



PROACTIVE

PHYSIOTHERAPY THERAPEUTICS

Message

**FROM OWNER/DIRECTOR
LAURIE MCLAUGHLIN**

Summer's over and everyone is either back to school or back to work. For those of us who work all year round, we still can't escape that sense that it's time to buckle down and get some real work done.

We're focusing this issue on the "back to school/work" theme in order to encourage everyone to keep their health, as well as their work, a priority this fall.

Common activities such as carrying a backpack that's too heavy or working in a desk chair that isn't the right height can adversely affect your health and well being. And it's not just a matter of being uncomfortable – you could actually injure yourself.

At this time of year, many of us also move our fitness routines back inside. In this issue we take a look at some popular indoor fitness machines.

On behalf of the team at ProActive, I wish everyone a happy, healthy and productive fall – and now let's all get back to work!

Laurie McLaughlin



Laurie McLaughlin at the office

WORK IN COMFORT WITH Office Ergonomics

At ProActive, we frequently treat patients suffering from work-related health issues, such as sore necks, backs, or repetitive strain injuries. We also assess the environment our patients work in, because a few simple adjustments in the set up of your office will help prevent injuries. Here are some guidelines to work productively and safely:

Body positioning – Get up, stretch, move around – don't sit for long periods of time. Adjust your chair height so feet are flat on the floor, knees are slightly below hip level and your weight is evenly distributed on the seat. The armrests should support the forearms with your elbows bent. The back of the chair should support the curve in the small of your back. And never hold your phone between your neck and shoulder for any length of time.

Keyboard – Keyboards are a frequent cause of repetitive strain injuries. The work surface height must enable you to keep your upper arms vertical and lower arms horizontal. Your mouse should be at the same level as your keyboard and on the same side that you write with.

Monitor – The top of the monitor should be at or below eye level to minimize eye or neck strain. Use an adjustable monitor shelf if necessary. Keep the monitor directly in front of you; don't twist or crane your neck to work on your computer.

Moving **Fitness** Indoors

For many people, changing their exercise routine from outdoors to indoors is as much a part of the fall as raking leaves, but don't forget to take the time for five to 10 minutes of warm up and cool down. Most joggers will do some stretching before running outside, but it's just as important if you're running on a treadmill or using an elliptical machine.

To get your blood flowing, walk up and down the stairs a few times – or even get on the machine but at a slow pace. At that point, do some stretching of your major muscle groups. Isolate each muscle, don't stretch past the point of a gentle pull, and hold each stretch for several seconds. Repeat the stretching at the end of your workout.

Just about any indoor fitness machine can deliver a fine workout. It's how often you use it and how long you stick with it that counts. And don't forget, ProActive's kinesiologists can design a personal exercise program for you. For more information please call ProActive.

Continued on back – See list of Indoor Fitness Machines!



Backpack Blues

What goes into a kid's backpack? Books. Binders. Gym shoes. Roller blades. Lunch. Maybe even a laptop computer.

Kids' backpacks seem to be getting bigger and heavier with every passing year. It's not unusual to see children literally bowed down by the size of their backpacks and it raises the question whether carrying that size of load is even safe for kids.

ProActive physiotherapist Greg Spadoni says: "Carrying a big backpack has become a trend, but it can put a strain on young muscles and joints that can ultimately be painful and cause injury. Parents should take a second look at what their kids are hauling around on a daily basis."

TIPS (FOR KIDS AND ADULTS) ON CARRYING A BACKPACK SAFELY:

- Make sure you purchase a backpack that is sturdily made, with wide straps and solid fastenings.
- The backpack should not hang down below a person's hips. Adjust the straps accordingly or find a smaller bag.
- If your neck, shoulders or lower back start to hurt, or if you can't walk without leaning forward, you're carrying too much. Headaches can also be caused by trying to carry too much weight.
- Never hang a backpack off one shoulder – it's not designed for that and you'll put too much strain on your shoulder and neck.
- If you're carrying a fully loaded backpack, use the hip and/or chest buckle to balance the weight.
- If you can't carry your knapsack and talk without getting out of breath, you're carrying too much.

AND A FEW EXTRA COMMENTS FOR WOMEN ABOUT BRIEFCASES AND HANDBAGS:

- Women often carry far too much in their briefcases and handbags, resulting in headaches and strained shoulders and necks.
- Go through your handbag and briefcase and only carry what's absolutely necessary. You'll be surprised how much stuff you can pitch out!
- Alternate sides that you carry your purse or briefcase on.
- When your briefcase is unusually heavy, carry it in front of you, cradled in your arms and close to your chest. This prevents shoulder and neck strain.



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www.proactivehealth.ca

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Indoor Fitness Machines:

Stair climbers: People have a tendency to lean over and rest their arms heavily on the machine. Adopting this posture means that you're not going to work as hard, and therefore not burn as many calories. Some people also find that climbers can aggravate hip, knee or ankle problems.

Exercise bikes: Again, poor posture can be a problem. The new, recumbent bikes (where you sit reclined while pedaling) help to solve that problem and some people actually find they can read while working out.

Treadmills: Among the most popular machines – research indicates people are more likely to stick with a treadmill workout. If you plan to run on it, make sure you purchase one with enough stability to handle the extra pounding.

Elliptical trainers: A relative newcomer to the home fitness scene. You "pedal" while standing upright... it's like a cross between riding a bike standing up and a slow motion jog. Elliptical trainers are popular in health clubs and gyms because of their reputation for delivering a great workout to the legs and hips.