HINDMARSH AND FITZROY PHYSIOTHERAPY

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HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY EXERCISE AT THE BEACH

SUMMER IS AN IDEAL TIME FOR WORKING ON YOUR FITNESS AND YOUR PHYSIOTHERAPY RECOMMENDED EXERCISES. THE BEACH IS A GREAT ENVIRONMENT TO WORK IN AS MAYBE YOU'RE ON HOLIDAY OR JUST WANTING A NEW ENVIRONMENT FOR INSPIRATION.

BUT WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW BEFORE STARTING YOUR WORKOUTS AT THE BEACH.

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT TIPS TO HELP YOUR WORKOUT BE INJURY FREE.

1. CHECK WITH YOUR PHYSIO FIRST-

Are your exercises suitable for a soft sand base, is your injury or condition going to cope with the change. If you haven't previously seen a physio, now is the time to get that advice and information so you dont aggravate existing problems or create new ones. If you let them know that you'd like to put in some of the work at the beach they can counsel you on how to do so while mitigating the risk of injury.

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2. FIND A BEACH WITH A MINIMAL GRADIENT

While carefully exercising on uneven surfaces (such as the beach) can assist with building core balance and strength, you don't want to find yourself on a serious incline. Look for an area with a minimal gradient and without crowds to ensure you can carve out a peaceful area.

Try to avoid slanted ground during runs.Many beaches are slanted in the area between the soft, dry sand and the wet sand closer to the water. Try to keep beach runs in a shorter area where you can control for slant; either going up and down the slant or finding a small flat area with deep soft sand.

If you have no other option, do an out-and-back run, so that you give each side of your body a chance to be on the slanted side. If you have access to hard, flat sand close to the ocean that's a better place for a long run. You can also keep your running shoes on at first and slowly transition to barefoot running. On softer sand, you'll want to go barefoot, again starting with very low mileage and building up over time so your feet can adapt.

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3.BRING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

You may need the correct exercise equipment to assist with your beach workout. Start with a large yoga mat so that your gear doesn't get covered in sand. You can add a stability ball, balance trainer, exercise tubes and bands, a foam roller, and consider K-tape / athletic tape if your physiotherapist recommends it.

4 .BEWARE OF SHARP OBJECTS.

You should always check the area before you get started to make sure there are no sharp objects hidden in the sand.

5.IF YOU'RE ADDING BAREFOOT BEACH WALKING OR RUNNING TO YOUR WORKOUT

Just to walk in sand requires you to recruit small stabilizing muscles in your feet, hips, and back. So even a basic exercise like a lunge uses different proportions of muscles in sand than on a hard flat surface supported by shoes.

You might notice that your hip flexors have to work harder to pull your knee up because your foot is deep in the sand and pushing off just digs it deeper rather than bouncing you forward. The extra resistance from the sand on top of your foot acts like a tiny ankle weight, further increasing the resistance.

Barefoot beach running is an exercise that will promote the growth of those small stabilizer muscles. When these stabilizer muscles are weak compared to the rest of your anatomy the risk of injury exponentially increases. In addition, beach running can help improve your balance, will assist in burning more calories (when compared to traditional running), and can help build a better footstrike – how and where your foot hits the ground.

That said, these benefits can only be realized with proper guidance and gradual progression.

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6.THE UNSTABLE SURFACE IS ACTUALLY MORE TAXING ON YOUR JOINTS.

Any instability or injury in the knees, ankles, hips, or lower back can be exacerbated by exercising on sand. Since sand is generally soft, there's a little more give and shock absorption, which will make it gentler on your joints in terms of impact force. But even though the compressive stress (impact) will be lower, the shear stress will be higher.

Compressive stress is more like when the femur hits the top of the tibia, where as shear stress is a translation across joint surfaces, so for example, the femur sliding across the top of the tibia.If someone has any stability issues, like a history of ankle sprains or an ACL or meniscus injury, they need to be much more cautious. That doesn't mean they can never exercise on sand but it does mean they need to be more cautious.

The hips and lower back can also be irritated by an unstable surface like sand, so be careful if you have any pain or pre-existing problems in these areas, too.And anyone, whether they have existing joint issues or not, could be at greater risk for small injuries like ankle rolls, strains, or sprains. That's simply because the stabilizing muscles probably are not as strong as they need to be if you primarily exercise on hard ground

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7.ALWAYS START SLOW SO YOUR BODY CAN ADAPT.

Always start with low resistance and low speed, and gradually increase based on how you feel. Different muscles are going to be working harder than they normally do, so you have to give yourself a chance to adjust if you want to avoid injury. We recommend you add a couple of minutes or a new exercise each time if all things went well until you get up to your full workout.

That doesn't mean you can't work out if you're just trying to get in a good sweat on a weekend beach vacation. But it does mean you shouldn't go full force. Modify your workout, and save the full-on intensity for when you're back at the gym.If you want to run on the beach, start with 50 percent of your usual duration or distance and go really slow. If you're feeling good, slowly get faster.

8. REMEMBER EVERY WORKOUT WILL FEEL MORE CHALLENGING.

Moves will feel a lot harder on the soft sand. The main reason for that is that sand is an unstable surface.When you do an exercise on a hard floor the surface stays put underneath you. When you do that same move on soft sand, the sand shifts and moves. Your body has to respond to this movement by firing up muscles and tendons that can help create stability. You also might feel disoriented. Your reaction time and proprioception, which is basically the body's ability to detect where it is in space, is going to be distorted when your body has to make more micro-adjustments for the moving surface.

9.BEWARE OF SANDBURN

You can also get sand burn if you fall and slide on it. The good news is that if you do fall, it won't hurt as much as falling on pavement

10. ENJOY THE VIEW

If you're working out on sand, you're probably somewhere with a great view, so go slow, tune into your body, and take in your surroundings instead of trying to push through a hardcore workout. It'll be easier to enjoy the rest of your time there if you're not dealing with intense soreness or a rolled ankle. And remember no matter the exercises you do on sand—bodyweight strength moves or even walking or running—you're going to work muscles you're not used to working.

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We are committed to supporting you and your familys physiotherapy needs. Please reach out to our team if there is anything we can do.

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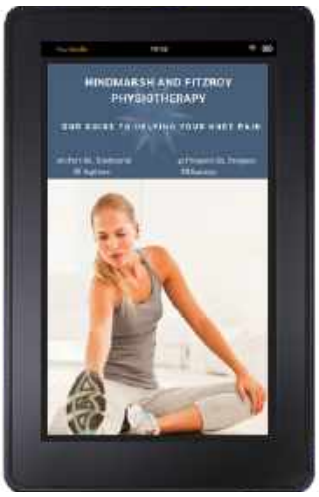
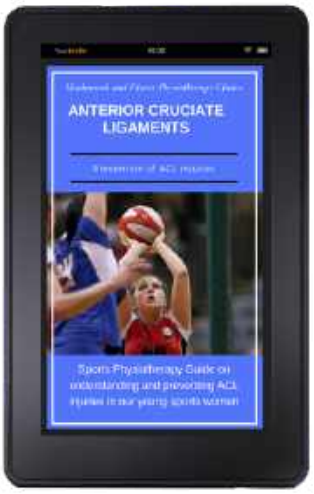
OTHER RESOURCES





WHAT INJURY IS THIS

MANAGING KNEE PAIN

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