

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of January 2, 2018 – New year's Resolutions

Welcome to the New Year! And as we all know, this is the time when so many of us make a New Year's Resolution. The motives why so many of us do this vary greatly, however typical reasons can be for physical appearance or to visit some far away land they have never been to before (and may never see again!). Some of us make a promise to improve relations or even to get into one. But whatever one's New Year's resolution may be, those of us that make this commitment do it for the purpose of making something in their lives better or more appealing.

From a Safety and Health point-of-view, there a number of things we can all do –either as a New Year's resolution or just because it makes sense. And of course, that would mean being able to enjoy a fuller, richer life.

Something we can all agree (hopefully), is to make a resolution to not use a cell phone while driving. According to the National Safety Council, 1.6 million auto accidents occurred in the U.S. last year that involved using a cell phone or texting while driving.

Another commitment we can do is to learn CPR. Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in adults. It accounts for 325,000 annual adult deaths in the United States. Learning how to effectively administer CPR could mean the difference between life and death for someone. And statistics suggest that the most likely scenario is that we would apply CPR on a family member!

How about committing to updating home emergency kits? Experts recommend that at the very least, your kit should contain enough food, water and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours. Your kit should reflect your needs, such as food for pets and any prescription medications. And don't forget about having emergency supplies for your car!

Of course, the most popular New Year's resolutions seem to focus on getting fit. But the fact is, while so many people start out gong-ho, by February, our humanness takes over and we begin to make excuses to not go to the gym or take our daily jog/run and wind up sitting on the couch, watching TV and eating potato chips and dip (OK pizza and beer!).

Here are some tips and thoughts for those that have decided that 2018 is the year we become lean, mean fighting machines.

The gym offers so much variety when it comes to exercise, it's tempting to jump in and try it all. Not only that, but some of us try to make up for lost time by doing workouts our bodies simply aren't ready for. The problem with this approach is that you're so sore for the next few days, you can barely move.

Some soreness is normal but if you can't function, you went too far. Here are some tips:

- Start with 10-20 minutes of exercise, 3 days at a moderate intensity, gradually adding time as you build endurance.
- Keep it simple! Even if you used to lift weights, your body needs time to adapt. Start with a few select exercises with 1 set of 10-12 reps for the first few weeks.



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- If you feel sore, give yourself extra recovery days. You may need a few weeks of consistent exercise to build a strong foundation.
- A key component for staying healthy is to make sure your body is ready for more intense exercise by warming up for at least 5 minutes. The cooldown allows you to stretch, relax and feel good about your workout.

Using bad form doesn't just compromise your workouts, it also puts your body at risk, possibly leading to pain or injuries. Bad form comes in many shapes and sizes, but a few common mistakes are listed below:

- When doing squats or lunges, keep the knees behind the toes. Pushing the knees forward puts pressure on the joints and could cause injury. To avoid this, learn proper form for squats and lunges or work with a professional.
- When bending over for an exercise, such as dumbbell rows, keep the back flat or slightly arched to protect the back from injury. To make it easier, bend the knees or raise up until you can keep the back flat.
- A major problem can occur is when you swing the weights or use your body to help get the weights up. When we do this we are not isolating the specific muscles you want to improve. Sometimes we do this without realizing it. And quite possibly we may even be wasting time while thinking we are “working out.” This type of mistake can cause people to feel that their exercise time is not paying off as they see no results. A sure way for one to get frustrated and lead giving up! Try watching yourself in the mirror to make sure you're using your muscles and not momentum.

And how about stretching? There are different ways to stretch the body. The most common is static stretching, which involves holding stretches for a period of time to increase flexibility. But, one thing you want to avoid is bouncing while you stretch. When you bounce, you force the muscles beyond their normal range of motion, which can lead to strained muscles or tendons. This is especially true when the muscles are cold and less pliable.

If you have made it past that first month or two (part of your commitment to becoming a better you) and find yourself caught in the same routine, there is a chance that you are now putting stress on the same muscles, joints and connective tissue. This can lead to an overuse injury as well as burnout and boredom. Some common overuse injuries include tendonitis, shin splints and stress fractures.

If you're short on time, you may be tempted to skip your warm up and jump right into your workout. But the warm up is important. By easing into exercise with light movement, you can gradually raise your heart rate, increase oxygen to the body and increase blood flow to the muscles. Not only will that make the transition to exercise more comfortable, it also prevents injuries by increasing the elasticity of the muscles.

Good luck with whatever your New Year's Resolution may be and have a health, safe and happy New Year!

Every man is guilty of all the good he didn't do - Voltaire

