

WHEENK! HEALTH

SURVIVING INJURED RESERVE

SO, YOU'VE BEEN WORKING OUT, PROBABLY PRETTY HARD, AND ONE WRONG STEP AND - BOOM! YOU'RE INJURED AND YOUR WHOLE ROUTINE IS OUT THE WINDOW. WHAT DO YOU DO NOW? IF YOU THINK MAINTAINING YOUR WORKOUT WAS DIFFICULT, BELIEVE ME, SURVIVING LIFE ON INJURED RESERVE REQUIRES BOTH PATIENCE AND A LEVEL OF COMMITMENT THAT FAR EXCEEDS YOUR PREVIOUS TRAINING ROUTINE.

A MINOR INJURY WITH A ONE-WEEK OR LESS RECOVERY CAN BE DEALT WITH PRETTY WELL, YOUR BODY COULD PROBABLY USE THE REST ANYWAY AND GETTING BACK ON TRACK SHOULDN'T TAKE MORE THAN A DAY OR SO ONCE YOU RESUME ACTIVITY. BUT WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A FAIRLY SEVERE INJURY WHERE YOU'RE OUT FOR MONTHS AT A TIME? A BADLY SPRAINED ANKLE OR WORSE CAN HAVE YOU ON CRUTCHES FOR WEEKS AND IT WILL BE LONGER STILL BEFORE YOU CAN GO BACK TO A FULL PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY IF THAT INVOLVES THINGS SUCH AS RUNNING, DANCING, AND WEIGHT TRAINING. AN UPPER BODY INJURY CAN PRESENT CHALLENGES AS WELL, BUT AT LEAST YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO WALK OR HANDLE A STATIONARY BIKE WHICH WILL KEEP YOUR CARDIAC FITNESS FROM SUFFERING TOO MUCH OF A SET-BACK. FOR LOWER BODY INJURIES, THERE'S A SPECIFIC CHALLENGE TO FINDING CARDIO AND STRENGTH TRAINING WHEN YOU CAN'T REALLY WALK WELL. YOU WILL SUFFER A CONSIDERABLE SET-BACK IN YOUR CALORIE-BURN, BUT THERE'S NO REASON WHY YOU CAN'T SEE PROGRESS OR AT THE VERY LEAST, MAINTAIN YOUR FITNESS DURING THIS TIME.

THE FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW YOUR HEALING PROTOCOL. REST AND HEAL. SOUNDS GREAT, RIGHT? JUST LAY ON THE COUCH, WATCH TV, EAT WELL AND WAIT FOR YOUR BODY TO DO ITS MAGIC. HA! RESTING IS HARDER THAN IT SEEMS, ESPECIALLY FOR AN ATHLETE. OH, AND IF YOU'RE NOT SURE YOU'RE AN ATHLETE, YOU WILL BE WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN IT OCCURS TO YOU THAT IT HURT MORE WHEN YOU REALIZED HOW LONG YOU WOULD BE AWAY FROM YOUR SPORT THAN THE INJURY ITSELF. AND RETURNING TO ACTIVITY TOO SOON, BIG MISTAKE! YOU'LL BE SIDELINED EVEN LONGER AND THAT REALLY IS NO FUN!

NEXT THING, BEFORE YOU GO COMPLETELY STIR-CRAZY ON THE COUCH, IS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU CAN DO, DESIGN SOME SORT OF WORKOUT THAT DOESN'T STRESS THE INJURY. THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO LOOK INTO SOME CROSS-TRAINING WITH A FLEXIBILITY PROGRAM SUCH AS A COMPREHENSIVE STRETCHING ROUTINE, PILATES, YOGA, OR MODIFIED BODY WEIGHT MAT ROUTINES. DEPENDING ON THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF YOUR INJURY, YOU'LL FIND THAT LOTS OF THINGS CAN CAUSE STRESS THAT YOU WOULDN'T THINK WOULD BE A PROBLEM, SO YOU'LL NEED TO FIND MODIFICATIONS OR ALTERNATE EXERCISES. THERE ARE MORE OPTIONS ONCE YOU'RE WEIGHT-BEARING BUT YOU STILL WANT TO BE VERY CAREFUL AND CONTINUE MODIFICATIONS AND WATCHING HOW YOUR BODY RESPONDS TO NEW ACTIVITIES. DIALING BACK YOUR PREVIOUS LEVEL OF INTENSITY REQUIRES A LOT OF SELF-CONTROL, AND IT IS ADMITTEDLY QUITE FRUSTRATING. PAIN IS YOUR FRIEND HERE, LISTEN WELL, IT TELLS YOU WHEN YOU ARE DOING TOO MUCH TOO SOON. THIS IS NO TIME TO PUSH THROUGH THE PAIN, HEALING IS DIFFERENT, THERE'S TIME ENOUGH TO PUSH YOURSELF AFTER YOU'RE COMPLETELY HEALED AND IF YOU DO IT TOO SOON YOU NEVER WILL BE. ALSO, BE AWARE THAT TAKING PAIN-RELIEVERS PRE-WORKOUT CAN MASK THE PAIN IF YOU ACCIDENTALLY OVERDO SOMETHING, WHICH CAN CAUSE A SET-BACK. IF YOU DO NEED PAIN MEDICATION, IT'S BEST TO TAKE IT AFTER THE ACTIVITY WITH ANOTHER HEALTHY DOSE OF REST.

NUTRITION IS A KEY FACTOR, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR BODY HAS BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO A CERTAIN LEVEL OF ACTIVITY, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SUPPLY IT WITH THE AMOUNT OF FUEL YOU'RE USED TO. YOU WILL, HOWEVER, NEED AN ADDITIONAL 200 CALORIES A DAY TO SUPPORT THE HEALING PROCESS AND A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THAT SHOULD BE PROTEIN. BY SIGNIFICANT, I MEAN ABOUT 30-40%, BALANCING OUT THE REST WITH HEALTHY CHOICES AND KEEPING WELL-HYDRATED. IF YOU'RE ON A WEIGHT-LOSS PROGRAM, YOU WILL WANT TO SIGNIFICANTLY SLOW DOWN YOUR GOALS TO NO MORE THAN A 1LB OR LESS PER WEEK OPTION, IN FACT YOU WOULD DO WELL TO EAT AT MAINTENANCE DURING THIS TIME. RECOVERY SHOULD BE YOUR PRIMARY GOAL. YOU SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER TAKING A HIGH QUALITY MULTIVITAMIN. IT IS DIFFICULT TO KEEP FROM OVER-EATING WHEN YOU'RE BORED AND 'RESTING', SO IF YOU AREN'T ALREADY DOING THIS (AND YOU REALLY SHOULD BE) IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO KEEP A FOOD DIARY WITH BOTH CALORIE AND MACRO NUTRIENT TRACKING. TO CALCULATE YOUR DAILY CALORIE NEEDS, YOU WILL NEED TO KNOW YOUR BASAL METABOLIC RATE. IF YOU DON'T ALREADY KNOW YOUR BMR, IT'S A GOOD TIME TO FIND THAT OUT. THERE ARE SEVERAL ONLINE VERSIONS SPECIFIC TO MEN OR WOMEN AND ACTIVITY LEVEL. YOU'LL PROBABLY WANT TO ADJUST IT DOWN TO SEDENTARY DURING LONG PERIODS OF REST JUST TO ENSURE THAT YOU DON'T OVER-ESTIMATE YOUR CALORIE NEEDS. THERE'S A REAL BALANCE TO BE STRUCK HERE, SUFFICIENT CALORIES FOR HEALING BUT NOT TOO MUCH TO CAUSE UNWANTED WEIGHT GAIN.

RETURNING TO ACTIVITY, WHETHER IT'S BEEN WEEKS OR MONTHS, IS AN EXCITING TIME AND THERE'S A NATURAL TENDENCY TO WANT TO GO RIGHT BACK TO EXACTLY WHAT YOU WERE DOING BEFORE - AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. SADLY, THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. FOLLOW YOUR RE-TRAINING PROTOCOL, ADDING IN ACTIVITIES AS TOLERATED. I KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR, BUT YOU WILL GET BACK TO WHERE YOU WERE, AND EVEN SURPASS IT, BUT ONLY IF YOU HEAL AND STRENGTHEN PROPERLY. LONG-TERM DAMAGE OFTEN RESULTS FROM TOO LITTLE REST AND TOO MUCH ACTIVITY TOO SOON, LET'S NOT DO THAT!

BY CHERYL HURT
PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

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