

Common Sports & Exercise Injuries (And How to Prevent Them)

Regular physical activity is one of the very best things you can do to maintain and improve your health. It controls weight and reduces your risk of developing heart disease, some cancers and even diabetes.

However, there are risks associated with any exercise. NorthShore University HealthSystem explores some common sports injuries and provides helpful tips for prevention and treatment. Get fit and stay safe!

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT



1 in 6 visit the emergency department due to a sports-related injury.



~53% of Americans exercise for at least 30 minutes, 3 or more days a week.



Give yourself time to rest.

Take 1-2 days off each week to give your muscles time to recover. Avoid overtraining by varying activity type.



11,000 individuals receive treatment in U.S. emergency departments each day for sports and exercise-related injuries.

Common Athletic Injuries

On average, 7.5 million people go to the doctor's office for shoulder problems each year.

Cause: Overuse during a sport or sudden trauma, like a dislocation or sprain.

What does it feel like? Overuse may cause the shoulder joint to feel stiff or achy. Dislocations or separations will be intensely painful immediately after the injury.

55% of all sports injuries are knee-related.

Cause: Repeated bending of the knee during exercise, which can irritate and overstretch knee tendons.

What does it feel like? Pain is felt around the knee or kneecap. Some may feel a grinding in the kneecap when moving the knee.

1 million people visit a doctor each year for an acute ankle injury.

Cause: Rapid outward rolling of the ankle while the foot moves inward simultaneously.

What does it feel like? Serious sprains may cause bruising, swelling and impact walking capability.



7% of all sports injuries are elbow-related.

Cause: Tendon degeneration in the elbow due to repetitive motions, such as the swinging of a racket or golf club.

What does it feel like? Pain develops gradually and is generally most severe when gripping or holding an object.

31 million Americans experience lower back pain.

Cause: Extreme physical exertion, falling, bending and crouching repeatedly, or lifting heavy objects with poor form.

What does it feel like? Pain and stiffness in the lower back may radiate to the buttocks and legs. Pain might intensify after long periods of sitting or repeated bending.

Shin splints account for 6-16% of all running injuries.

Cause: Increasing the intensity of a workout too soon or exercising on a new surface (i.e. cement instead of grass).

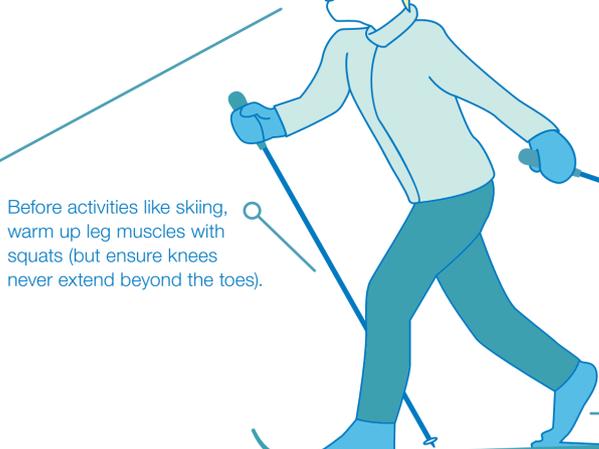
What does it feel like? Throbbing or aching around the shinbones.

Achilles tendinitis affects 6-18% of runners.

Cause: Overuse or overtraining, especially in activities that require jumping.

What does it feel like? Pain, swelling or stiffness is felt on the back of the foot above the heel.

Prevention & Treatment



Check with your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program.

Before activities like skiing, warm up leg muscles with squats (but ensure knees never extend beyond the toes).

Stretch!

Regular stretching is important for active individuals. It helps maintain range of motion in muscles and joints and can help prevent injury.

WARM UP your muscles with dynamic stretches, which are activities similar to your workout but lower intensity. **COOL DOWN** with static stretches that target the muscle groups you just exercised.



Before running, warm up muscles with a brisk walk, lunges or leg swings.



Hold stretches for 15-30 secs.



Never stretch beyond your regular range of motion.

If the Shoe Fits!

Choose your shoes wisely. Runners need running shoes and basketball players basketball shoes. Shoe type should match your chosen activity.

Change your shoes...

- **Runners** every 500-600 miles
- **Non-runners** every year
- **Daily workouts** every 6 months



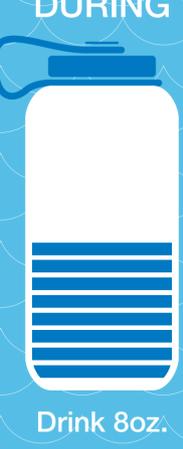
Stay Hydrated

20-30 mins BEFORE



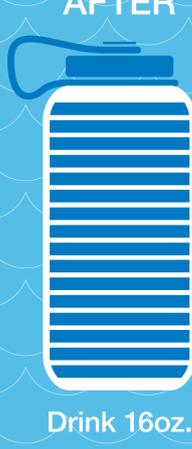
Drink 8oz.

every 10-20 mins DURING



Drink 8oz.

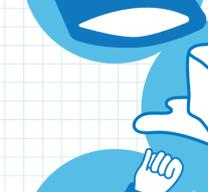
AFTER



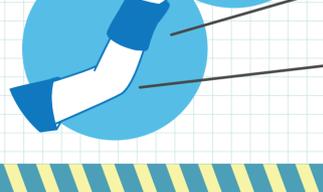
Drink 16oz.

For sprains, strains and bruises, remember:

R.I.C.E.



REST injured body part for at least 24 hours.



Apply **ICE** packs to the injured area for roughly 10-20 minutes every hour for the first 4 hours.



COMPRESS the injured area by wrapping it with an elastic bandage. Keep it compressed for 48 hours.



Keep your injury **ELEVATED** as much as possible.

IF YOU'RE IN PAIN, **STOP**

For injuries and pain lasting more than a week, see your physician. If you're concerned or pain is severe, seek medical attention immediately.



Sources

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- foxnews.com
- orthoinfo.aaos.org
- niams.nih.gov
- benthamsience.com
- cdc.gov