

Expert's workout tips

Exercise is a well-proven way to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, boost energy and even enhance mood. However, if done improperly injuries may result - some with life-long consequences.

"Exercise should be safe, while also enhancing your motivation, endurance and recovery time before, during and after a workout," say the experts at Slimtree.com (www.slimtree.com), which provides free access to more than 100 free Web-based fitness videos.

To best ensure you won't be worse for the wear from your exercise regime, Slimtree.com offers these 10 fundamental fitness tips:

1. Don't overdo it. Exercising in moderation - not excess - is key. Before beginning any program, consult with your doctor to ensure the desired workout activities are safe and appropriate for you.

2. Wear proper attire. Properly fitting shoes and clothes appropriate for the activity, environment and climate are safety essentials. Removing jewelry is also recommended.

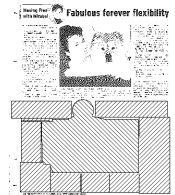
3. Warm up before stretching. Warming up prepares your

body for physical activity. It increases your heart rate and blood flow while also loosening up your muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints, also reducing risk of stretching-related injury.

4. Stretch cautiously. Perform stretches slowly and care-

fully until you reach a point of muscle tension, holding for 10-20 seconds and then slowly releasing. Never stretch to the point of pain, always maintaining control and never "bouncing."

5. Drink water liberally. When working out, drink enough



water to prevent dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke – particularly when exercising outdoors. Staying hydrated will help you perform better.

6. Don't push it. Rest when you feel fatigued, dizzy, short of breath or experience soreness or pain. "Pushing through" may do more harm than good.

7. Cool down. Slow your motions and lessen the intensity of your movements for at least 10 minutes before you stop exercising completely to bring your heart rate and body temperature back to normal levels.

8. Schedule "off days." Days of rest will allow the muscles, tendons and joints in your body to properly recuperate and ready themselves for future workouts. The mental break will also do you good.

9. Don't consider exercise a chore. Take your time and enjoy exercising. Don't let your mind wander – stay focused on the task at hand.

10. Set reasonable goals. Set challenging, though attainable, goals. Once realized, set new ones. Continue to raise the bar so you don't plateau and keep making progress toward your goal.

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