

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Healthy Hunting for Locals and Visitors

Bowhunting season opened September 1st and General Big Game Season is right around the corner (October 20th). Checking and updating your gear may be at the top of your weekend to-do list but getting your body ready for the exertions of the hunt should also be a top priority. Good physical health is a big contributor to successful hunting and a key component in avoiding accidents and injuries.

Why will good physical health help my hunting?

Consider that you've just climbed up through a stand of trees and you see a terrific cow elk to your left (just like it says on your tag). If you're out of breath and your chest is heaving, your chances of an accurate shot are substantially diminished. If you're panting too much, the critters can probably hear you!

Heart attacks are a leading casualty during hunting season.

Exercise!

- Check with your healthcare provider to confirm that you're ready for an exercise routine.
- Try to start an exercise program at least six weeks before you plan to go hunting (but right now isn't too late).
- Begin with fast walking at least 30 minutes per day, every day. Carry the amount of weight you will carry while hunting. Work up to an hour a day and increase the weight.
- There are living room exercises you can do in the evenings to strengthen your calves, thighs and upper body such as stair stepping, bicycle leg swings, bench dips, ab crunches, back extensions and push-ups.

Pat Watson, PA-C, at Ruby Valley Medical Clinic advises that "occasionally, somebody under 40 will have a heart condition that could limit their ability to exercise." Better to be safe and make sure that your heart is ready for a workout.

If You're a Flatlander -

- Physical training is even more important because the air is thinner in the Rockies and your heart will have to pump harder and faster.
- Wear your pack during your workout routine and add weight to it progressively.
- Drink lots of water. A gallon of water a day will make a big difference.
- Be sensitive to the signals of altitude sickness such as headache, dizziness and stomach complaints. Severe altitude sickness can lead to pulmonary edema (fluid in the lungs) and cerebral edema (swelling of the brain).

Visiting hunters should keep in mind that Madison County is a very rural area. "Sometimes it takes a while for emergency services to arrive at the scene of an accident or medically ill patient. Also, due to our mountainous terrain, it is often very difficult to find cell phone service," notes Watson. With the intermittent cell service, a cellphone's GPS will likely be useless in providing emergency services with locations in the mountains or remote areas.

If you're over 40 and smoke, have high blood pressure or cholesterol, have diabetes or an inactive lifestyle, you should have a check-up with your healthcare provider before heading off to hunt.

The following links have useful information about hunt-oriented exercise programs and safety.

benefits.mt.gov/huntinghealthtips.mcp.x

www.avma.org/public/Health/Documents/hunters_tips.pdf

[Conditioning for the Hunt](#)

www.elk-hunting-tips.net/hunting-fitness.html

elk101.com/category/physical-conditioning/

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altitude_sickness

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