

# How to prevent exercise accidents

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(HealthDay)—It's great to challenge yourself to keep workouts interesting, but you need to take steps to avoid injury whether you're new to exercise or a seasoned veteran.

This often means adapting exercise to your current fitness level and abilities. For instance, if you're experiencing a problem with balance, swimming will be safer than running. If you develop [joint pain](#) from a condition like arthritis, avoid high-impact activities to avoid stressing those joints. If you take [fitness class](#) and are having trouble with certain movements, don't hesitate to ask the teacher to help you modify exercises.

If you have a [medical condition](#) and are new to exercise, talk to your doctor about the safest options for you. Get instruction before you go it alone.

Always warm up first. Walking in place gets your circulation going and delivers blood to your muscles, prepping them for more [intense exercise](#) of almost every type. Afterward, cool down the same way.

To avoid [overuse injuries](#), vary your exercise choices from one day to another. For instance, alternate between brisk walking and cycling. When you're ready to challenge yourself, gradually increase intensity and length of workouts. A 5% increase is safe as you progress.

Don't forget to make sure your equipment and any safety gear are in good working order.

Ease up or skip a workout when you're not feeling well or are overtired and unable to fully focus on the activity. And if an illness or injury sidelines you for more than a couple of days, ease back into exercise after your recovery—don't try to return at your previous level all at once.

**More information:** The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more on [steps to avoiding accidents](#) while exercising.

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