**I’m Guilty**

I’m guilty of one of those things I preach strongly about, the need to prep one’s self in advance of doing something physical. Often in the office I discuss the need to realize that just because one was able to do things a certain way before and get away with it so to speak, doesn’t mean that they can continue to do so and not suffer some repercussions.

About a week and half ago I decided one morning that I needed to start exercising again. Like many people I get into a good run of exercising and then this deteriorates for various reasons. Maybe I was sick, maybe it was a late night, maybe a pregnant wife wakes you up when she goes for a snack at two in the morning because, ‘the baby is hungry’ and you can’t fall back asleep, it doesn’t really matter. Like I’ve told many, it’s not a matter of what you haven’t done; it’s a matter of what you’re doing. The past is the past, but this doesn’t mean you can’t start exercising again. And so I got up, turned on the news and started doing squats, lunges, and calf raises. Did I wear sneakers? Yes, I even tied them. Did I warm up a little bit despite having just been in bed for eight hours with my muscles cold from lack of use? Of course not, why would I? In the past I never had to, but in the past I was younger and probably in better shape.

This would have been a good time to take my own recommendations and stretch and warm-up before exercising. No, I was not going to be doing anything too intense or long, just 20-30 minutes of simple exercises, but it doesn’t take that long to hurt one's self. One can begin to move a fridge and hurt themselves in seconds, trust me, I’ve heard the stories often. What it also doesn’t take too long to do is to stretch and warm up. Lightly jogging in place and then stretching my legs should take under three minutes. Was it worth it for me to save those three minutes, staying in bed longer or getting one less thing done before I left the house?

The muscle behind my left knee has been bothering me since this time. Sometimes it just hurts, sometimes I’m just aware that it’s there, other times it grabs and I can’t straighten out my leg while walking. And because of this while working I’m often not able use my legs correctly to take the pressure off of my back, which is not good for my back in the short or long term. When I get up in the morning and take a few steps and feel nothing I begin to think that, ‘okay it’s good now’, but then I bend down or get up after sitting at my desk for a little bit and there it is back again. Deep down I know this was going to be the case as it takes weeks for muscles to fully heal. Early on in the healing process there might be pain and limitations from it, but towards the end of the process there may be only some slight tightness that one wouldn’t notice unless they were really pushing it. Regardless, it takes time to heal even if one does the right things like heating it up, stretching it out and not pushing it to hard so that one doesn’t cause a setback that slows the healing process down.

I share this to encourage people. We’re not always going to be perfect in how we take care of ourselves. As a member of the health profession there is no doubt that I know better, but just because I know better does not mean that I always do what I should. What we can do is learn from our mistakes and try to be better next time, the past is the past. And what I can do right now is stretch out my legs.