



spotlight on health

Don't Let The Cold Keep You From Staying Active

(NAPSA)—According to statistics at the Mayo Clinic, more than 65 million Americans suffer from back pain each year, preventing them from enjoying weekend leisure activities. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to help you stay active.

According to David Draper, Ed.D., A.T.C., Professor, certified athletic trainer and director of the graduate program in sports medicine/athletic training at Brigham Young University, neck and arm pain is the most common exercise-related pain, which often results from a wide variety of activities including unaccustomed exercise, physically-demanding work, and overuse or repetitive use of a muscle or joint. "Pulled muscles are more likely to occur in the fall and winter months because your muscles tighten and contract in the cold weather," adds Dr. Draper. "But sometimes sore muscles occur despite taking the right precautions. In these cases, I recommend continuous, low-level heat therapy."

Here are his tips to help you perform at the top of your game:

Stretch your muscles: Not only does stretching improve performance, it helps prevent injuries and improves flexibility. One of the best times to stretch is right after a workout, such as running, skating or skiing. Stretching fatigued muscles immediately following the exercise that caused the fatigue helps enhance the promotion of muscle growth, and will actually help decrease the level of post-exercise soreness.

Treat sore muscles: If stretching didn't do the trick, don't think sore muscles will just go away; beat them to the punch with heat therapy. ThermaCare® is an air-activated heat wrap designed to provide at least eight hours of continuous, low-level heat therapy,



powerful pain relief and deep muscle relaxation. Once exposed to air, ThermaCare HeatWraps reach a therapeutic temperature of up to 104° F within 30 minutes, which increases circulation, thereby enhancing the body's natural restorative process.

Eat right: Smaller, more frequent meals are easier to digest and increase your metabolism, helping keep fuel reserves at their peak. Your body can only handle so much food at one time, and the digestive process is much more efficient with smaller quantities of food, making nutrient absorption more complete. Also, it's extremely important to stay hydrated throughout the day, so drink a lot of water.

Dress Appropriately: Layer your clothes. Wear tights under sweatpants, and a turtleneck under a sweatshirt with a light jacket. Once you warm up, layers can be removed.

Keep these tips in mind and you'll be able to perform at your best and feel great too.