

How to ease back into exercise safely after a long break

- After taking a long break from physical activity, most people will not be able to perform at the same level they once did
- It's important to manage expectations and set realistic goals when easing back into exercise after a break

Varying your workouts and including strength training in your fitness routine will help you increase your endurance and reduce the risk of injury

If you took a long break from exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic, you're not alone. The stress and uncertainty of the past year, along with the closure of many gyms and need for physical distancing, have thrown off many people's workout routines. Getting sick from COVID-19, a debilitating disease with weeks or sometimes months of symptoms, has also greatly limited the ability to engage in physical activity for many people. As vaccines continue to roll out throughout the United States and restrictions begin to ease, it's natural that many people are eager to get active again. However, there are some things people should be mindful of while restarting their fitness routines to avoid injury and get the most out of returning to exercise.

Manage your expectations: People who have taken a long break from exercise are likely to find that they may not be able to do the things they once could. Whether this is running a 5K or holding a yoga pose, experts say not being able to perform at the same level is to be expected.

Still, this may be difficult for some to accept. Many people, especially those who were very athletic or worked out a lot before the pandemic, may think they're more capable physically than they actually are, said Christina Frederick, PhD, a psychologist who specializes in motivation for sport and exercise.

"Our physical appearance, our perceived fitness, and our identity as an athlete or fit person are all part of who we are," she told Healthline. "As we age or when significant long-term events happen in our lives (like the pandemic), our fitness can also be negatively impacted. When that happens there is cognitive dissonance between our fitness-based identity and the reality of the situation," she said. Common reactions people may have to this are frustration and anger. But these feelings won't serve you if you're trying to get back into fitness.

"Angry or frustrated people can set unrealistic goals or jump into a routine that is too hard or too intense," said Frederick, who is also an associate professor of psychology and human factors at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida. "They risk losing motivation through failure experiences or in-



jury." She said a healthier option is "to engage in self-examination and to reassess objectively who we are and where we are." "This can lead to the creation of goals to help motivate us to get back on track and reengage in fitness and health activities so that our identity and our reality of self come into alignment again," Frederick said.

Take our quiz to learn more about techniques and tips that will help you achieve your goals.

Getting back to exercise safely: The key to returning to exercise safely after a long break is to take small steps and frequently change up your routine, said Dr. Melissa Leber, FACEP, director of emergency depart-

ment sports medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. "The way our bodies work is that we really do need to gradually ease back into the training regimen," she told Healthline. "And your training regimen needs to be varied in terms of intensity, frequency, and the type of workout you do." For example, for someone who used to run frequently before a long break, Leber recommends introducing interval training or jogging two or three times a week along with low-impact workouts like yoga or Pilates on other days of the week.

"Our bodies don't respond well to the same repetitive action and the same sport over and over and over again," Leber said. In addition to building endurance,

this kind of cross-training will also help prevent injury.

Strength training is also an important part of getting back to exercise safely, as weakened muscles can lead to joint pain. "The older you are, the more important that gets," Leber said. If you do end up pushing yourself too hard and get injured, rest is important.

"Take a break from that exercise that caused it and take an anti-inflammatory medication like ibuprofen," Leber said. She recommends giving it about a week to see whether the injury gets better. During that time, you can still do other types of exercise. For example, if you have knee pain from running, try going for a swim.

If the injury does not subside within a week, it's time to see your doctor. "If you have joint swelling or can't bear weight, then I would seek out medical attention sooner than later," Leber said.

Tips to stay motivated: If you don't see results from your new workout routine right away, it can get frustrating, and you may be tempted to give up. But remember, it will only get easier with time. "Once you make exercise a habit and a routine, your endorphins and your own brain are actually able to motivate you," Leber said. "But making it a habit and making it a routine is the hardest first step." To make exercise an enjoyable habit, it's important to choose activities you like to do, Frederick said. "For instance, I love cardio-type activities, but I hate to run," she said. "If I want to get in shape, it makes little motivational sense for me to choose running. It makes more sense for someone to examine what they enjoy doing for health and fitness, and what options they have locally to engage in those things." Additionally, if you enjoy activities that are more social in nature, you may want to look into taking an outdoor fitness class or finding a workout partner to stay engaged and motivated. Finally, to stay on track, experts recommend setting goals and using a fitness device or mobile app to track your progress. "Goals should be specific, realistic, and attainable," Frederick said. "Maybe you can only do 3 days of walking per week for 30 minutes at a time and you will try to get your heart rate to 60 percent of max. That's great! Articulate it and track it." Keep at it even if you can't attain your goals right away. —Health Line

Moderna boosting COVID-19 vaccine capacity, targets up to 3b shots in 2022



Moderna Inc (MRNA.O) said it is boosting manufacturing capacity for its COVID-19 vaccine and expects to make up to 3 billion doses in 2022, more than twice its previous forecast.

It also said it is increasing its expectations for 2021 vaccine production to between 800 million and 1 billion shots, raising the bottom of its range from 700 million. The final number of inoculations will depend on how many are lower-dose formulations for boosters and immunizations for children. Moderna shots currently deploy 100 micrograms of vaccine substance but some future shots may use only 50 micrograms. "As we look forward to next year, we just see so much need for primary vaccine, we are hearing it all over the world, and also boosters," Moderna President Stephen Hoge said in an interview.

"So depending upon... how much the ordering that happens is third doses or pediatric doses at 50 micrograms, we could see up to 3 billion doses," he added. Moderna had previously said it expected to make 1.4 billion shots in 2022.

Moderna also said new data suggests its shots can be stored safely for up to three months at refrigerator temperatures, making it easier to get them to hard to reach areas that may not have access to freezers.

"That might be a breakthrough that really matters in 2022 in Africa and across lower and middle income countries," Hoge said.

Wealthy governments have been trying to stock up on COVID-19 shots from Moderna and Pfizer Inc (PFE.N)/BioNTech SE (22UAY.DE) after safety concerns and production problems temporarily sidelined vac-

cines from AstraZeneca Plc (AZN.L) and Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N). But even as rich countries speed up their vaccine rollouts, other parts of the world are facing sharp upticks in cases and struggling to acquire needed shots. India has recorded more than 300,000 cases each day and more than 2,000 deaths in the past week. Fewer than 10% of its more than 1.3 billion citizens have received one dose and only around 20 million are fully inoculated against the virus.

Moderna expects to double output at a drug substance plant in Switzerland run by Lonza Group AG (LONN.S) and boost production in a Spain-based facility owned by Laboratorios Farmaceuticos ROVI SA (ROVI.MC) more than two-fold. U.S. plants will also raise output by more than 50%. Moderna's two-dose vaccine uses messenger-RNA technology that programs cells to build immunity to the novel coronavirus. The U.S. drugmaker said it would begin making investments this year and that production boosts would start in late 2021 and carry into early 2022.

Moderna said it is in advanced talks for additional deals with other manufacturers to help make its shots. Moderna earlier this month announced shot production deals with Sanofi SA (SASY.PA) and Catalent Inc (CLTL.N).

The company would need regulatory sign-off to start shipping vaccine at the higher, refrigerator-level temperatures. So far, Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca have been the only major global drugmakers with authorized COVID-19 shots that can be stored without a freezer. Both companies have faced production problems and reports of severe side effects that have slowed uptake of their vaccines. Moderna Inc said on Wednesday the U.S. government had agreed to increase the contract for the company's COVID-19 vaccine by \$236 million to roughly \$1.25 billion, to include additional costs related to the shot's studies.

Addressing Covid-19 vaccine myths



Of all the modern medical interventions we have at our disposal, few have been victim to as much falsehood as vaccines. As the world battles a pandemic, stripping the truth from the lies is more urgent than ever.

All data and statistics are based on publicly available data at the time of publication. Some information may be out of date. Visit our coronavirus hub and follow our live updates page for the most recent information on the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between 2010 and 2015, vaccines prevented an estimated 10 million Trusted Source deaths.

Scientists have worked tirelessly to create safe and effective vaccines to protect us against SARS-CoV-2. Now, as many governments roll out Covid-19 vaccines, scientists and medical experts are facing a new challenge: misinformation and associated vaccine hesitancy.

Some anti-vaxxers — individuals who believe vaccines cause a range of medical

ills — dedicate their entire lives to railing against vaccines. In reality, vaccines have saved lives of millions of people.

Vaccine hesitancy is nothing new and, in many ways, perfectly reasonable. For instance, misinformation about the vaccines' safety and potential effects on the body is rife on the internet. Also, the Covid-19 vaccines were developed unusually swiftly and use relatively new technology. In this article, we will tackle these concerns head on. Today, a significant percentage of the United States population, and the world at large, are nervous to take a shot that could save their lives. In this article, we tackle some of the most common myths associated with the Covid-19 vaccines. Although it will not convince dyed-in-the-wool anti-vaxxers, we hope that this information will prove useful for those who are hesitant. The vaccines are not safe, because they were developed so fast. It is true that scientists developed the Covid-19 vaccines faster than any other vaccine to date — under 1 year. —Agencies

US restricts travel from India amid worsening coronavirus crisis



WASHINGTON: The United States will restrict travel from India starting next week, due to rampant spread of Covid-19 in the country, the White House said. "On the advice of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the administration will restrict travel from India," Press Secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement. She cited "extraordinarily high Covid-19 caseloads and multiple variants circulating in the India". The policy will take effect May 4. —AFP

Long Covid and children: The unseen casualties of Covid-19

Since children appear to be less at risk of severe Covid-19 than adults, those who do develop the disease may not receive as much attention from researchers and the media.

Yet some of these children have become "long haulers" who experience symptoms months after they first contracted SARS-CoV-2. Some studies have argued that children have a lower risk Trusted Source of developing severe Covid-19 — the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 — than adults. Reports indicate that, in most cases, children who contract the new coronavirus develop mild-to-moderate symptoms Trusted Source or remain asymptomatic.

However, in some extreme cases, they may develop multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) Trusted Source or pediatric inflammatory multisystem syndrome (PIMS), as some experts refer to it. Stay informed with live updates on the current Covid-19 outbreak and visit our coronavirus hub for more advice on prevention and treatment. According to existing data, MIS-C/PIMS can become apparent at 2-6 weeks after a SARS-CoV-2 infection, and some of the symptoms that can accompany it include:

In most cases of Covid-19 in children, symptoms should typically improve and then disappear altogether after a couple of weeks from symptom onset. Yet some



children experience ongoing symptoms weeks or even months after their initial illness — a phenomenon commonly referred to as "long Covid."

How do ongoing symptoms of Covid-19 actually impact the day-to-day lives and well-being of the children and adolescents who experience them? To answer this and many other questions, Medical News Today spoke to the parents of children and teens with long Covid. In this Special Feature, we present, at length, the stories of four parents whose children still experience debilitating symptoms. These parents spoke to us about the difficult journey towards securing an accurate diagnosis, and the often fruitless search for formal support. —Agencies