

Why YOU should warm up

- raises your heart rate to prepare your body for physical exertion
- speeds up nerve impulses so that your reflexes are enhanced
- reduces muscle tension
- sends oxygenated blood to your muscle groups
- reduces your risk of injury, particularly to connective tissue like tendons
- increases your flexibility and joint mobility

Why YOU should cool down

- helps to gently return your heart rate, breathing and blood pressure to normal
- improves your flexibility
- reduces your risk of injury
- removes waste products from muscle tissue and helps reduce your risk of soreness

Protect yourself from injuries this winter

Playing sport and/or exercising in cold weather places extra demands on your body. A drop in your core body temperature of just 1°C causes your muscles to shiver, which can lead to low blood sugar levels and reduced sporting performance. It can also mean injuries.

Sprains and strains are common winter-related injuries as cold muscles, joints and tendons are more prone to injury.

To reduce your risk of sprains and strains this winter, we recommend you thoroughly warm up, stretch and cool down. Warm up and stretch the specific muscle groups required for your sport/exercise and ensure you cool down once finished, as this is an important injury prevention strategy. See one of our physiotherapists to help you devise warm up, stretching and cool down routines appropriate to your sport/exercise and AVOID sprains and strains this winter.

For further information on how to prevent and treat sprains and strains this winter, consult one of our physiotherapists.

If, however, you do fall victim to a sprain and/or strain, we recommend the following immediate treatment:

- Stop your activity
- Rest the injured area
- Use icepacks every two hours, applied for 15 minutes, separated from the skin by wet towelling
- Compress or bandage the injured site firmly, extending the wrapping from below to above the injury
- Elevate the injured area above heart height whenever practical
- Avoid exercise, heat, alcohol and massage, which can exacerbate swelling

If the pain and swelling does not subside after a couple of days, seek our help to promote rapid recovery. Your physiotherapist may prescribe:

- exercises to encourage healing, strength and flexibility
- manual techniques, such as mobilisation and massage
- electrotherapy
- a progressive functional program to return to activity, or
- ongoing treatment and supervision of return to sport



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Chinatown Physiotherapy Centre

Get set to hit the slopes

Winter 2006 is here and many people will head to the snow for a well earned break. While skiing comes naturally to some, others spend most of their time unsuccessfully negotiating the equipment and terrain. Whatever your level of experience, skiing can be hazardous and contribute to injury. The physiotherapists in our practice can help. We can ensure that you are prepared for the slopes by minimising your injury risk through specific exercise programs, fitness regimes, strengthening and warm up, stretching and cool down techniques.

To avoid injury this snow season, the physiotherapists in our practice recommend you:

Be fit to ski

Begin to incorporate ski-specific exercises into your regular exercise routine at least eight weeks prior to your holiday. This will promote use of the muscles and joints required for skiing. Strengthen the muscles specific to snow sports (thighs, butts, core stabilisers and triceps) to reduce the risk of injury and increase your enjoyment and endurance on the slopes. We can outline ski-specific exercises whilst prescribing a conditioning program to improve your core stability and muscle strength. Ultimately, your performance on the ski slopes relies on your fitness, so talk to us about how to achieve an optimal fitness level.

Look after your back

When travelling distances to reach the mountain, rest every two hours and stretch. See one of our physiotherapists for effective stretching advice.

Warm up, stretch and cool down

Before hitting the slopes, warm up like you would with any other sporting activity. Stretch your thigh, calf and arm muscles. Start your day with easy runs to loosen up (make sure you also do this after each rest break). Once you have finished skiing for the day, remember to cool down. These activities will better prepare your body to avoid injury. We can show you warm up, stretching and cool down techniques.

Ski within your capabilities

Beginners should take advantage of a ski lesson and not succumb to the pressure of keeping up with experienced skiers. Don't be afraid to rest when you find yourself getting tired. And remember, the more unfit you are, the more tired you will become.

To avoid injury on the snowfields this winter, consult one of our physiotherapists on how to best prepare your body and ensure your holiday is injury free!

Contact details

Chinatown Physiotherapy Centre
QG6 Prince Centre
8 Quay Street
HAYMARKET
NSW, 2000

Phone: 02 9281 2743

Fax: 02 9211 7425

Email: rosannang@bigpond.com