

I started back lifting weights again recently after a 6 month stretch without due to a shoulder injury. My shoulder is not 100% yet but it is able to do the work I'm putting it through since I am being smarter this time. I have been plagued with a bum shoulder for the last 1 ½ years after I injured it... being stupid. I knew the rules and didn't follow them. I was over enthusiastic one day doing heavy yard work and didn't listen to my body when my shoulder didn't feel right about half way through. Most injuries happen to “weekend warriors”, people who don't do much activity most of the time but then try to do something more strenuous that their bodies are not used to. Your body is an amazing machine and can do things all the way until old age (ask my idol Jack LaLane who is 95 and still works out 2 hours every day). What the body can't do is be asked to perform at levels that it is not prepared to do on a moments notice. It would be like taking a race car that has been sitting for years with rotting tires, old oil, leaky seals, etc. and taking it out to the track and racing it. Something is bound to happen, and not a good thing at that. But, if you replace the tires, changed the gas and oil, fixed the seals and tuned it up – that car could go out and perform almost as well as it did in it's day. Maybe not enough to keep up with the newer models but it would be “respectable”.

There are ways we can perform “respectably” again: First is to get back into shape. Now, I'll give a little latitude to those of you who have never been in shape but there are people know as personal trainers who can guide you on how to do it in a safe and effective way. There are others of you who don't have as much of an excuse. You know who you are former high school and college athletes, former cheerleaders and track stars, former swimmers and tennis players. You slowly let yourself get away from some of those hobbies that made you feel and look great. Life started to get a bit more complex, you heard the little voice that said, work out tomorrow or you can start again next week. Then a week became a month, that became a year, then a decade. Now weaker, non-motivated and 20+ pounds later you say I wish I could be like that again but are overwhelmed at how to do it. Here's the easy part: **JUST START!**

Do the opposite of the little voice telling you to put down the second helping of potatoes or the one that said I'll wait for 5 minutes for a closer parking spot so I don't have to walk. After that go back to what you did before. If you played tennis then get a racket and some balls and go. Part of why people fail at something new is because they don't know the culture, they don't know how to incorporate it into life. You already know those things because they were in your life before and they used to be fun. Now for the big BUT: DO NOT TRY TO DO THE THINGS YOU USED TO BE ABLE TO DO!!! You are older and weaker than you were and your body is not used to the stress even a light exertion will cause. Start slowly and don't push it. Do not wait until your body becomes sore swinging the racket the first few times as you will not know how much you actually worked the muscles until the next day or two. A thing that will greatly reduce the risk that you will hurt yourself and that will enable your body to respond better is to warm up for at least 5 minutes before you start. Light jumping jacks, marching in place, swinging your arms and torso are all things that will help. Moving your joints in a full range of motion in circles will also help warm and lubricate the joints. Only stretch lightly before you work out. Deeper stretching should only be done after a good warm up and at the end of the workout as cold muscles are like cold rubber bands, they don't like to be stretched and they may break if you stretch too much. Stretching after exercising will help the muscle regain flexibility faster and will enable the muscle to recover faster. Drinking plenty of water and eating proteins will also help recovery and healing of muscle.

Don't do the same exercise every day, especially in the beginning. When we do strenuous exercise it breaks down muscle fibers. It is only when we rest the muscles in between workouts that the muscle repairs itself and makes itself stronger in preparation for the next workout. So give yourself at least one if not two or three days rest between, especially if you have not done the activity in a very long time or are older. You can do a different, lighter exercise between the more strenuous activities to improve your health and work your body in another way.

Get back into the shape you were or the shape you want to be. Don't give into that little "voice

of sabotage” telling you that you can't or you deserve a rest. Get your old chassis back on the track but tune it up before you start racing again. You will have less illness and injury, need less medication and feel better than you have in years. It's your life. It's your health.

Doc Visconti's office is located near the Citrus Tower. If you have any questions regarding this or any other health related topics, please contact him on his website at WWW.DOCVISCONTI.COM. On facebook? Sign up for the “Visconti Acupuncture & Natural Medicine” fan page for interesting information and updates on natural health!