

# Newcomers to physical activity shouldn't overdo it

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result, you get strains," explained Laskoski, who worked as a therapist with the 1999 Canadian Pan-American Games team.

"We try to identify muscle groups that are tight or are weaker. It's a combination of one side of a limb being too tight and the other side being too strong due to an imbalance around the whole pelvis," he said. "You have to have people stretch all muscles so there's a level of flexibility."

After a proper warm up, Flint suggested, whatever you do, don't over-exert yourself. Calling his guideline the frequency, intensity, type and time of activity (FITT) principle, Flint recommended an exercise schedule "with a frequency that allows your body a recovery period." He also suggested a day off between exercise sessions.

"Work out or play at an intensity that

enables you to maintain a conversation," he said.

Some people believe in "no pain, no gain," Laskoski isn't one of them.

"Pain is a message that tells us something's going on. If you do get discomfort when you start, it's saying something's not right. You need to listen to what pain tells you."

Flint said newcomers to any physical activity should avoid marathon sessions.

The prescribed starting route would be a 20-minute aerobics class. As you become accustomed to the workout, gradually lengthen the session.

Laskoski said, for someone who just wants to improve their general fitness, a half-hour workout three times a week is sufficient.

"As long as you're able to elevate your heart rate and get a good cardiovascular workout, that's all you need," he said.

When it comes to training equipment, Flint and Laskoski agreed empty-

ing your bank account simply isn't necessary. Laskoski said many touring professionals who do dryland training, such as baseball or hockey players, work out with a thera-band or thera-tubing that sells for \$1.50 a foot.

Stores like Wal-Mart sell \$10 gym balls that can be used for workouts.

Once your game or workout is complete, drink plenty of fluids and do cool-down stretches that focus on sore areas.

"Monitor any aches and pain, or modify future sessions accordingly," Flint said. Visiting a registered massage therapist can help reduce discomfort, too, he said.

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