

10 Tips to Help Make Summertime Activities Safe and Injury Free - By Tri-Rehab

1. Increase your exercise levels gradually. Walking, riding a bike and doing yard work can be a daily activity, but start small to avoid excessive soreness and/or muscle strains.
2. Water intake is essential with any activity. Drinking 8 glasses of water daily is recommended by most healthcare professionals.
3. Improve your overall upper body strength by doing 10 push ups a day, starting with your knees down on the floor and just doing the push up from the waist up. This is acceptable to avoid injury and until your upper body strength improves.
4. Improve your core or abdominal strength by doing 10 sit ups a day. Don't hook your feet under any furniture as this works your hip muscles versus your abdominal muscles. It is recommended that you should bend your knees, with your feet flat on the floor and put your hands across your chest, not behind your neck. As your strength improves, add 5 to 10 repetitions to your program every week for pushups and situps.
5. Stretch your calves before beginning any ladder climbing, excessive walking or running. You can easily do this by stepping on the first ladder rung, letting the back of your feet gently drop down off the back of the ladder rung until you feel a comfortable stretch. Another way to stretch your calves is to place your foot up against a solid structure, such as a fence or your home, and lean forward gently till you feel a stretch in your calf. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times for both calves.
6. Gently stretch your shoulders and low back with the use of a broom. Place the broom behind your low back, around belt height and rotate slowly side to side, holding for 30 seconds each direction, 3 times on each side. Do the same for your shoulders by putting the broom on top of your shoulders and place your arms over the top of the broom.
7. The elbow and wrist can be stretched as follows: Straighten the left elbow out in front of yourself, place your right hand on top of your left hand and gently pull down your hand into a stretch. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times. Repeat for the right side.
8. Stretching your hamstrings can be done by placing your feet shoulder width apart and gently leaning forward towards the ground till you feel a comfortable stretch in your hamstring area. Don't bounce when you stretch and don't lean forward too far that you lose your balance. When straightening upright, go slowly to avoid making yourself lightheaded or dizzy. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times. Another way to stretch your hamstrings is from a seated position, placing one leg out straight in front of yourself, bring your ankle up towards yourself and gently leaning forward till you feel a stretch. Again, hold for 30 seconds, 3 times each leg.
9. Neck muscles can be stretched four different directions as follows: Gently letting your head bend forward towards your chest, rotating your head to each side and looking up to the sky. Do these stretches slowly to avoid cramps in the neck muscles and to prevent dizziness. Ideally, these stretches can be performed while you are sitting, even while eating your breakfast. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds and repeat 3 times for each neck position.

10. If you are sore from any activity, use an ice pack or a bag of frozen vegetables, wrapped in a damp towel and place over the area for 20 minutes. You can apply the ice treatment every two hours as needed. Remember, stretch easily till you feel slight discomfort, hold for the appropriate time and don't over stretch.