



Katy experts suggest seeking the advice of a personal trainer before beginning a sport that you are unfamiliar with

# 5 Health Risks

## for Active Katyites to Watch for

From weekend warriors to triathlon athletes to yoga participants, all share the same potential health issues for physically active people

*Written by Tassie Hewitt*

**W**ith increased physical activity, comes a greater risk for injury. Everybody benefits from being physically active, but sometimes what starts as a healthy jog down the trail can end with a painful sprint to the doctor.

“I feel great,” says Laura Saucedo, age 29, who began taking a spin class with her mother four months ago. “To me, it’s not about losing weight, but staying healthy and living a long life so I can see my grandchildren.” Her mother, Rebecca Saucedo, started working out to lower her blood pressure, but discovered her new routine benefited her in other ways as well. “I sometimes feel pain or soreness afterward, but I’m getting more fit. I love it.” Pain is often cause for concern to doctors who find that active people are at a higher risk of certain injuries than their sedentary friends.

### **Muscle and Back Issues**

The public spends more money on back pain than any other health-related issue, according to Dr. Bill Sheppard, from United Chiropractic. After the common cold, it is the number one reason for doctor visits.

“People have back pain because their abs are weak and hamstrings tight,” Dr. Sheppard explains. He suggests people learn to lift properly from a squatting position, avoid bending from the waist, and take time to do crunches and



**Dehydration**



**Concussions**



**Sprains and Strains**

stretch. “If you’re not healthy and you don’t take care of yourself, you certainly can’t take care of your family and loved ones,” he says.

## 2 Sprains and Strains

According to Dr. Craig Nemow, a chiropractor at Chiro Dynamics, muscle strains and sprains can often be the result of muscle imbalance or incorrect form. Cheerleaders and tumblers are especially at risk. “It’s rough. It’s on a hard surface, and there’s a lot of impact on the body,” says Dr. Nemow. “Often times girls come in worse than some of my football players.” Adults are at risk for sports-related injuries, too. Dr. Nemow sees many patients who have attempted Crossfit or P90X without proper training.

Dr. Ethan Brown from The Emergency Room at Katy Main Street recommends beginning any new workout slowly. “There is never a problem with starting something at the low end and working your way up,” says Dr. Brown. “You don’t want to go to the gym and try to bench press 400 pounds the first day.” For those who suffer more pain than gain, Dr. Brown recommends rest, ice, elevation, and ibuprofen to get them back on track.

## 3 Concussions

Athletes suffering from concussions, however, should use their heads. Anyone who has had a head injury and is suffering from a severe headache, loss of consciousness, dizziness, and nausea or vomiting should see a doctor for a full evaluation.

Since many athletes don’t experience a headache after getting hit in the head, they may be unsure if there has been a serious injury. Experts recommend seeking medical care for a proper diagnosis. Andy Shen, M.D. with Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital says, “Once an athlete has suffered a concussion, they are at risk of injuring themselves further if they do not take themselves out the game. Additionally, if the athlete tries to return to their sport too soon while recovering from a concussion, they risk prolonging their recovery.”

It’s important for athletes to be especially careful if they have sustained head injuries in the past. Dr. Shen adds, “An

athlete’s risk of suffering another concussion once they’ve already sustained one increases compared to an athlete who has never had a concussion.” Dr. Shen says symptoms to beware of include headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, mental foginess, and inability to concentrate.

## 4 Dehydration

Even in the fall, hot Texas temperatures can make athletes run for cover. But for those who must practice outdoors, avoiding exercising during the hottest part of the day and staying hydrated are crucial and can help combat heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Water, however, may not be enough. According to Dr. Heidi Schultz of Fulshear Family Medicine, athletes competing in marathons and triathlons who drink too much water and not enough fluids with electrolytes, may suffer from low sodium levels. Dr. Brown suggests drinking fluids every 15 minutes. “If you’re out in the heat and you start getting dizzy, you feel faint, or you have trouble breathing, you need to get out of the sun and stop exercising.”

## 5 Heart Problems

Active people need to know when to stop exercising before exercising stops them. Dr. Schultz advises men over the age of 45 and women over 55 to visit their doctors for a cardiac stress test before starting vigorous training programs. Athletes experiencing chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea, or extreme fatigue should seek medical attention.

“Symptoms can also include pain or discomfort in the back, neck, jaw, or stomach,” adds Dr. David McPherson with Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital.

Fear of injury may leave the bravest weekend warriors quaking in their Nikes, but experts encourage you to get off that couch and into the gym and be active. “Find time for yourself,” says Dr. Sheppard. “It has to be something you enjoy, and you have to do it several times a week.” **KM**

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