

## Warm up without burning out

You can exercise safely during the warm summer months.

Dr. Holly Andersen, director of education and outreach at the Heart Institute at New York–Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, cautions that exercising during the warmest season of the year can lead to dehydration, profuse sweating, exhaustion, and even a cardiac event.

Dr. Andersen offers the following tips to those looking to resume or begin a workout routine this summer:

- **Take your workout indoors.** When it is too hot or humid outside, exercise in a cool, air-conditioned space. Extreme temperatures can alter your circulation, increasing the work of your heart and making breathing more difficult.
- **Stretch.** Even in the summer, our bodies need to warm up. As you are exercising, take time to work on breathing and posture.
- **Drink plenty of fluids.** Throughout your workout routine it is important to drink plenty of water, even before you feel thirsty. If you are prone to lightheadedness (from low blood pressure), are an endurance athlete, or over age 75, you should replenish your “electrolytes” as well—having a little salt can be important for you.
- **Try to maintain an even body temperature.** After your workout you should not take an extremely hot or cold shower, or a sauna, as these can increase the workload on your heart.
- **Be an early bird.** If you truly enjoy exercising outdoors, take advantage of the coolest times of day—the early morning and evening hours.
- **Wear sunscreen.** If you have a sunburn, it will decrease your body’s ability to cool itself off.
- **Take it slow.** Start your exercise regimen slowly and pace yourself throughout the workout, including plenty of time for breaks and to drink fluids.
- **Have fun.** Taking time to exercise is taking time for you.