

In order to keep fit, regular activity is necessary. The Canadian Association of Fitness Professionals recommends a minimum of 30 minutes of accumulated moderate exercise daily. Regardless of age or athletic level, regular exercise through cross training and sport-specific exercises will enhance your overall fitness. Weekend warriors, on the other hand, cram a week's worth of exercise into a weekend, playing hard at their favourite sports – whether it's cycling, golf, tennis, rollerblading, running or swimming – leading to possible injury. Here are some tips to keep your body safe from injury and in peak form for your favourite summer sports.

Walking and running, for example, should be cross trained with lateral movements to develop opposing or secondary muscle groups. Cross train with a different activity at least once a week.

4 Get connected

Clubs for running, cycling, golf and tennis give you guidance and motivation.

5 Get challenged

You want to have fun but your body will see the best gains when you challenge yourself to new heights. It can be a fine line between having fun and going too hard.

7 Safety Steps TO TRAIN YOUR Weekend Warrior Body

BY CHERILEE GAROFANO, BA, CPT, CNP

1 Get realistic

Don't expect to do a 5 km run as soon as you get off the couch. It can take up to 3 months to train properly. We need to ease into golf and tennis games, and charity bike rides to avoid injury.

2 Get specific

Train for specific sports to maximize performance and reduce injury: running uses lower body muscles while golf works upper body and core.

3 Get cross training

You love to run and think it best to run as much as you can, but repeating the same patterns leads to muscle overuse and injury.

Stay in control of your workout and never work through any pain, or ill feeling.

6 Get your diet in check

Eat foods that support energy and repair. Quality, unprocessed, preferably organic whole foods are your best choice. Small meals throughout the day and constant hydration are best. Never get too hungry or thirsty.

7 Get consistent

Exercise regularly during the week. Sporadic exercise provides little benefit to overall health or sport performance. This general strength and flexibility program 2-3 times a week will keep you injury-free and at the top of your game.



Spinal rotation

stretches the length of spine, back and shoulder for golf, tennis
Stand with feet hip width apart. Swing arms from side to side; rotate at the waist. The idea is to gently twist the spine like you're wringing a towel. Stay in constant motion. Do each side 10 times.



Towel stretch

stretches upper back and back of shoulders for golf, tennis
Stand relaxed with feet shoulder width apart and a slight bend in both knees. Hold a hand towel behind your back as in the photo. Gently pull towel by moving hands in opposite directions. Hold for 30 seconds and switch positions.



Shoulder circles (Not shown)

stretches shoulder girdle for tennis and golf
Stand or sit. Roll shoulders in big circles forward 5 times and backward 5 times.

Squat with windmill

stretches low back, obliques, chest and front of shoulders for runners, golfers, cyclists, tennis players
With feet shoulder width apart, squat then bend forward at the waist. Stretch arms out to each side, then gently twist at your waist as one arm spirals towards the ceiling and the other towards floor; hold stretch for 15 seconds. Stretch each side 2 times.

Stretches

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Chair squats

strengthens leg muscles: glutes, hamstrings, quads
Standing hip width apart; squat as if sitting in a chair. Be sure your bent knees are behind the toes not over top of them. Return to standing. Work up to 2 sets of 20 repetitions.



Lunge with medicine ball twist

strengthens whole body especially trunk/core muscles
Feet together; holding medicine ball at chest height with straight arms, lunge forward with one leg and twist upper body over the leading leg. Perform in one slow movement. Swing arms to front of body return to standing, keeping arms stretched in front of you. Keep abdominals tight with bent knee aligned over ankle. Alternate sides. Repeat each side 20 times.



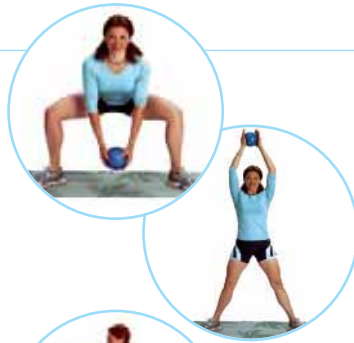
PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN HALENKO

Exercises

Wide plié squat with upper wood chopper

strengthens whole body, functional move

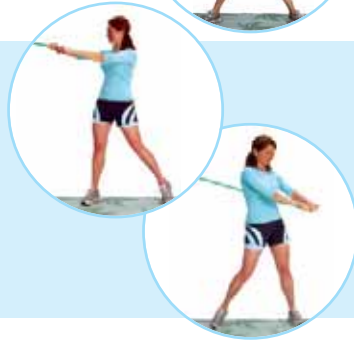
Stand legs wide apart, toes pointing slightly out to sides; squat holding medicine ball down towards floor. Stand up with straight back while bringing arms straight up above head as if chopping over head. Do not over-extend or bend arms. Do 2 sets of 15 repetitions.



Spinal rotation with band

strengthens upper back and shoulder area.

Tie a flex band to a tree or fence post. Stand with side to tree, hold flex band with both hands; twist upper body at waist to face tree then pull with straight arms across the front of your body with a gentle twist at waist. Perform 15 repetitions on each side.



Back extensions/ supermans over ball

strengthens lower back and glutes

Kneel on floor with belly on ball; extend arms to sides. Round down over ball and then extend body up and back squeezing shoulder blades together. Do 15 repetitions.



Swiss ball toss and catch

works abdominals/inner thighs

Lie on back, legs straight up, holding ball between ankles, arms overhead. To begin, sit up bringing arms and chest up to catch ball between legs. Holding the ball in your hands, lower upper body and legs to the floor at the same time. Repeat first step by placing ball between legs. Work up to 20 reps.



Young or old, rotation and flexion of the spine is important to keep the core strong, yet flexible enough to play when and as hard as we want to. Be active and smart about your fitness during these summer months to ensure quality outdoor activity! **H&L**

Cherilee Garofano B.A., C.P.T., C.N.P., R.N.C.P. President of Envision Wellness, a corporate and in-home holistic nutrition and training company. The nutrition practice office is located at 2276 Queen St. E. Toronto, ON. Call 416-200-1501 or visit www.envisionwellness.ca