**London 2012**

The London Olympics has come and gone but their legacy is still there to see. Now is an exciting time to get involved in sport or fitness and perhaps a great time to think about taking up a new challenge. Sport is there for all to enjoy and London 2012 provided us with many amazing stories to get us motivated and give us the inspiration we need to get started. To top it all, how lucky were we to have this global event right here on our doorstep.

Exercise has so many benefits and good preparation for sport can make all the difference between the experience being a pleasurable or a painful one!! Poor preparation and pushing the body too much too soon, can predispose you to injuries. It is vital before starting a sport to gain a basic level of fitness and these are a few areas to consider

* **GRADUAL PROGRESSION**

One of the key things to remember is that any new activity or sport should be introduced gradually and the amount you play should be built up slowly. Our clinicians at Healthflex will be able to guide you on this if it’s something you’re not sure about or have an injury to consider

* **CROSS TRAINING** whilst it is good to develop a certain degree of cardiovascular fitness, don’t get carried away with monotonous activity (long runs, bike rides and 90 minute gym sessions!!). Repeated cyclical exercise puts our nervous system to sleep and many sports demand agility, quick reflexes and explosive power. Repeated activity if performed too early in an exercise programme may also leave you vulnerable to injury. So it is good to mix up the fitness regime with aerobic and anaerobic activity
* **CORE STABILITY** it is essential to have good strength around the trunk to take the stress away from our limbs and ensure good efficient dynamic movement of the body whilst doing activity.
* **STRETCHING** this is often the area that is neglected!! Stretching can feel good after exercise and will help the mind and the body unwind!!
* **GUIDANCE WITH EXERCISE** this may mean a few coaching sessions to improve your technique or perhaps working with a personal trainer who can tailor an exercise programme to suit your requirements
* **EQUIPMENT**  and last be not least, your equipment. It is vitally important to make sure the equipment you have is up to the job and the more specific the job, the more specific the equipment needs to be. As a rule you generally get what you pay for, so don’t skimp, especially on shoes. Equipment considerations can range from sport specific shoes for a particular sport to items such as your golf clubs or tennis racquets . For example if your racquet grip is too small or too heavy or your golf shaft is too whippy then these can all have an impact on your body, not to mention your performance!

Healthflex’s team of professionals, based at the Edge in Haslemere, are available to help you gain the most out of your sport and prevent you getting injured. They will be happy to give you advice about what you may need to do before you embark or give you guidance when you are ready to start.

If you are considering exercise for the first time or suffer with any medical conditions then you are advised to see your GP in the first instance and get the green light to start getting fit!!

For further information about the services that **Healthflex** provide please visit [www.healthflex.co.uk](http://www.healthflex.co.uk) or call the team on **01428 642577**.