

# Boomers beware

Boomers are now age 50 and older. And they are getting lots of injuries to backs, knees, hips, ligaments and tendons (the structures that attach muscles to bones).

Regular exercise is critical for maintaining and improving bone and muscle strength. And yet if not done properly, exercise can result in pain and injury, sprains and strains. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons offers the following exercise safety advice for anyone older than 50:

**Warm up and stretch.** Walking, bending, jumping jacks, and running in place before exercise gets and keeps the circulatory system moving and helps prevent injury. Stretching can be done before or after a workout.

**Exercise consistently.** Don't be a weekend warrior. Try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.

**Take lessons.** Consider taking lessons for the sport you love. Whether you're new to a sport or have been taking part in it a long-time, proper form and instruction reduce the chance of an overuse injury like tendonitis or stress fractures.

**Wear the proper equipment.** Select the proper gear and shoes for your sport.

**Listen to your body.** As you age, you may find that you are not as flexible as you once were, or that you cannot tolerate the same types of activities. If so, modify your exercise routine to accommodate your body's needs. For example, if you've been a daily runner for many years, consider replacing a day or two of that activity with swimming, biking, or another sport that puts less impact on your joints.



## Use the 10% rule.

When changing your activity level, increase it in increments of no more than 10% per week. Slowly build up each week until you reach your higher goal. This will prevent overuse injuries that may keep you from exercising or enjoying your favorite sport for some time.

**Develop and maintain a balanced fitness program.** Include cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and flexibility. A balanced exercise program will provide a total body workout. This keeps you from getting bored and lessens your chances for injury.

**Take a break.** Hard workouts can take a toll on your body and thus require strategies aimed at recovery. Learn to take a day off or cut back your training to allow your body to adapt and recover. Gentle stretching, light aerobic exercises, and proper nutrition and hydration are all helpful to the recovery process.

**Consult your doctor.** If you develop or have had a sports or orthopedic injury like tendonitis, arthritis, stress fracture, or low back pain, consult an orthopedic surgeon who can help design or modify your fitness routine to promote wellness and minimize the chance of injury.