

WHEENK! HEALTH

A GENERATION OF THE "WII"

VIDEO GAMES ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE POPULAR. WHAT IS INTERESTING ABOUT THIS POP-CULTURE PHENOMENON IS THAT IT IS BEGINNING TO SHOW UP IN OUR PHYSICAL THERAPY JOURNALS AND RESEARCH. THE FIRST PUBLISHED STUDIES SHOW THE PHYSICAL THERAPY BENEFIT FROM USING THESE GAMING SYSTEMS SUCH AS THE WII. THIS TECHNOLOGY IS BEING USED IN CLASSROOMS AS PART OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, HOSPITAL REHABILITATION CENTERS AS WELL AS NURSING HOMES. RESEARCH IS SHOWING THAT OFF-THE-SHELF GAMING SYSTEMS CAN RESULT IN IMPROVEMENTS IN VISUAL-PERCEPTUAL PROCESSING, POSTURAL CONTROL AND FUNCTIONAL MOBILITY.

BECAUSE OF THE WII'S GROWING POPULARITY BOTH IN THE HOME AND IN THE HOSPITAL, "WIIITIS" IS ALSO GROWING IN POPULARITY. WE ARE SEEING AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PATIENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR WITH WII INJURIES. SPRAINS, STRAINS AND REPETITIVE TRAUMAS (TENDONITIS) ARE THE MOST COMMON VIDEO GAME INJURIES. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FORCES GENERATED BY THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR BODY ARE DIFFERENT BETWEEN PLAYING THE WII GAME AND PARTICIPATING IN THE ACTUAL ACTIVITY. IF A PATIENT DEVELOPS "WIIITIS" HE OR SHE SHOULD REST FROM PLAYING ANY ACTIVITIES THAT CAUSES AN INCREASE IN PAIN IN ORDER TO NOT FURTHER IRRITATE THE INVOLVED STRUCTURES. TREATMENT DEPENDS ON THE BODY PART INVOLVED, BUT AS WITH ANY OTHER INJURY YOU SHOULD SEEK APPROPRIATE MEDICAL HELP IF SYMPTOMS PERSIST.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP PREVENT WII INJURIES:

1. WARM UP MUSCLES AND PERFORM STRETCHES JUST AS YOU WOULD BEFORE PLAYING AN OUTDOOR SPORT.
2. RAMP UP SLOWLY IF YOU ARE NOT USED TO SO MUCH ACTIVITIES. DON'T SWING OR BOWL WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT THE FIRST FEW TIMES. EASE INTO THE ACTIVITY.
3. BE AWARE OF PERFORMING A CERTAIN MOTION FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. SWITCH ARMS PERIODICALLY OR SWITCH ACTIVITY. CROSS TRAINING IS THE BEST EVEN WITH REGARDS TO 'WII' ACTIVITIES.
4. TAKE A MOMENT TO STRETCH AFTER EVERY 10-15 MINUTES OF ACTIVITY.
5. STOP PLAYING IF MUSCLES BECOME SORE OR TIRED. (USE COLD PACKS IF NEED BE).

SHARED BY,
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