

**HELPING YOUNG ADULT ATHLETES WIN THE BATTLE AGAINST SPORTS-RELATED INJURIES:
*Weekend Athletes must work harder, smarter to reap benefits and reduce risks of exercise***

New York, NY and Greenwich, CT, April 2009 – For young adult athletes and sports enthusiasts in their 20's and 30's who find little time to indulge in their favorite activities during the workweek, but try instead to cram a weeks' worth of them into two short weekend days – there's good news, and there's bad news.

"The good news is that almost all types of exercise are beneficial to the cardiovascular system," explains Kevin Plancher, M.D., a leading NY-area orthopaedist, sports medicine expert and official orthopaedic surgeon of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard teams. "The bad news is that these enthusiastic young 20's and 30's athletes run a high risk of joint and muscle injuries as a result of their lifestyle," he adds.

Young Adult Athletes Risks

Dr. Plancher notes that a number of factors conspire to make young adult athlete' activities more dangerous. "First, they tend to be longer in duration and greater in intensity than weekday exercise sessions," he explains. What's more, from day-long golf outings and hours-long tennis or racquetball sessions to organized games of team sports like soccer and basketball, Young adult athletes' sports also tend to involve groups of players. "Playing a sport with a group of college buddies or neighborhood friends can inspire a more competitive spirit than, say, walking or jogging alone," Dr. Plancher points out. "The more competitive we get, the more likely we are to push our bodies past their limits, increasing the risk of injuries," he says.

These injuries are most likely to occur in the joints and muscles of the knees, shoulders and elbows, Dr. Plancher notes, for two key reasons. "Firstly, they are the three key areas that receive the most shock and friction during these young adult athletes activities – and they're also the areas that get the least amount of weekday workouts, based on a mostly sedentary lifestyle during the workweek."

Here to Stay

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2003 "American Time Use Survey,"² Americans spend 70% more time exercising on weekends than they do on weekdays. That's because employed Americans spend more than eight hours on average each weekday at work, and another six hours on average attending to household and family needs like chores, child care, errands and social/educational commitments. What's worse, Americans spend what little recreation time they have during the week primarily on sedentary activities like watching television, reading, computer activities or relaxation.

Ready, Set, Play

Dr. Plancher offers the following tips to prepare the body for a weekend of intense sports activity:

- **A little goes a long way.** "Young adult athletes can take steps during the week to protect themselves for their weekend activities," Dr. Plancher points out. For example, he suggests a quick 20-30 minute jog at lunch each day, or lifting a set of light weights in the office for a brief morning workout, or using a bath towel as a resistance band to stretch shoulders and back muscles during a telephone call. All of these activities can keep muscles engaged and fluid flowing in the joints, helping to ready these areas for more intense activity on the weekends. "Preparing the body during the week for a high level of weekend activity is better than nothing at all," he adds.
- **Saturday morning stretch.** "Warmups are key to protecting joints before higher level exercise," Dr. Plancher notes. He advocates 20-30 minutes of jogging or brisk walking to enhance joint flexibility, followed by brief stretching work to prepare the muscles for a more intense workout.
- **Take a break.** Young adult athletes should pace themselves properly during long activities," Dr. Plancher advises. "Take breaks at regular intervals for rest and to hydrate the body, because the muscles need water to function properly," he adds.
- **Don't be a hero.** "It's critical that young adult athletes – and all athletes, for that matter – recognize when the body is overworked, or when it is injured, and immediately stop the activity," Dr. Plancher

warns. "Many sports-related joint and muscle injuries require immediate medical attention in order to heal as quickly and painlessly as possible," he adds. If in doubt, call a time-out.

Bio: Kevin D. Plancher, M.D., M.S., F.A.C.S., F.A.A.O.S, is a leading orthopaedic surgeon and sports medicine expert with treatment in knee, shoulder, elbow and hand injuries. Dr. Plancher is an Associate Clinical Professor in Orthopaedics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in NY. He is on the Editorial Review Board of the Journal of American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

A graduate of Georgetown University School of Medicine, Dr. Plancher received an M.S. in Physiology and an M.D. from their school of medicine (cum laude). He did his residency at Harvard's combined Orthopaedic program and a Fellowship at the Steadman-Hawkins clinic in Vail, Colorado where he studied shoulder and knee reconstruction. Dr. Plancher continued his relationship with the Clinic for the next six years as a Consultant. Dr. Plancher has been a team physician for over 15 athletic teams, including high school, college and national championship teams. Dr. Plancher is currently the head team physician for Manhattanville College. Dr. Plancher is an attending physician at Beth Israel Hospital in New York City and The Stamford Hospital in Stamford, CT and has offices in Manhattan and Greenwich, Connecticut. www.plancherortho.com

Dr. Plancher lectures extensively domestically and internationally on issues related to Orthopaedic procedures and injury management. During 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, Dr. Plancher was named among the Top Doctors in the New York Metro area and to the sports medicine arthroscopy program subcommittee for the American Academy of Orthopaedic surgeons. In 2007 and 2008 Dr. Plancher was named America's Top Doctor in Sports Medicine. For the past six years Dr. Plancher has received the Order of Merit (Magnum Cum Laude) for distinguished Philanthropy in the Advancement of Orthopaedic Surgery by the Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation. In 2001, he founded "The Orthopaedic Foundation for Active Lifestyles", a non-profit foundation focused on maintaining and enhancing the physical well-being of active individuals through the development and promotion of research and supporting technologies. www.ofals.org.