

Staying Active While You Stay at Home

With stay at home and shelter in place orders quickly spreading across the United States, the ability to work out and stay active may seem out of reach. Saint Louis University athletic training professor Timothy Howell, Ed.D, ATC, PES, CES, CSCS, has some advice for those feeling the burden of a more sedentary life.

Get Creative

With access to gyms cut off, it's time to get creative with your workouts, Howell said. While he recommended going outside for a run, walk or bike if possible, there are also ways to bring the gym to you, even if you don't have gym equipment at home.

"You have more than you realize," he said. "If you have a backpack and books, you could do bicep curls, front raises or lateral raises."

No backpack? No problem.

"Look around the house for things that you can move. If you can move it, do it," he said. "The muscles will appreciate the attention and you will feel better for the effort."

Keeping Up with Treatment

With hours even at medical facilities curtailed or on hold, people in the midst of athletic training, physical therapy or occupational therapy might worry that a break in treatment could severely hinder their results.

Howell said it's important to stick to a training plan even if a patient can't make it to a scheduled therapy appointment.

"Strength, endurance, hypertrophy and power are all aspects of muscle function and human performance," he says. "If we stop doing our exercises, the muscles stop doing 'work.' If muscle function declines, the effort that was put into increasing the muscle function is lost."

That function loss can result in reduced strength, a decrease in power or the muscle decreasing in size, he added.

Remote Learning

For students learning about medical treatment in lab spaces, learning from home might seem difficult. But Howell said it's all about a positive attitude.

"What are the opportunities that will come out of this that we 'have to' try because previously we never 'got to?'" he asked.

In one athletic training course, students are creating four “Instagram-Worthy At-Home Exercise” videos. Each of the videos will be of one full set of repetitions for one exercise. Ultimately, there will be a collection of 92 exercises that come out of this class.

“These videos take professional skills,” he noted. “Telehealth and telemedicine are emerging applications in health care, so to be able to teach and instruct skills/techniques in a non-face-to-face format are skills that are transformative.”

Howell’s Recommended Resources

- Instagram has a ton of people demonstrating innovative and creative exercises for at-home or in the gym.
- Planet Fitness is offering free online at-home programs.
- Team Beach Body has a free trial of their programs.
- TRX has a trial subscription.