

Ease into a workout program to prevent injuries

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Doctors give safety tips for weight-lifting and other regimens.

(HealthDay)—If your New Year's resolution was to get in shape, you should ease into your exercise program, an expert warns. Trying to get quick results could do more harm than good.

"It's important to know and respect your body's limits," Dr. Joshua Harris, an [orthopedic surgeon](#) with Houston Methodist Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, in Texas, said in a news release. "Start with an [exercise program](#) that will slowly build your strength and endurance."

Nearly 500,000 workout-related injuries occur each year in the United States, according to the news release. Major causes include people wanting to do too much too fast and overusing their muscles, as well as poor technique during [weight training](#) and other exercise regimens.

For weight-lifting workouts, Harris recommended starting with a light- to moderate-intensity workout three times a week. The focus should be on high-repetition, low-weight sets that emphasize larger muscle groups, including the shoulders, hips, pelvis and core.

It's crucial to use good form when lifting weights,

said Dr. Shari Liberman, a hand and upper extremity specialist at Houston Methodist Orthopedics.

"In January, I see an increase in patients with wrist sprains and other hand injuries caused by improper weight-lifting," Liberman said in the news release.

"Keep your wrist straight when lifting weights," she said. "Many people tend to bend the wrist in or let it fall back, which can increase their risk of a sprain or other [injury](#)."

It's a good idea to work with a personal trainer for a few weight-lifting sessions to help you develop good form for your wrists and back, Liberman said. She also suggested switching among workout routines.

"Rotating routines helps prevent [overuse injuries](#) and increases overall fitness because of the use of many different muscles," she said. "For example, do yoga on Monday, running on Wednesday and weight-lifting on Friday."

Overuse injuries also can be prevented by increasing your flexibility, so you should stretch after every workout, Harris said.

"It's important to pay attention to workouts," he said. "Study good form and let muscles rest. It might take a little longer to get results, but in the end it will prevent injuries."

More information: The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons has more about [safe exercise](#).

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