



## EXERCISE AND JOINT PAIN

We all need exercise, it's part of what our bodies are designed to do. Cardiovascular and resistance exercises are something that we need our bodies to incorporate on a weekly basis to help keep our muscles and energy levels up as well as keeping us feeling good. But what happens when your joints hurt so bad that you can't exercise, or certain exercises hurt too much to do even a couple of times per week? The first answer that comes to mind is to change some of the exercises you are doing, at least the ones that bother you.

Often times when we have pain in a joint during exercise, we need to change the entire exercise to one that is pain free, but accomplishes the same goal. Sometimes it's beneficial to change some aspect of the exercise that causes pain in an attempt to make it pain free. When we are talking about cardiovascular exercise, often times the solution is as easy as doing a different form of cardio. Example: switching from a treadmill to a stepmill, or rowing machine to relieve stress on the knees or lower back.

Sometimes an exercise can cause pain because it is being done too often. In this case the pain in the joint can be from overuse. It can happen easily when someone trains with without much variety. In my

experience, this happens when someone only does one type of cardiovascular activity several times per week. Example: doing treadmill walking 5 days per week, or exercise bike every day. This pain can be caused from overusing the joint in the same way all the time. What happens is that some muscles get over used and others get underused, thus creating muscle imbalances. These imbalances effect how the joint moves, usually through pulling more on one side of the body than the other.

What can you do? Have more variety in your cardio program, using a variety of machines or activities to get your cardiovascular challenge done each week. If you do have muscle imbalances you may want to do corrective exercises to help strengthen weak muscles and gain flexibility in tight muscles. Most personal trainers can help teach you how to do that and my experience is that the cost is well worth the long term exercise experience.

Joint pain in resistance exercises is usually due to improper alignment when performing the exercise, or repeated overuse of the joint in the same exercises too often. The remedy, seek guidance from a personal trainer to make sure the exercises you are performing are

safe for your joints. Hint, most exercises you see in magazines and see other people performing are only safe for some people, maybe that's you, maybe not. Also most exercises can be made high or low risk with some minor adjustments. The value of a personal trainers "eye for exercise" is immeasurable if it could reduce long range pain free exercise. Don't forget, a fitness coach or trainer can also offer alternative exercises that can be more fun and more appropriate for your individual body.

Trying to grab a trainer on the floor for advice in-between clients isn't really an effective way to reduce joint pain. It is tough if not impossible for a trainer to give you something appropriate without knowing your history and doing some tests. It also takes time to learn how to do exercises effectively. Trust me it's worth learning. When thinking about your body consider that you only get one, and joints last a lot longer if you treat them right. In terms of pain, doctors visits, surgeries and quality of life, the cost of a personal trainer who can teach you to exercise pain free is extremely low. Good luck and stay pain free, it makes exercise and life a lot more fun.



## EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY TIPS (SEGMENTING WORKOUTS)

Cardiovascular Training Tip: Segment your cardio. One of the easiest ways to make cardiovascular training easier and less lengthy is to break-up the total time you are doing into manageable segments. If you are doing 30 minutes of cardio, break your time into 6 x 5 minute segments. This doesn't mean you will stop every 5 minutes it just means that every 5 minutes is a segment that you will want to do your best on. This simple trick makes the total cardio time seem shorter and more manageable. Shoot for a challenging level of effort in each segment. You only need to do 6 x 5 minute segments to reach 30 total minutes of cardiovascular exercise.

Breaking your cardiovascular training into smaller segments works well for two reasons. The first is that you are thinking about smaller segments, which psychologically are easier to handle and see-yourself achieving. Secondly, the segments go by faster, leading to a sense of accomplishment sooner, and with each passing segment. Additionally, this little trick makes it easier to track progress during your cardiovascular exercise of choice. For example, you might say to yourself "I've done 3 segments, and I've got three segments to go. I can work hard for three more segments and then I'll be done." For most people that self statement sounds more realistic and tolerable than "I've done 10 minutes and I've got 20 minutes left before I can stop"

Try segmenting in your next cardio workout and see what you think. It can be a powerful tool if you are someone who thinks cardio is boring and tedious. Segmenting can also make it easier to add time or intensity to your cardiovascular training. When you are ready, or when your improvements have reached a plateau, add a segment to your workout to increase the total amount of calories burned. If you aren't ready to add a segment to your workout, try upping the intensity for 2 or 3 of your 6 segments. Both of these options are easier ways to burn more calories and get leaner than you have been. Have fun and please tell me how this experience has helped you by emailing [mac@healthynation.biz](mailto:mac@healthynation.biz). I really appreciate your feedback.

## MARCH HEALTHY RECIPE CRAB STUFFED ARTICHOKE

### INGREDIENTS:

8 ounces lump crabmeat, any shells or cartilage removed chopped  
1 3/4 cups fresh whole-wheat breadcrumbs  
1 large shallot, minced  
1 stock celery finely chopped  
2 tablespoons capers rinsed  
2 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning  
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 tablespoon of extra-virgin oliveoil

**PREPARATION:** To prepare, combine all ingredients in a medium mixing bowl. Cut off tips of artichoke. Boil artichokes and stuff with mix.

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:** Per stuffed artichoke: 254 calories; 9 G fat (1 G sat, 7 G mono); 66 MG cholesterol; 26 G carbohydrate; 19 G protein; 8 G fiber; 835 MG sodium; 560 MG potassium.

**NUTRITION BONUS:** Vitamin C 30% of daily value, Iron 28% DV, Folate 25% DV, Potassium 16% DV, and Calcium 15% DV

Source: *Eating Well* 2008

*Mac Dodds, M.A., C.S.C.S., is a Strength and Conditioning Specialist, Speaker, and Personal Trainer Certified through the National Strength and Conditioning Association since 2002.*

**Contact Mac at: [yourjourney@healthynation.biz](mailto:yourjourney@healthynation.biz)**