



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Plan Before You Sweat

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Outdoor activities are popular during warm weather, but physical injuries can put you or your Family members on the sidelines during the fun.

According to the U.S. Army Public Health Command, musculoskeletal injuries are a leading contributor to the estimated 25 million limited duty days logged in the Army during an average year. Many of those injuries occur during physical training or while participating in sports. Fortunately, preventing sports and PT injuries is relatively easy — all it takes is proper planning.

The Army Pocket Physical Training Guide contains a wealth of information on the planning and preparation required for safe and injury-free physical activities. Recommendations include:

Safety

- Always warm up and cool down before and after physical activity.
- Although some muscle soreness is expected following physical activity, pushing yourself too hard can aggravate injuries.
- Activities should be age appropriate. There are many ways to exercise outdoors; plan ahead so everyone in your group can participate in an activity suitable for their age and fitness level.
- Stay hydrated.
- Provide water for pets coming along for the fun.

Shoes

Proper footwear plays a key role in injury prevention. Keep the following tips in mind when choosing shoes:

- Shoe selection should be tailored to your particular foot type.
- The arch of your foot will help determine the type of shoe you should purchase. High arches need cushioned shoes; stability shoes are appropriate for normal arches; and motion control shoes are the best fit for low or no arches.
- Always tie and untie shoes when putting them on and taking them off.
- Shoes should be comfortable when you try them on. If they aren't, don't buy them.

- Replace running shoes when they begin to show visible wear or after 500 miles, whichever occurs first.
- The best shoe for you may not be the most expensive. Always try on both shoes in the pair you're considering and walk around the store before purchasing to ensure proper fit.
- If possible, shop for shoes at the end of the day to accommodate foot swelling.

Clothing

Proper clothing can help prevent injuries and keep you safe by heightening your visibility to motorists and protecting against the sun's harmful rays. Remember these tips when shopping for exercise clothing:

- Select items that include reflective material if you'll be running or exercising outdoors during times of low or limited visibility.
- Items should be comfortable, light in color and fit loosely.
- Never wear rubberized or plastic suits during outdoor activities.

Environmental conditions

- Find an alternate indoors location when the weather is extremely hot.
- Avoid activities near heavily traveled streets and highways during peak traffic hours.
- Avoid exposure to tobacco and other pollutants before and during exercise.
- Exercise early in the day or during the late evening if your area has a problem with smog.
- Use waterproof or sweat proof sunscreen when exercising.

For additional information on exercise safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.



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