Exercise and Summer Heat: Staying cool while working out!

Staying active should be a year round goal, but in these hot summer months it's important to know the dangers of heat exhaustion, and to prepare accordingly. Exercising in the heat puts added stress on the body, and raises your heart rate rapidly. Keep these simple precautions in mind when running, walking, or playing sports!

Watch the temperature- Look up the temperature and humidity before you begin your workout. Pay attention to possible heat alerts in your area.

Know your fitness level- If you're new to regular exercise, you may be more sensitive to the heat. Reduce your intensity if you start feeling excessively tired or faint/dizzy, and take frequent breaks.

Drink plenty of fluids- Don't wait until you're thirsty to grab that water bottle! It's important to hydrate before, during, and after your workout.

Dress appropriately- the best attire for working out in the heat is lightweight, loose clothing. This will keep you cooler when your body starts to sweat. Avoid dark colors, and wear a hat to protect your face from the sun!

Have a back-up plan- If the day is just too hot, plan to get your workout in somewhere else. Walking the stairs inside an air conditioned building, or doing laps around the mall are both excellent alternatives to working out outside.
Pay attention to warning signs- If you do choose to exercise outside this summer, it's important to understand the warning signs of heat-related illnesses. These symptoms include: muscle cramps, nausea or vomiting, weakness, headache, dizziness, and confusion. If you experience any of these symptoms, stop exercising immediately and start hydrating. If the symptoms haven't gone away after 30 minutes, seek medical help.