

## Keep Those Muscles Moving

Thinking about skipping today's workout because you are a bit sore from yesterday's exercise routine? Keep moving and do not take that break.

Contrary to popular belief, muscle soreness is not an indication that you have worked too hard. It is just your body's way of getting used to your new fitness regime, according to the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

The dull aches and stiffness that typically come a day or two after starting a new exercise program are caused by microscopic damage to muscle or connective tissue. The aches should be minor and should not interfere with normal activity, said Carol Torgan, Ph.D., an exercise physiologist and ACSM fellow. In fact, moving the muscle with light exercise will help alleviate the problem.

"Don't interpret soreness as sorely out-of-shape," Torgan noted. "Some people think they have no business exercising because exercise is 'painful.' That's not the case. The soreness is simply there

because your muscle is learning something new, and the benefits of exercise far outweigh any initial discomfort."

To minimize that discomfort, Torgan suggested:

- ✦ Gently stretch or massage the affected area
- ✦ Apply balms, creams and/or ice
- ✦ Take a warm bath
- ✦ Take a product containing ibuprofen

It is normal to be a little sore, especially after trying some new moves. But if you are concerned, talk to your health care provider or exercise instructor.

## Preventing Cramps

Another concern that keeps some would-be exercisers sitting on the couch is muscle cramps—those painful spasms that typically occur toward the end of a long workout.

Cramps may be caused by dehydration or loss of minerals through sweat, but it is most likely caused by muscle fatigue after many repetitive movements.

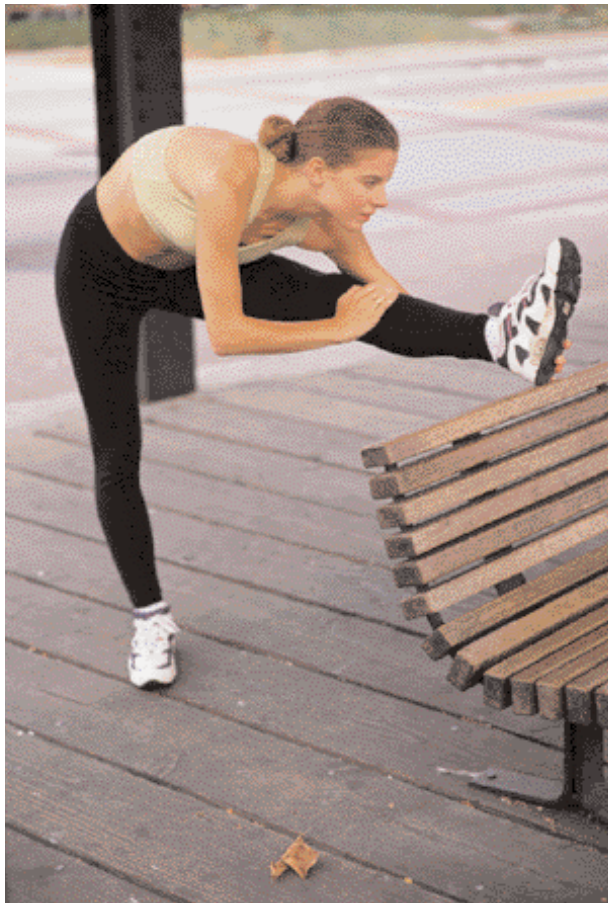
While muscle cramps cannot be cured, these tips may help reduce the risk:

- ✦ Stretch regularly
- ✦ Drink plenty of water
- ✦ Eat a well balanced diet

When cramps occur, Torgan suggested stretching the muscle and holding it in that position

until the cramp subsides. Urban legends for curing cramps include drinking pickle juice or pinching the upper lip or nostril. While no scientific evidence supports these methods, some athletes swear they work.

Source: American College of Sports Medicine, [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)



**Botox**, the drug best known for reducing wrinkles, may provide relief for some of the **30 million American adults** who suffer from **migraine headaches**. Ask your doctor for more information.

Source: University of Michigan Health System, [www.med.umich.edu](http://www.med.umich.edu)