



Fitness Dos and Don'ts

It is important for individuals with a bleeding disorder to find a form of physical activity that they enjoy. When muscles are used during exercise it helps keep them flexible and strong. Physical activity also helps individuals maintain a healthy weight minimizing the stress on the joints. Exercise has even proven to reduce the number of bleeds a person may experience.

At Symposium 2015, HFA's FitFactor program brought together experts in the areas of yoga, martial arts, personal training, and massage to offer participants an opportunity to learn about and try these different types of activities. Our fitness experts share some dos and don'ts of each activity.

FROM MICHELLE MORATH



Things to consider when starting a strength-training program:

Benefits of Strength Training:

Stronger Joints: Strengthening muscles around a joint will reduce the likelihood of injury and a joint bleed.

Weight Management: Regular strength training and exercise in general will help with weight loss and weight maintenance which will decrease the amount of force on your joints and therefore decrease pain

Increase Energy: With regular exercise, you will notice having more energy to do the things in life that you enjoy.

Strong Core: When you have a strong core, you feel stronger throughout your entire body. You are able to do your daily activities with ease.

Improved Health: Exercise greatly reduces the risk of many diseases such as diabetes, osteoporosis, and heart disease. It can also actually improve your quality of sleep and mental well-being.

Start Slow and Gentle: When beginning a strength-training routine, start with one set of 8-10 repetitions. Over time, gradually increase your repetitions or increase to two sets.

Have Patience: "No pain, no gain" is NOT a motto by which to live. Doing too much, too fast can cause injuries. Progressing slow and steady will get you to your goals and greatly improve your quality of life.

Maintain Consistency: Along your path of getting stronger, you may experience some setbacks in maintaining your routine. Just know that life can and will get in the way. The key to being successful long-term is to not beat yourself up about miss workouts and just get back to your exercise routine as soon as you can.

Joint Bleed: If you are currently experiencing a joint bleed, do not exercise the affected joint. You may, however, be able to do other exercises. For example, if the affected joint is your knee, you may be able to do upper body or core exercises instead of leg exercises.

Personal Trainer: When looking for a personal trainer, make sure he or she is certified through an accredited organization. If he or she does not have experience working with someone with a bleeding disorder, be sure that the personal trainer specializes in post-rehabilitation.



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FROM COREY PIERCE



Benefits of Yoga:

(Body) Physical: By practicing yoga you can strengthen your joints and improve joint flexibility.

(Mind) Psychological: One of the oldest definitions of yoga is the process of 'Stilling the fluctuations of the mind'. Yoga can help you navigate chaotic 21st century living — a big reason why there is an expanding interest in yoga, as people become increasingly inundated in a hyper-connected world.

Learn Limitations: Reflecting on the body through yoga helps avoid injury in daily life.

Breathing: Connecting the breath with movement increases resolve and focus. Learning yoga breathing techniques can increase awareness and reduce sensations of pain.

Determine Origin of Bleeds: Medical professionals unintentionally reinforce a fallacious idea that bleeding is something that 'happens' to us or is spontaneous. *Only by creating greater bodily awareness and spatial understanding of our environment do we have the ability to prevent bleeding altogether.* It is the mindfulness and knowledge of your own body that will prevent you from the vicious cycle of injury.

Things to consider before starting a yoga program:

Find Local Classes:

- Look for yoga classes in your hometown, and ask about special introductory offers. A good class that is in your neighborhood might be better than a GREAT class all the way across town.
- You can find classes in community centers, at specialized yoga studios, or in fitness gyms. Ask around.

Try it More Than Once:

- Commit yourself to a few months of yoga, practicing every day if you can. (This could be for as little as 15 minutes a day at home).
- If you are unable to go to studio classes, locate classes on DVD, YouTube, or Netflix, etc.

Start with Beginner Classes:

- Stick to introductory or beginner classes to start. For those of you with advanced joint disease and limited range of motion, 'chair yoga' classes would be the best place to begin. In time, your strength and range of movement may allow you to participate in more demanding classes.
- Teachers in beginner classes will give you more hands-on instruction regarding proper form.
- Disclose injuries/limitations with instructors. Whenever you begin a class with a new instructor, be sure to let them know beforehand what joint limitations you have. The instructors may be able to give you some ideas on how to modify postures to make them work with your anatomy.
- Keep in mind that few things in this world happen by accident. You will not improve your body by accident. It will take dedication and persistent effort to improve your joints, body, and mental health.



FROM MICHAEL PEZZILLO



Benefits of Martial Arts:

- Builds muscle tone, flexibility and general health
- Builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-control
- Teaches responsibility and respect
- It is FUN!!

Things to consider before starting a martial arts program:

- Become educated about the practice and do your research to find a qualified instructor and a program that is safe and right for your needs.

- Always disclose your bleeding disorder and any other relevant medical information.
- Consult with your physician, physical therapist or HTC before beginning any physical activity or exercise program.

It is important for individuals with hemophilia or von Willebrand Disease to find the right form of activity for their type, severity, and body. Individuals and families should **always** talk with their doctors or physical therapists prior to starting any exercise regime to help determine what types of physical activity might be acceptable for them.

A healthy body and doing something you enjoy are the goals. Here is a list of "don'ts" to keep in mind before starting any physical activity.

