

Enjoy the Weather; Avoid the Injury

By Sara Edwards, MD, Orthopaedic Surgery

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As an orthopaedic surgeon, during the summer months I can always expect an increase in patients who have suffered injuries during athletic activities. After a long winter, Chicagoans love to enjoy the city's many options for outdoor activities. Whether they are 12 or 80 years old, injuries happen across the board and can put a damper on anyone's summer. While injuries range in severity, many of the most common sprains, dislocations, fractures, and tears may be prevented with a few easy safety measures.

My number one rule for avoiding injury during summer months is simple: slow and steady wins the race. While it is normal to want to dive right into physical activity, if you've taken the winter months off from exercise you need to ease back into it. Many of the injuries I see result from patients doing too much, too soon. Take gradual steps toward getting back to your previous workout level.

I also recommend proper stretching before and after a workout. Not doing so, or doing so improperly, can lead to injury. Stretching increases blood flow and flexibility within the muscles and promote agility during physical activity. Stretch slowly and wait until you feel a slight pull before releasing.



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Avoid jerking or thrusting your body forward when stretching. This can cause injury rather than help alleviate muscle tension.

When the weather turns warm, traffic also tends to increase across the city. Every year, there is a significant increase in accidents involving cyclists, runners and pedestrians during the summer months. The crowded lakefront can be particularly hazardous with bikers, walkers and runners all competing for the same space. My simplest advice is to stay alert. If the lakeside path is looking a bit overcrowded, taking in the scenery of the nearest park, bike path, or running trail may be the best alternative for safely enjoying the outdoors.

To learn more about how to prevent summer injuries, read this [press release](#) featuring Dr. Edwards.

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