

No Pain, No Gain? No Way...

“No pain, no gain” was a popular mantra associated with exercise in the 80’s. If you didn’t “feel the burn”, you just weren’t exercising at the right intensity. Exercise should hurt, right?

Not necessarily. When exercising, there is “good pain” and “bad pain”. Muscle soreness or discomfort that occurs 24 to 48 hours after exercise is normal. If you experience this type of pain, rest followed by moderate exercise and stretching is in order. However, some post-exercise pain and soreness is more troublesome and indicative of a real problem.

What kind of pain should you worry about during or after a workout? The following guidelines can be helpful in determining if the pain you are experiencing warrants a break in your workout schedule and/or medical attention.

- **Joint pain or discomfort.** Pain in a joint is rarely muscle-related. If you experience pain or discomfort in a joint, it could be indicative of a more serious injury that requires medical attention.
- **Localized pain or discomfort.** Post-workout muscle soreness can generally be felt across an entire area, and symmetrically on both sides of the body. Pain that occurs at a specific location may be an early indicator of an injury, particularly if that pain does not occur in the same place on the opposite side of the body.
- **Sharp, sudden pain.** Sharp pain that occurs suddenly should not be ignored, as it usually indicates an injury. If you experience sharp, sudden pain during a workout, you should stop working the affected area and consult a healthcare professional.
- **Persistent pain or discomfort.** Pain that lasts for longer than two weeks or gets worse over time, should be examined by a healthcare professional.
- **Swelling and/or heat.** Swelling and heat are classic signs of injury, and should not be ignored. If you experience swelling and/or in a particular area, especially if it is accompanied by pain and/or stiffness, you should consult a healthcare professional.
- **Pain that disrupts your normal routine.** If you experience pain that is so severe that it disrupts your sleep or interferes with your ability to perform work or other daily activities, it could indicate a more serious problem.

Pain is the body’s way of communicating that a problem exists. While some burning and muscle soreness is normal during and after a workout, if that pain becomes sharp and/or highly localized, persists for more than two weeks, and/or is accompanied by swelling, you should consult a healthcare professional.

look, feel, be better!

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