago winter!