



## Tips for Starting That New Exercise Program...Again!

As we begin another year, many people will make the resolution of a better year of fitness...and maybe you are one of them. Whether you are new to exercise, returning from a hiatus, or trying to ramp your program up to a new level, there are some important things to remember.

- 1) **Don't try to make up for lost time:** Whether it's been a few weeks, a few months or a few years since you last exercised, don't try to get back your fitness in your first workout. Overdoing it in the beginning is one of the top reasons people will fail in a new program. The delayed onset muscle soreness most people get can be pretty discouraging. Being so sore that it hurts to get up from a chair or bend to tie your shoes isn't the way to go. Ease back into things for the first few weeks to allow your body to adjust to the new demands and you will have a much better chance of sticking with your new program.
- 2) **Set short term and long term goals:** Goals don't have to be measured in pounds and inches in the beginning, but you should start with some simple fitness goals. If it's been years since you could run a full mile, or squat your body weight, use those as simple motivation to keep you going. When you start (or return) to your program, don't expect drastic results. Set simple attainable fitness goals and the reshaping of your body will take care of itself.
- 3) **Feed your fire:** Your body will need fuel to for fitness. Starting an exercise program in combination with a crazy diet is almost never a good idea...and forget about starving yourself! Without food you will not have the right energy to perform, your metabolism will slow down and you'll end up reversing all the benefits. If you aren't sure what to eat, consult a dietician for a session or two and get yourself going in the right direction.
- 4) **Sometimes doing an exercise wrong is worse than not exercising at all.** Doing even the simplest of exercises (push-ups, sit-ups, squats and lunges) incorrectly can lead to injuries. Taking it to the next level and jumping into a high level CrossFit or intense yoga class can be even worse. Take the time to learn proper form with your exercises. Using a full, controlled range of motion for exercise is better for you and puts you at a much less risk for injury. When in doubt, see your physical therapist for tips. At Blue Hills Sports & Spine we are experts on motion.
- 5) **Fitness is a marathon, not a sprint.** No one gets fit overnight...or in two weeks. To make real changes in your level of fitness, think in quarters of a year. In three months of consistent exercise you should start to realize some of your fitness goals...but still not all of them. Exercise should be like brushing your teeth. Something that you do daily and sometimes multiple times daily to stay healthy.
- 6) **Ice is your friend.** Don't discount the power of ice when you start your new program or add some new exercises. If you are working out, injuries will occur. Reducing inflammation as quickly as you can goes a long way in keeping you exercising and there is still no better remedy than a good cold pack. Before you invest in that \$500 fitness tracking device, pick up a couple \$30 cold packs to keep in your freezer...you will be glad you did.

There is no shortage of advice on exercise and fitness, but following the tips above as you begin your journey toward better health in 2017 should be a good place to start. Also remember that should you find that you are having pain, stiffness, weakness or have an injury (old or new) that is stopping you in your tracks, the experts at Blue Hills Sports & Spine are here to help.