



FEBRUARY FITNESS TIP: Exercise and Your Immune System

Exercise has a powerful effect on your immune system. A study published in *The American Journal of Medicine* (2007) showed that when unfit, sedentary people started briskly walking for 45 minutes a day, five days a week, they caught fewer colds over a one-year period. Each and every time you moderately exercise, your immune system starts functioning at a higher level and remains elevated for about three hours. Since this effect is not long-lasting, it's important to exercise regularly. However, strenuous exercise without sufficient rest can temporarily weaken your immune system.

Just in case you do get sick, here's a quick guide to follow regarding exercise:

SYMPTOM Sniffles

EXERCISE IF you generally feel okay otherwise.

REST IF you're so blocked you can barely breathe, even after 10 minutes of a light cardio warm-up.

SYMPTOM Fever

EXERCISE IF it's 100F or lower.

REST IF it's above 100F.

SYMPTOM Headache

EXERCISE IF it's mild enough not to be distracting.

REST IF your head is pounding.

SYMPTOM Muscle Aches or Chills

EXERCISE IF, no ifs, do not exercise.

REST IF aches and chills are present. They indicate a more serious full-body infection and your body needs all it reserves to fight it.

SYMPTOM Sore Throat

EXERCISE IF it's a little scratchy.

REST IF your glands are swollen.

SYMPTOM Cough

EXERCISE IF you're coughing just to clear your throat of excess mucus.

REST IF you feel like you're bringing up a lung.

Reference: pedal-on.com 2007