

## SPRING TRAINING TIPS:

After a long winter of reduced activity or inactivity you might be tempted to get outside and train as soon as the weather improves. You may also be tempted to exercise at the same level you did at the end of the last season. But such enthusiasm often leads to early season injuries. If you changed your routine for the winter, you need to get back into shape slowly. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you head out the door this spring.

- **Slow but Steady.** Don't succumb to the weekend warrior syndrome. Try to get some exercise 3-4 times per week on alternate days. One of the best ways to get injured or sore is to go hard all weekend and do nothing during the week.
- **Monitor Your Level of Exertion.** Use the perceived exertion scale, the talk test, or the heart rate range to help you determine an appropriate intensity level. Stay at the lower end of the scale (11-13) and build up over several weeks.
- **Increase Your Training Slowly.** Increasing training (mileage, time or amount of weight lifted) more than 10 percent per week increases your risk of injury. To avoid this, increase your training gradually over the weeks.
- **Avoid All-Out Efforts Until You Build a Solid Base of Fitness.** Depending upon how much inactivity you had over the winter, it could take as long as 6 weeks to re-establish a solid fitness base. Start your exercise program with slow, steady aerobic sessions. When you add intervals or all-out efforts, make sure you allow enough rest and recovery (at least 48 hours) between those hard effort training days.
- **Follow a Training Program and Keep Records.** If you really want to build back up to optimal fitness, it helps to establish a training plan and stick with it. There are many training programs for all types of sports and having one is not only good motivation, but it helps keep you from doing too much too soon.
- **Cut Yourself Some Slack.** If you took the winter off, don't expect to be back to peak fitness in a week or two. It's ok to go slow and just enjoy being outside again. There's plenty of summer left, so don't worry about going a bit slower in the beginning.
- **Train With Others at Your Fitness Level.** If you can find a few people with the same fitness level and goals as you it can help keep you progressing at a good pace. Training with those who are farther along will only encourage you to overdo it, get injured or feel 'behind' in your training. Workouts with more fit people can be motivating and help you improve, but only after you have a good solid base to work with. Otherwise they can be harmful.
- **Remember to Have Fun.** Keep in mind that this is Spring Training which is a time for fun, light-hearted exercise. You aren't competing and you aren't burnt out yet. So just relax and enjoy your activity.