Life Cycle of the Athlete: Your Body's Changing Frame

124 West 60th Street, Suite 23M
New York, NY 10023
telephone: 212-489-8006

Contact:

Robin Waxenberg
212/489-8006
rwaxenberg@nyc.rr.com

"LIFE CYCLE OF THE ATHLETE" NEWS CONFERENCE KEYNOTE SPEECH SUMMARIES

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 – To offer the newest research on how athletes and active people of all ages can stay healthy, fit and injury-free, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) and the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) hosted "Life Cycle of the Athlete" – an educational forum held today at the Club Restaurant in Madison Square Garden in New York, from 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Throughout the morning, top health care experts addressed the specific physical challenges of youth and high school athletes, Generation X women, baby boomers and active seniors. Below are some of the highlights presented.

Youth & High School Injuries: Can the Epidemic Be Stopped?

Key Findings from Alvin H. Crawford, MD

- An estimated 10 percent of the 30-35 million American kids playing organized sports each year will become injured.
- Overuse injuries, once considered rare for young athletes, are becoming increasingly common.
- There is a growing concern that minor injuries, if left untreated, may become serious injuries by junior high or high school.
- Coaches, athletic trainers, parents and physicians need to monitor the training and competitive activities of the young athletes; modify factors that may place athletes at acute risk of injury; and enforce periods of "relative rest" when necessary.

Key Findings from Jon Almquist, ATC

- Since 1984, there has been a 27 percent increase in high school sports participation overall: 18 percent for boys and 40 percent for girls.
- There have been major changes in the management of common sports injuries and illnesses, such as concussions and heat illness, over the past few years.
- Physicians, athletic trainers and other allied health professionals who provide appropriate medical care on-site to youth athletes can reduce injury severity and lost time from participation.

The Gen X Woman: Strength, Stress & Self

Key Findings from Letha Y. "Etty" Griffin, MD, PhD

- Generation X women make up 9 percent of the U.S. population, numbering 25 million.

- Gen X women need to remember that to be an excellent caregiver, one must first care for oneself through proper diet, adequate sleep and appropriate exercise.
- With a little planning and a lot of motivation, Gen X women can find time to exercise, which will help increase their energy and decrease their chances for depression, hypertension, CVD, stroke, diabetes and osteoporosis.
- Mothers who exercise serve as excellent role models for their children.

Key Findings from Elaine Winslow-Redmond MS, ATC

- Generation X female athletes face the dilemma of choosing family life versus career, and the pressure to conceive before age 40 is ever-present.
- Maintaining a certain level of fitness while pregnant, and regaining the competitive edge after pregnancy, are concerns many women face.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recently revised its guidelines for exercise during pregnancy, allowing an increase in the level and intensity of exercise it recommends during pregnancy.
- Articles in *Res Q Exercise Sport* and *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* concur that regular exercise for pregnant women is safe and beneficial.

Boomeritis and Beyond

Key Findings from Nicholas A. DiNubile, MD

- Musculoskeletal ailments have now surpassed the common cold as the #1 reason for visits to physicians.
- There are "weak-links" that increase the vulnerability of the musculoskeletal frame, and internal structural, biomechanical, and biochemical changes that occur in muscles, bones and joints that occur as a result of aging.
- Humans have doubled their life expectancy in the last 100 years but their musculoskeletal frame was not designed to last that long.

- Boomers are the first generation to try to stay active on an aging frame, which has resulted in a dramatic increase in musculoskeletal ailments as well as injuries.

Key Findings from Marjorie J. Albohm, MS, ATC

- Musculoskeletal changes in the boomer population over time have necessitated a rethinking in approaches to fitness and injury prevention within this age group.
- Fitness programs should be customized to improve fitness.
- Going all out and ignoring pain can no longer be the exercise pattern of physically active boomers.
- It's time for a new fitness prescription for boomers.

The Independence of the Active Senior

Key Findings from Vonda J. Wright, MD, MS

- Active aging is a key element in preventing the loss of independence frequently experienced by sedentary seniors.
- Exercise is the most simple and profound daily investment our seniors can make in their future.
- One-third of seniors are obese and 70 percent do not engage in 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day.
- More than 35 illnesses can be positively impacted by exercise and many of the 250,000 deaths per year, attributed to a sedentary lifestyle, may be avoided.

Key Findings from Kent Biggerstaff, ATC

- Seniors should check with their physician before beginning any exercise program.
- Two times per week is enough for strength exercises.
- Cardio and stretching exercises can be a daily activity.
- Form and technique are very important.
- Exercisers need to monitor the number of sets and repetitions they do to lessen injury risk.

- Proper footwear is extremely important to ensure the right fit for best performance.

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