

PLAY SPORT TO BE FIT OR, BE FIT TO PLAY SPORT?

An interesting question which you might ask yourself, particularly if you suddenly get drafted into the works football/netball team and then subsequently find yourself in one of our medical establishments being told something that is painfully obvious in more ways than one.

Martin Dyer, physiotherapist from Healthflex Haslemere says: “There are several ways for people to train for their particular sport not only to prevent injury but also to enhance their performance/enjoyment. They need to make sure that their body has training that is specifically related to their particular sport. It may not require hours sweating away in the local den of lycra and bulging biceps but possibly 10-15 minutes of specific exercising at home.”

One of the first things to try and do is analyse your particular sport – does it require good balance and/or posture? Does it require short bursts of speed? Do you need to keep going for long periods with little rest? Do you need to concentrate? Or do you need combinations of the above. Once you know the particular demands of your sport, you can then plan your training around them. Sometimes this is a difficult exercise and you are best speaking to somebody with expertise in that particular discipline.

The important thing to remember is that probably the worst thing you can do to your body is to sit in an office all week and then pitch up and go for it without any preparation. **You must be fit to play your sport** and not the other way around. Once fit, your activity will retain and improve your fitness and then you only have to worry about the others! A knee to the groin hurts, fit or not.

Martin’s particular areas of interest lie in golf and tennis. All golfers know that in order to play better, they need to probably hit the ball a bit further and consistently a bit straighter. They will go to great lengths and expense buying equipment which reputedly can help them do this. Yet they ignore possibly the most important bit of equipment, themselves! You can train your body to be fitter for golf, to maintain better posture during the swing. Martin also mentions that he works in close liaison with local golf professionals. “Whilst I can help an individual with the above factors, they will also benefit from having technical input at the same time from their local pro. Whilst I have a working knowledge of golf, it is not my area of expertise and best left to those who know,” says Martin. Martin has also been a physiotherapist attending the players at Wimbledon Tennis Championships for the past 20 years and went on to say: “With regard to tennis the same things apply as they do to golf, you need to train your body to be sport specific if you want to perform at your best.”

Martin can be contacted at Healthflex Haslemere. If you would like more information on any of the above services provided at Healthflex or, would like to make an appointment, please call them on **01428 642577** or visit them at: **www.healthflex.co.uk**
You can also follow Healthflex on Facebook and Twitter.