

## DOES IT HURT?

**Then don't do it.**

By Michael Boyle

I get asked rehab questions all the time. I have rehabilitated athletes in almost every major sport who were told they were "all done" by a doctor or a team trainer. Because people know my background, they often ask for advice.

Most of the time they ignore the advice because the advice does not contain the answer they want. They say "it only hurts when I run."

I say things like "Don't run."

A famous coach I know once told me, "People don't call for advice; they call for agreement or consensus." If you don't tell them what they want to hear, they simply call someone else." His advice to me, don't bother wasting your time with advice.

Here I go again -- wasting time.

If you have an injury and are wondering whether or not a certain exercise is appropriate, ask yourself a simple question. "Does it hurt?" The key here is that the question "Does it hurt?" can only be answered yes or no. If you answer yes, then you are not ready for that exercise, no matter how much you like it.

Simple, right? Not really.

I tell everyone I speak with about rehab that any equivocation is a yes. Things like "After I warm up, it goes away" are yes answers. It is amazing to me how many times I have asked people this simple question only to have them dance around it. The reason they dance around the question is that they don't like my answer. They want to know things like, What about the magic cure that no one has told me about? What about a secret exercise? I have another saying I like: "The secret is there is no secret." Another wise man, Ben Franklin I think, said, "Common sense is not so common."

If you are injured and want to get better, use your common sense. Exercise should not cause pain. This seems simple, but exercisers ignore pain all the time and rationalize it.

Discomfort is common at the end of a set in a strength exercise or at the end of an intense cardiovascular workout. Additional discomfort, delayed onset muscle soreness, often occurs the two days following an intense session. This is normal. This discomfort should only last two days and should be limited to the muscles not the joints or tendons. Pain at the onset of an exercise is neither normal nor healthy and is indicative of a problem. Progression in any strength exercise should be based on a full, pain-free, range of motion -- that produces muscle soreness without joint soreness. If you need to change or reduce range of motion, this is a problem.

Progression in cardiovascular exercise should also be pain free and should follow the ten percent rule. Do not increase time or distance more than ten percent from one session to the next. I have used these simple rules in all of my strength and conditioning programs and have been able to keep literally thousands of athletes healthy. I'm sure the same concepts will help you. But only if you follow the advice.

*Michael Boyle's new book [Designing Strength Training Programs and Facilities](http://www.michaelboyle.biz) can be downloaded as an ebook at [www.michaelboyle.biz](http://www.michaelboyle.biz). You can purchase the book at the same site.*