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Baby Boomers Sports And Gym Injury Risks|avoid Over 40s Exercise Injuries

By Chris Chew

Due to health care education, more people, who are over forty, those born in 1946 to 1964, commonly known as the baby boomers, are realizing the benefits of taking up sports or exercising in a gym.

This is well and good since exercising regularly severely cut the risks of contracting aging and obesity related potentially killer diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases, stroke, some forms of cancers and many other diseases.

It is indeed heartening to know that more baby boomers are taking charge of their health through regularly exercise to improve their cardiovascular health thus becoming fitter and stronger. However, with more middle aged people exercising and playing some form of sports, instances of injuries sustained from these activities have risen substantially.

In the United States, these gym or sports injuries have become the number 2 reason for people visiting the doctor's office just behind the common cold, reported by the National Ambulatory Medical Care in 2003.

A Consumer Product Safety Commission research in 1998 found that sports related injuries to baby boomers had risen by 33 percent since 1991 and contributed to US\$18.7 billion in medical costs.

Outdoor sports such as tennis, jogging and golf are very popular with people over forties. Not to be outdone, the more body conscious over forties baby boomers are also joining gym memberships in the multitudes.

Gyms all over the developed world are happily reporting booming new memberships year after year with a large pool of their members being the over forty baby boomers brigade, male or female baby boomers irrespective.

As baby boomers get older, their susceptibility to sports injuries rise proportionately. As people age, their body degenerate along with the aging process, although exercising regularly is known to slow

down this very degeneration process.

This is particularly so for the risky weekend warriors who take to the running tracks or lifting weights to build their body with gusto during the weekend putting their aging bodies and joints to sudden busts of unaccustomed stressful activities, causing damages to their own bodies unknowingly.

What are the common baby boomer's sports injuries? How to avoid them?

- Shoulder injuries - Common for those playing squash, tennis, badminton and lifting weights in the gym using wrong form and techniques.
- Elbow injuries - People who play racket games and bodybuilders.
- Back injuries - A very common occurrence in the gym amongst baby boomer bodybuilder wannabes.

Also a common injury for golfers who often have to swing their spine.

- Knee injuries - For baby boomers who participate in sports with sudden movements and changes of directions such as squash and soccer.
- Ankle injuries – Usually striking the runners and joggers of long distances.

How to avoid the risks of sports injuries for the over forties?

This is largely common sense which most people know but few do it regularly as part of their exercise routine in so doing, risking injuries which can be avoided.

- Thorough warm of the muscles and joints which will be involved in the exercise or sport.
- Stretching adequately and correctly. Many people stretch in the wrong manner which then may cause even more injuries.
- Take the exercises or sports one step at a time, then as endurance and strength build up over time, you can then increase the intensity of the sport or the exercise.
- Exercise regularly. Not just over the weekend. Your body may not be able to cope with the sudden outburst each weekend.
- Hire a sports personal trainer who can tailor an exercise program suitable to your health condition and guide you safely through the exercises.

So baby boomers, don't become a victim of your exercises. You want to be fit and healthy, not suffering from pain and despair from what could have been an enjoyable game of healthy sporting activity. Over 40s sports injuries can be avoided.

Chris Chew is a fitness personal trainer and count actors, pageant winners, models and other celebrities as his clients. More free articles on his sites

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The Baby Boomer Athlete

By Louise Roach

Are you a Baby Boomer? If you were born between the years of 1946 to 1964, you are part of the 79.1 million Boomers, comprising 29 percent of the total US population. According to the AARP, every seven seconds a Baby Boomer turns 50! And, about one-third of Americans who take part in sports activities are Boomers.

As this generation grows older, they are working harder to keep their youth and vitality, are staying active with physical activity, and unfortunately are experiencing more injuries than the generation before them.

A US Consumer Product Safety Commission report states there were 1 million sports injuries to persons between the ages of 35 and 54 in 1998. This is a 33% increase over the same statistics of 1991. While this sounds like distressing news for aging bodies, many sports-related injuries are minor aches, sprains and strains that can be treated or even prevented using self-treatment techniques. Whether you are a weekend warrior or a lifelong athlete, the following suggestions may help you stay limber and relatively pain-free.

Warm-up before stretching or an activity. Muscles that are warm through slow-paced pre-exercise such as jogging or walking, will be less likely to tear.

Stretching before and after exercise. Stay limber and flexible. Stretching is one of the best preventive measures against injury.

Get fitted with the proper shoe. This is a top priority especially for running, hiking, and cross training. Go to a running store with someone on staff who will analyze your walk, arch, and how your foot turns in or out during activity. They will then fit you with a shoe having the right amount of support or cushioning for your particular body type. This alone can substantially reduce the incidence of injury.

Start daily conditioning. Do some type of activity every day to help condition your body for more strenuous weekend exercise.

Try adding low-impact activities to the mix. Such as: Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, Elliptical Trainer, Recumbent Cycling, Spinning.

Add strength training to your weekly routine. Stronger muscles mean better joints and a more energized body.

Create a workout program with balance. Combine stretching, strength training and cardiovascular exercises to keep your body in balance.

Use R.I.C.E. If pain does creep into your body after an activity, use the technique of R.I.C.E. immediately to reduce inflammation. Never use heat in the first 48 to 72 hours after an injury occurs,

as this will increase swelling and bruising. Rest–Ice–Compression–Elevation can make the difference in a fast, effective recovery from a sprain or strain.

Try massage. For tight, stressed muscles, massage therapy can be a relaxing and helpful treatment for minor pain. Self–message is easy to do on legs, ankles and feet.

Give cognitive behavior therapy a go. This therapy works on the concept that you can reprogram your mind to increase performance or decrease pain triggers, incorporating relaxation and other visualization techniques. Professional athletes have been using it for some time to rehearse a perfect performance in their mind before an event.

Physical activity may produce its own set of challenges for Baby Boomers. But inactivity itself is a threat to health. A sedentary lifestyle is associated with an increased risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoporosis, stroke and some cancers. Regular physical exercise helps Boomers strengthen muscles, which in turn stabilizes joints, increases flexibility and keeps age–related diseases at bay. Better to be a buff Baby Boomer than a middle–age couch potato!

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical treatment or consultation. Always consult with your physician in the event of a serious injury.

Louise Roach is the editor of an on–line health and fitness newsletter. She has been instrumental in the research, testing and development of SnowPack, a patented cold therapy that exhibits the same qualities as ice. Her injury prevention and treatment articles have been published on running, walking and fitness websites. For more information visit:

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