

## Too Much, Too Soon *By Joy Karley, M.A.*

### A Quick Quiz:

1. Did you:
  - A. Take a month off from your workout?
  - B. Go out of town for a week?
  - C. Take two months off from your workout?
  - D. Stay in bed for 2 weeks with the flu?
  
2. Are you:
  - A. Trying a new workout?
  - B. Trying a new sport?
  - C. New to exercise of any kind?
  - D. About to increase your training to prepare for a competition or event?

### If you:

Answered “yes” to any of the above, take heed or you could end up taking even more time off... while your injuries heal. Doing “too much, too soon” is one of the most common reasons for injuries. As a guideline, remember the soft tissues of your body (such as the muscles and tendons) need approximately eight weeks to adjust to a new activity. Not heeding your body’s time clock and doing “too much, too soon” can create musculoskeletal injuries.

Are resuming your regular exercise program after a week or more off, don’t jump back in headfirst. The length of your layoff should dictate the rate at which you increase activity to pre-layoff levels. Gradually increase the frequency, duration and intensity levels of your workout. Be sure to include enough days off for rest and recovery while your body gears back up.

Are new to exercise, a fitness evaluation is a good idea. If you are fairly young and a non-smoker with no history of health problems, a consultation with a fitness professional might be enough to get you going in the right direction.

Are over 40, a smoker, have a history of health problems, a family history of heart disease, or have any other major risk factors for heart disease, it is recommended that you consult with a physician before beginning any exercise program.

### Remember:

Fitness doesn’t happen over night. Taking your time and following a smart program will help you reach your health and fitness goals, and lessen the likelihood of being sidelined from an injury. Listen to your body.

If you are sore or fatigued or it is your first day back, take it easy. Use lighter weights, do less reps, use low-impact, lower your step, walk fewer miles, avoid big hills, stay in low gear, etc. Don’t push too hard. Your body will make you pay for the “abuse.”

Let your body REST! You would not like it if your boss didn’t give you a day or two off each week would you? Your body doesn’t like it either. It will “quit” on you if you do not give it adequate time off. This includes the occasional vacation from exercise too. A few days to a week off every now and then will give your body time to recharge and come back stronger and feeling better than ever.