



## Fit For Sisters

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Columnist

### Don't let joint pain slow you down

Knee, hip, shoulder and back-pain all are part of the human experience. Most everyone gets to enjoy the experience of nagging pain. Friedrich Nietzsche philosophized: "The aim of the wise is not to secure pleasure, but to avoid pain." Once pain sets in the wisdom says to stop the activity and avoid pain.

Many forms of exercise — running, jumping, hiking, downhill skiing — involve a lot of joint stress and poses the potential for back pain. Small impacts over time can lead to arthritis and degeneration of joint tissue. Eventually, people find

themselves on the sidelines. Anytime someone forgoes exercise, it can lead to a decline in health and a cascade of loss of well-being.

There are solutions beyond giving up activity.

Pain affects many runners. The common trope is that it's not *if* a runner will suffer pain, but *when*. It is estimated that 75 percent of running injury is caused by overuse. Overuse injury happens when a person runs too much, too soon, or too fast for their ability. Adjusting shoe type, corrective insoles, improving running technique, and other methods to prevent injury, were not effective in reducing injury rates. There was also no significance in gender, body mass, running surface, and running speed.

The takeaway message is clear: running injury is ubiquitous, and the best intervention for running longevity is moderation. This approach can consider another activity to balance the scales. A great alternative is cycling. It works the quads (front of thigh) a little more intensively, and doesn't repetitively stress the lower leg. It also still allows you to be outside and in the open air.

People reading this may lament the pain of sitting

on a saddle, but a properly fitted bike will make all the difference. See a local expert to get the bike fit. Green Ridge Physical Therapy, Eurosports, and Step & Spine all have specialists in this area.

Back pain also hampers a variety of activities and leads people to believe their days of fitness are over. The incidence of back pain is more common than not: 80 percent of people have experienced significant back pain at some point in their lives. There are several reasons for low-back pain but the majority (70 percent) of instances are caused by lumbar strains. This is when the muscles and surrounding structure of the lower back are overworked, stressed, and cause a pain signal to radiate throughout the body.

An alternative exercise for working with back-pain is swimming. Central Oregon triathlete/coach Jaime Dispenza says: "Swimming totally rocks for people of any age. There is no impact on the body as long as the technique is solid."

He recommends swimming to his athletes who are recovering from long runs or bouts of injury.

Swimming is a great cardiovascular exercise, where

the athlete is unweighted, providing a gentle stretch. Sisters Athletic Club is a place for basic lessons; a competitive swimmer might contact Jaime Dispeza for more information.

These are just two examples of how to manage painful ailments affecting nearly everyone. It is also a good excuse to try a new exercise. Either way, you don't need to forgo fitness or go under the knife to avoid pain. Therapeutic exercise for both meniscus and low-back strains has been shown to be as, if not more effective than, surgery. In fact with back pain, exercise can be as effective as painkillers. If exercise is something you might consider trying, see a local expert and get set up on the right path.

Additional resources are linked with the online version of this column at [www.nuggetnews.com](http://www.nuggetnews.com).

## Learn how to fix your bike at free class

If you ride a bike, at some point, you're going to have to fix it.

Blazin Saddles will host a free basic bike maintenance class on Thursday, August 18, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at their downtown Sisters shop.

Learn how to fix a flat, as well as the basics of bike maintenance and mechanics.

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Limited to 15 people; sign up at the shop located at 413 W. Hood Ave. or call 541-719-1213 to reserve a spot.

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