



NEWS RELEASE

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Jump back into exercise – slowly

By Chris Halagarda,

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FORT LEE, Va. – Like bears, too many of us tend to hibernate during the winter, parked on the couch and “surfing” TV channels instead of getting outside or to the gym to exercise. Then when winter breaks, we burst through the doors like grade school kids at recess and resume our exercise program from last fall. Without warning, a week or two after we resume exercise, our body hurts — or worse, we’re injured.

This spring, get back into exercise safely and effectively by following these top recommendations made by Chad Quinn, Navy fitness program manager and certified athletic trainer:

- **Develop a program to fit your fitness level.** Better yet, speak to a qualified fitness or sports medicine professional to create a good, goal-oriented program. A program should progress slowly to prevent excessive soreness or pain. A good rule for endurance exercises such as running, biking or swimming is the 10 percent rule: Don’t increase your mileage or yardage by more than 10 percent per week. It’s also important to limit high-intensity workouts to once a week in the beginning of training.
- **Listen to your body.** Some soreness is expected when resuming a workout program. If you start to feel excessive soreness, have difficulty moving or need to take pain medications to get through the day, you’ve overdone it and need to take a couple of days off. When you feel better, resume your program slowly by reducing the intensity

and maybe choosing low-impact exercises more often, such as swimming, biking or elliptical training.

- **Spend time selecting, fitting and maintaining equipment and gear.** You don't need the best or most expensive equipment, but you do want to have equipment that fits correctly and is appropriate to your surroundings. Take time to have your bike fitted correctly for your height and your running shoes fitted appropriately to your feet. Wear the right gear for your region's climate. It's also wise to wear layers of clothing when going on long bike rides or runs. Nothing is worse than going out for a bike ride on a warm afternoon and coming back into a cold evening breeze when underdressed.
- **Be selective of your workout partners.** Workout partners are great for motivating you to work, but don't let them dictate how much you should do or how intensely you should do it. If they are much more fit than you, or they didn't hibernate throughout the winter like you did, they are going to be at a different point in their training cycle. If you follow your ego and not your body, you may end up back on the couch, recovering from injury.
- **Monitor environmental conditions.** I alluded to this earlier, but it's worth restating. Look at the weather forecast before you go out to exercise; be prepared for the unexpected. Have a safety plan in place that includes some of the following tips:
 - Be sure somebody knows your exercise route and approximately what time you should return or arrive.
 - Know of "bailout" safety locations on your exercise route, such as bridge underpasses or storefronts, to take cover during lightning storms or torrential downpours.
 - Carry a cell phone to be able to call 911 in case you are in danger, or you witness somebody else in danger.
 - Carry more fluids and food than you'll expect to use for your workout.
 - Have a few people in mind whom you could call to pick you up in case you feel ill and can't complete your workout. Some cities offer free taxi rides, in emergencies, to individuals who choose alternative transportation to work, such as cycling, running, carpooling, or taking the bus or train.
- **Stay hydrated and practice good nutrition.** Staying well hydrated and choosing a diet high in lean meats, beans, nuts, seeds, oils, fruits, vegetables and whole grains is extremely important for physical performance and recovery. Be sure to monitor your urine output and color. You want your urine color to be light yellow, like the color of

hay. If it's darker than that, you need to drink more nonalcoholic fluids. The foods you choose will also go a long way in helping you stay hydrated. When you go to the commissary, pack your cart with broth-based soups, green teas, fruits and vegetables. These foods and beverages are loaded with inflammation-battling antioxidants, plus they're loaded with water to keep you optimally hydrated.

- **Beware of supplements and medications.** Be sure to talk with your doctor about the side effects of any medications or supplements you're taking. Many medications may cause fatigue, drowsiness and joint aches, while many supplements — specifically, weight loss supplements — are loaded with stimulants that could put you at risk for heat illness.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*