

Exercising Just on Weekends is Healthy– With Precautions

Sports Physician Dr. Alexander Meininger Offers Tips for Preventing Injury in Weekend Warriors

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO, UNITED STATES, September 13, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "[Weekend warriors](#)" may be humming favorite workout songs when Saturday and Sunday arrive, but their sudden bursts of end-of-week activity – after being sedentary for five weekdays -- could prove injurious to bones, joints, ligaments, and muscles without proper precautions, according to noted orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist [Dr. Alexander Meininger](#).

Those precautions include doing the recommended warm-ups and stretches for muscles, ligaments, and joints before engaging in strenuous exercise; using proper equipment, not the least of which are correct-fitting shoes; and "listening when your body tells you enough is enough," says Dr. Meininger, a founding partner of [Steamboat Orthopaedic & Spine Institute](#), based in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.



Dr. Alexander Meininger

"Experts agree that exercise in general, even if it primarily occurs on weekends, offers important health benefits," Dr. Meininger states. He points to a 2022 study, published in JAMA Internal

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Medicine (bit.ly/3LeADrQ), which "suggests that whether the recommended amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity is spread out during the week or concentrated into fewer days, there may be no significant difference in health benefits. For people with fewer opportunities for daily or regular physical activity during their work week, these findings are important."

"But those long-term benefits are oftentimes overshadowed by orthopedic-related injuries that

can be painful, sometimes significant, potentially long-lasting, and detrimental to a person's quality of life, including their ability to engage in everyday activities like simply walking," Dr. Meininger advises. Such injuries are more commonplace in men, especially among those over the age of 50.

"Bones and soft tissue undergo time-related changes after age 50. Joints stiffen, are less pliant. Tendons, ligaments, and cartilage dry out, becoming more subject to pulls, strains, and tears," Dr. Meininger states.

Other sports medicine specialists concur. In an article on the WebMD site (wb.md/3r09MZD), a representative of the American College of Sports Medicine likens ligaments and "muscle-tendon units" to springs. "The tissue lengthens with stress and returns to its normal length — unless it is pulled too far out of its normal range." Returning to that "normal range" is more difficult the older one gets, Dr. Meininger says.

Sports- and exercise-related trauma commonly affects shoulder, knee, hip, or groin. Dr. Meininger lists medial collateral ligament (MCL) strains; painful knee effusions (fluid accumulations), which are frequently associated with intra-articular cartilage damage, fractures, or torn ligaments or menisci; partial dislocation (subluxation) of the knee joint; and anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears as common knee injuries.

Shoulder injuries include rotator cuff tears, joint dislocation, or instability where the shoulder and upper arm (humerus) bone connect (glenoid joint), and fractures of the glenoid socket. Stress fractures, hip pointers due to sudden impact to the iliac crest or hipbone, abductor muscle and hamstring pulls, and tears of the hip labrum, the cartilage surrounding the hip joint, also can occur during sports activities or heavy fitness routines.

"That some of these injuries, like ACL tears, only happen to professional athletes is a misconception," says Dr. Meininger, who specializes in advanced procedures to repair the ACL. "The ACL can tear when a person is simply running and makes a sudden move in another direction."

In fact, an article published by Thomas Jefferson University in a 2023 issue of its Bone Bulletin (bit.ly/3Rjx870) indicates "weekend warriors share many of the same [musculoskeletal] injuries as those seen in competitive athletes." The author goes on to write that, in non-competitive, weekend warriors, injuries stem from a "combination of insufficient training, stretching, and strengthening attributed to doing 'too much too soon.'"

The term "weekend warriors" generally refers to those whose family and job commitments leave little time for regular exercise during the week and who concentrate their physical activities on the weekend. But Dr. Meininger emphasizes those activities are not just limited to golf, tennis, one-on-one basketball, skiing, and other sports. "Weekend warriors include those who drag out the ladders, bush trimmers, lawn mowers, shovels, and saws to do the home maintenance, car

cleaning, and gardening they are unable to do on weekdays," Dr. Meininger says.

But whatever one's weekly exercise patterns, "the important thing is to remain active," Dr. Meininger says, referring again to the JAMA Internal Medicine study, in which investigators state that "physical inactivity costs global health care systems at least \$54 billion per year." The study authors conclude that the weekend warrior's participation in just one to two sessions of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week "may be sufficient to reduce risks for all-cause, CVD (cardiovascular disease), and cancer mortality..."

Meanwhile, Dr. Meininger offers weekend warriors these tips to minimize risk for injury:

- Warm up muscles and stretch, stretch, stretch before exercise even if just planning to set up an extension ladder and clean the house gutters.
- Wear clothes and use equipment appropriate to the activity.
- Do not follow the "'no pain--no gain' adage." The body uses pain to indicate something is not right. So, whatever you are doing, stop.
- Stick to your usual exercise routine. If you want to increase the miles you run or the number of fitness repetitions in the gym, do so gradually -- no more than 10 percent in any one session.
- Take breaks and make sure you stay hydrated.
- Exercise your age. A 60-year-old cannot expect to do what he or she did at age 30.
- Finally, "lose the pounds. Obesity is a major contributor to exercise-related injury because joints and muscles are already stressed by the added weight. Someone who is overweight should talk with a physician before initiating any kind of exercise regimen," Dr. Meininger recommends.

Alexander Meininger MD is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon and a specialist in sports medicine whose practice focuses on the treatment and repair of knee, hip, and shoulder injuries. He is a founding partner of Steamboat Orthopaedic & Spine Institute.

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