



THE Wii WARM UP: The British Chiropractic Association advises how to avoid Wii-injuries

At the top of gift wish lists up and down the country, the Nintendo Wii is very much in demand.

The British Chiropractic Association (BCA) is advising that users undertake a ‘Wii Warm up’ before getting to grips with the exciting games.

In contrast to standard computer game consoles, the Wii encourages anything but a sedentary lifestyle. With built-in motion sensors, players actively control characters and actions on screen by physically playing out the actions themselves rather than slumped on a couch moving just their fingers.

Tim Hutchful from the British Chiropractic Association comments: “As chiropractors we are encouraged that this new technology allows users to be so active especially at this time of year when the tendency is to do very little except eat and watch TV! We want people to enjoy these games, but enjoy them safely. Gamers should treat a ‘Wii session’ like any form of exercise and warm-up adequately beforehand to prevent stiffness and possible injuries.”

Hutchful continues: “Any unaccustomed exercise or activity lays yourself bare to problems that could occur from prolonged periods of active movements, so treat it like a gym work out – warming up and cooling down”.

The BCA has developed a **‘Wii Warm Up’** to help users retain nimble fingers but avoid over exertion:

1) **Shoulder Shrug** – Slowly shrug your shoulders towards your ears. Hold for 2/3 seconds, and then relax. Repeat 3 times. Because it is easier to relax a muscle after you’ve tightened it, you will relax the muscles in the shoulder and allow the blood to flow into the arms.

2) **Wrist Stretch** – Slowly stretch the wrist backwards, hold for 2/3 seconds, then slowly stretch it forwards and hold for 2/3 seconds. Repeat 3 times. This exercise prevents tightening of the wrists.

3) **Make a Fist** – Hold the arm at right angles from the elbow. Make a fist and tense it, and the whole of your arm. Hold for 2/3 seconds, then relax and let the arm flop to your side. Repeat 3 times. This will help the blood flow and tone the muscles.

4) **Neck muscle stretch** – Try to make a double chin, to stretch the muscles at the base of the neck. Hold this position for 2 to 3 seconds and repeat 3 times. Always stretch very slowly.

5) **Lower back loosen** – Stand with your feet shoulder width apart slowly circle your hips 5 revolutions to the right and then 5 revolutions to your left.

But remember warm up exercises shouldn't be painful, so if they are stop!

Hutchful concludes "It is also important to take frequent breaks during a Wii session, at least once every 45 minutes for most people, but 20 – 30 minutes for those who do not exercise regularly. Don't forget - pain is a warning sign, so if you feel any pain no matter how slight – stop!"

Chiropractors treat problems with your joints, bones and muscles, and the effects they have on your nervous system. Working on all the joints of your body, concentrating particularly on the spine, they use their hands to make gentle, specific adjustments (the chiropractic word for manipulation) to improve the efficiency of your nervous system and release your body's natural healing ability. Chiropractic does not involve the use of any drugs or surgery.

The information here is guidance and you should consult a BCA chiropractor or other healthcare professional for further specific advice if you are experiencing pain, have an existing injury or other medical condition.

For more information or to find a BCA chiropractor in your area:

The British Chiropractic Association

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