

## **BEGIN THAT NEW EXERCISE PROGRAM THE SMART WAY**

### ***Preventing Exercise Related Injuries***

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Jan. 7, 2010 ) – According to the CDC, nearly 67 percent of adult Americans are considered overweight or obese, so it's no wonder that the two most popular New Year's resolutions are to lose weight and begin a fitness program. But don't let your zeal for the perfect figure prevent you from beginning a new exercise routine the correct way.

According to KORT physical therapist James Escaloni, the two most common mistakes people make when starting an exercise program are:

- Beginning an aggressive program after leading a fairly sedentary life prior to New Year's Day. These "go-getters" jump right into an advanced and complicated routine they see in a fitness magazine or on the latest celebrity exercise DVD.
- Doing relatively little to no exercise during the week then killing yourself in the gym or on the court all weekend. These "weekend warriors" work at a desk for 8-10 hours during the week then try to make up all their fitness in just two days.

"You're just asking for injuries when you start a program that's too advanced for your current physical shape. It's great to have goals, but they need to be realistic and focused on long-term success," said Escaloni. "There's no point in killing yourself for a few weeks, sustaining an injury, then giving up on exercise for the rest of the year."

Escaloni suggests a progressive exercise regimen that allows your body to adapt to the physical changes your making. He says you should focus the first few exercise sessions on improving cardiovascular fitness and regaining flexibility. This will allow you to more easily transition to higher levels of exercise down the line.

### **Building a Better (and Safer) Exercise Routine**

- Take a moment to write down your goals and plans before beginning a new routine. You may need to consult a professional if you don't know where to begin. Finding a trained exercise specialist certified by the NSCA or ACSM is the best bet. It is important that your goals match the trainer's plan. This miscommunication can be critical for those with specific goals.
- Make sure you incorporate flexibility training into any exercise routine.
- If you work a desk job, get up every hour to allow the back muscles to "wake up" & decrease stress on the posterior spinal ligaments.
- Perform simple stretches for the hip flexors, lower back, and neck/upper back. These take just a few moments, but will allow for improved flexibility and can prevent injuries.
- Perform simple bodyweight exercises throughout the week like bodyweight squats, lunges, or push-up variations. These can be challenging and allow for a better adaptation to higher level exercise on the weekend.
- If you are experiencing aches or pains, consult a physical therapist or physician prior to beginning any exercise routine. You want to make sure whatever program you start is suited to you. *For example:* if you are experiencing chronic knee pain, you may need to switch from jogging or running to riding a bike to avoid excessive stress on the knee; if you have shoulder or neck pain, performing a bench press motion or overhead pressing

motion may aggravate the problem. You may need to begin by stretching the chest and shoulders and strengthening the upper back muscles first then go back to your presses.

The most important thing is to start exercising, says Escaloni.

“Exercise should be a part of everyone’s daily routine,” says Escaloni. “The National Institute of Health recommends physical exercise for 30 minutes a day for at least 5 days a week. Exercise can come in any form of activity including stretching, walking, or bodyweight exercises. In fact, the best fitness program encompasses cardio, weight training and stretching or flexibility.”