

Orthopaedic Observations

A Matter of Medicine...

TM Pending

Weekend Warriors

By Alan M. Reznik, M.D., MBA



Every Spring battle cries can be heard from public parks and private clubs. With new sneakers on, the weekend warrior hits the battlefield with the best of intentions. Hoping a simple strategy to improve fitness will have tremendous physical and mental benefits, they arrive to shed a few pounds, get back into shape, or reduce stress in their lives. But according to statistics,

these enthusiasts are tempting fate if not well prepared.

Although, walking twenty minutes three times a week can burn up to 100 calories per mile, tone your muscle and reduce your risk of a heart attack, for many walking or even running is not enough. These individuals carry their intense work style onto the ball field becoming the tri-athletes of the weekend. During the week they work in a relatively sedentary environment only to burst into full competition on days off.

The repetitive routine of nine to five, Monday through Friday causes the muscles and ligaments to stiffen. The acceleration, rotation and deceleration of most sports strain the under-utilized parts. The abrupt changes in physical activity, a weekend athletes endures, can be harmful and even injurious with age.

Studies have shown that one in ten of the weekend warrior will hurt themselves each season, but with the appropriate precautions the odds can be improved.

Flexibility: Warm up before exercising by starting with a light aerobic activity. Walk around the tennis court, stretch the quads, hamstrings and calf muscles before you play. High level tennis players are at risk

for hamstring pulls, calf muscle tears and Achilles tendon ruptures.

Consistency: Overworked and too busy to exercise, you may need it more than you think. Create a routine and stick to it. **Protective Gear:** Don't forget to have protection from common injuries. Bike riders, skateboarders, skiers and rollerbladers should all use helmets.

Conditions: Be aware of the risks of extreme weather conditions. Drink plenty of fluids in the summer to avoid heat exhaustion. Pay attention to the wind chill in the winter, layer up and cover exposed skin to avoid hypothermia and frost bite.

Shape Up: Sporadic exercise can put you at greater risk of injury. Work out aerobically at least three times a week.

Listen to Your Body: Pain is frequently a warning sign. Muscle soreness may follow strenuous exercise but sharp pain, swelling or bruising should not. If symptoms are progressive or persistent you should see your doctor.

Delayed Symptoms: Knee injuries such as isolated ACL tear, are associated with a snap or a pop and frequently not too painful. Some skiers can continue to ski only to have a swollen painful knee four to six hours later. Meniscal tears (torn cartilage) can cause intermittent knee locking or a periodic sense of giving way. Even if the symptoms have temporarily resolved, the knee may not be mechanically sound.

Follow Doctor's Orders: When injured follow your Doctor's orders. You may believe you're a fast healer but your body may have its own time table. Severe sprains can take up to six weeks to heal and then your muscles will need reconditioning before you can return to the same intensity as before. If you haven't exercised, get a check up before starting a rigorous aerobic program.

(Dr.Reznik's biography on back side of page)

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A Westinghouse Science Talent Search Honoree, Dr. Reznik received his Bachelors of Science from Columbia University's School of Engineering. At Columbia, he participated in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome research. He then attended Yale Medical School and after graduation from Yale, Dr. Reznik returned to New York City for his Orthopaedic Residency at the Mount Sinai Medical Center. He was selected for a Fellowship at Oxford in Orthopaedics under Professor Robert Duthie, the Head of the Nuffield Orthopaedics Center. At Nuffield, he met Dale Daniel, M.D. a world renowned expert on knee ligament reconstruction and the Director of the San Diego Sports Medicine Fellowship. After completing Dr. Daniel's Fellowship in advanced Shoulder and Knee Arthroscopy, Dr. Reznik returned to the New Haven area to enter private practice Orthopaedics and teach Orthopaedic Surgery at the Yale School of Medicine.

Board Certified in Orthopaedics since 1991, in 2001 he became a member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America. Dr. Reznik was a founding member of the Yale-New Haven Hospital's Orthopaedic Trauma team and was awarded the Yale Resident Teaching Award. He also served on the game organizing committee for the 1995 World Special Olympics, where he helped care for special athletes from over 105 countries. During his residency, he was court doctor for the US open in Forest Hills, NY and, in 1999, he was appointed the team physician for the New Haven Knights professional hockey team.

Dr. Reznik donates his time to many charitable activities. More recently, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, he served as the surgeon on a medical relief team to New Orleans. At that time, Dr. Reznik treated patients and helped set up a clinic that cared for hundreds of victims of those two storms. Currently, he serves as volunteer member and committee chair of a local school board and, in January of 2008, Dr. Reznik joined a medical/humanitarian mission to Cuba.

Dr. Reznik consults on surgical improvements for arthroscopic surgery. He has several patents pending. One of his inventions was licensed by Johnson and Johnson and available nationally in 2007. Another was produced by Innovative Medical Products, and shown for the first time at the 2008 American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS) annual meeting.

In 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006 and again in 2007, Dr. Reznik was selected by Connecticut Magazine as one of the "Top Docs" in the state by nurses, physicians from other specialties and his peers. He was also named one of "America's Top Physicians" for 2004, 2005 and 2006 by the Consumer's Research Council of America. Currently, he is the managing partner of The Orthopaedic Group, LLC. He especially enjoys caring for recreational, competitive and professional athletes of all ages.

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