

YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Athletic injuries

A guide for treatment and recovery

By Encarnacion Pyle

More Content Now

Physical exercise is great for the mind, body and spirit. And playing a team sport can be good for learning accountability, dedication and building confidence and leadership skills.

But participating in athletics isn't without its risks.

Sports medicine experts say that's why it's important to learn how to prevent injuries and look beyond your medicine cabinet to treat some of the most common sports injuries.

And once you've recovered, it's also good to know how to keep from suffering the same injury again.

"A lot of injuries happen within the first few months of a person taking up a new activity," said Dr. James Borchers, director of sports medicine at Ohio State University's Wexner Medical Center.

"The last thing we want people to do is to defeat themselves before they even get started."

One way to reduce the risk of this happening is by talking to your doctor about the appropriate level of exercise for your fitness level and abilities, he said. Many injuries occur when people do too much, too quickly.

When starting an exercise routine or a new workout program, start slowly, Borchers said. You should gradually build up the intensity, duration and frequency.

It's also important to warm up before and after exercising, stretch regularly and vary your workout so you don't overuse one set of muscles, said Dr. Sylvia Rozek, a sports medicine doctor at Mount Carmel Fitness & Health.

A certified personal trainer, physical therapist or strength/conditioning coach can teach you good techniques and create a safe and realistic exercise program, she said.

There are basically two types of injuries: Acute

and overuse, said Dr. John Diehl, a family practice and sports medicine doctor at OhioHealth's McConnell Spine, Sport & Joint Physicians group.

Acute injuries usually occur after a single traumatic event, such as a twist, fall or collision, Diehl said. They can include broken bones, sprains such as ligament injuries, strains such as muscle and tendon injuries and cuts and bruises, he said.

Overuse injuries typically occur over time, when an athletic activity is repeated so often that parts of the body don't have enough time to heal, he said. Examples include runner's knee, swimmer's shoulder and tennis elbow.

People should seek medical treatment for serious injuries, but can manage many sports injuries themselves, experts say. Diehl said the RICE method — short for rest, ice, compression and elevation — is helpful. And some sports-medicine experts add a P, for protection.

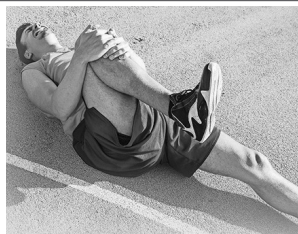
If pain or other symptoms don't improve, see a doctor or sports-medicine expert.

More persistent problems might require rehabilitation, surgery or both, said Dr. Christopher Kaeding, executive director of sports medicine at Ohio State. And don't let the fear of re-injury become an excuse for giving up exercising or a sport you love, he said.

After nearly a year of physical therapy, Corey Greenblat, 21, is looking forward to finally getting back to playing soccer.

"Soccer has always been my stress reliever, and in many ways the mental part of my recovery has been even harder than the physical," he said. "But I want to do everything right to keep from re-injuring myself."

— Encarnacion Pyle can be reached at epyle@dispatch.com or follow @EncarnitaPyle on Twitter.



FREPIK

Common sports injuries

Concussion

Prevention and treatment: Helmets can protect against skull fractures and more serious brain injuries, but they cannot prevent concussions. With rest, most people fully recover. Some take a few hours; others a few weeks. It's important to know that after a concussion the brain is more sensitive to damage. Avoid activities that might reinjure it.

Shoulder injury

Prevention and treatment: Strengthening wrist, arm, shoulder, neck and back muscles protects and decreases stress on your shoulder. If you do get injured, use the RICE method and anti-inflammatory medication. Your doctor might also recommend physical therapy.

Ankle Sprains

Prevention and treatment: Warm up, do foot and ankle strengthening exercises and be careful on uneven surfaces.

Wear shoes that fit well and are made for the activity you are doing. Treat sprains with the RICE method and anti-inflammatory drugs. If you have a more severe injury, your doctor might give you a boot, brace or cast to wear to keep your ligaments and joint in place while they heal.

Runner's knee

Prevention and treatment: Strengthening your quadriceps through weight training; taking rest days between workouts; and cross training to prevent overuse

ACL tear

Prevention and treatment: Having adequate strength in your hips and thighs provides support for your knees and prevents ACL injuries. Squats and lunges are among the exercises that can build strength. See a doctor if you suspect an ACL injury as a completely torn ligament requires surgery.

— Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Texas Children's Hospital/Cleveland Clinic

"ON THE VILLAGE SQUARE" HammondSport
SAM PENNISE, DMD
 As Always, Accepting New Patients!
 Appointments Available Daily
 Office...28 Mechanic St.,
 HammondSport
607-569-2242
 Res....HammondSport...607-569-2143
 Available for Emergencies, Consultations
 and All Your Dental Needs
 Mastercard
 & Visa Accepted

Water Street Pharmacy, Inc.
 14 Water Street
 Dundee, NY 14837
 607-243-8114
 One Hour Photo Lab
 Professional Healthcare
 Hometown Hospitality
 Tracy L. Knapp, RPh President