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Training With a Winter Illness?

While many of us are in the throes of a nasty winter bug (upper respiratory or gastrointestinal version!), our ability to train while being sick comes into question. No doubt if you've been afflicted with the latest bug, you missed at least a few days of training. However, less nasty bugs can get us down throughout the winter, and training while being ill may or may not be a good idea.

Firstly, REST is always a good idea when ill. For some, this means getting a little more sleep than usual, and for others this may entail taking time off the training regimen as well. Clinically, there are more concrete guidelines as to making a decision about training, that one can observe on their own.

The "neck check" is one of the most straightforward ways to determine whether you should be exercising with a winter illness. If your symptoms are only above the neck, such as stuffy or runny nose, you can continue to train as long as you have the energy, but at a lower intensity. If you have symptoms below the neck, such as a sore throat, enlarged lymph nodes, chest tightness, achy muscles or fever, these are signs of a more serious illness and taking some time off until they are gone is indicated. Exercising with these symptoms will only make you sicker and prolong your recovery.

If your symptoms are above the neck, training should be done at a moderate intensity, or no more than 75% of your regular intensity. You can keep at this intensity, but with fewer sessions through the week, until you feel full-strength again.

Many athletes experience a continuum of illness throughout the winter. Exercising good judgement and taking a few days of rest will pay off with a more rapid return to health, with fewer missed days overall.

If your symptoms last longer than a week or so, it may be time to see a physician. There are many healthy ways to kick a bug, for good!

Healing Ligament, Tendon, and Cartilage Injuries with Prolotherapy

Connective tissues, as the above are known, are notorious for their slow healing. When connective tissues get injured, the body does what it can to repair them. But, connective tissues by nature have a poor blood supply and this predisposes them to slow/incomplete healing.

There are many ways to heal from strains and sprains, as well as minor cartilage tears. However, if healing is incomplete, the once strong and taut connective tissues become more lax and weak. It is theorized that much of joint pain is the result of chronic weakness/injury in the connective tissues supporting the joint.

The good news is that connective tissue injuries that don't respond to conservative treatment (rest, ice, physical therapies, etc) can be repaired with a natural technique called prolotherapy.

Prolotherapy works by injecting a solution into the area of damage in the tendon, ligament or inside the joint. The injected solution is referred to as a "proliferant" as it will assist with proliferation of new connective tissue, hence the name "prolotherapy". Most commonly the solution is comprised of dextrose (sugar water) and a locally acting painkiller. The solution triggers a localized inflammatory response, meaning that the body is directed to begin the healing process which leads to the creation of new collagen, the substance from which connective tissue is made.

Prolotherapy does not create scar tissue-rather it is a way to directly repair and regenerate healthy connective tissue. This results in a repaired, stronger tendon, ligament or cartilage. Treating damaged tendons and ligaments (and minor cartilage injuries) with prolotherapy can eliminate the cause of pain. Once repaired, tendons and ligaments are stronger and quite often the person is able to return pain-free to their sport.

Prolotherapy was pioneered by osteopathic (D.O) doctors in the 1930's. More recently, prolotherapy is experiencing resurgence in popularity because of its simple, safe approach, as well as its benefits in resolving pain and keeping people active. In many cases prolotherapy can keep people from undergoing surgery, or taking anti-inflammatory medications for the rest of their lives. In fact, anti-inflammatory medications (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDS) drugs) are part of the reason why connective tissues do not heal properly-the drugs actually inhibit cartilage repair!

Prolotherapy is not taught in medical school, so not all doctors have heard of it-you may need to ask around for a qualified provider.

Upcoming Seminar Series at Back In Motion Clinic

Preventive and natural medical approaches continue to increase in popularity, so much in fact that they are becoming part of the mainstream. Are you curious about how you can stay healthier, slow the aging process, and benefit from preventive medicine? Come and listen to Back In Motion's natural medicine expert, Dr. Jason Barker for some informative discussions throughout the year. Get your questions answered, enjoy a healthy snack, and make this your year to get healthier! All talks are open to everyone.

Our first talk is on Saturday, February 17th at 3:00.

Topic: Natural Hormones: Is natural hormone replacement for you?

Come and learn the facts.

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Supplement Tip:

The mineral magnesium acts like a very gentle muscle relaxant, which makes it great for keeping overworked muscles from getting too tight, and for preventing muscle cramps and spasms.

Magnesium can also be used for relieving premenstrual cramps because of its muscle-relaxant qualities.

Magnesium is found in low amounts in the food supply, and athletes generally require more due to loss in sweat and through metabolism. It is involved in over 300 metabolic reactions in the body-a very important supplement indeed!

Have a sports nutrition question?
[Please ask!](#)

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