



ACTIVE-LY

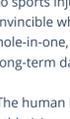
Avoid Injury

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An examination of the typical sports injuries associated with basketball, baseball, golf, and extreme sports – plus treatment and prevention tips.



INTRODUCTION

Even if you're an experienced athlete, you are not immune to sports injuries. While you may feel as though you're invincible when you're hitting a big slam dunk or scoring a hole-in-one, everyone can be vulnerable to immediate or long-term damage to muscles, tendons, and joints.

The human body is capable of fantastic feats of athleticism, but over time it wears down, causing numerous issues for active individuals and athletes. Muscle tears, sprains, and strains are unfortunately common, and if you push yourself beyond your limits, you could cause irreparable harm to vital limbs. You wouldn't want to forsake your athletic prowess because of an easily avoided injury. The key is to know how to identify where things could go wrong, and correct improper movements before it's too late.

Let's examine four popular sports to see where the root of their most common athletic injuries lie, how to treat them, and what can be done to help prevent them.



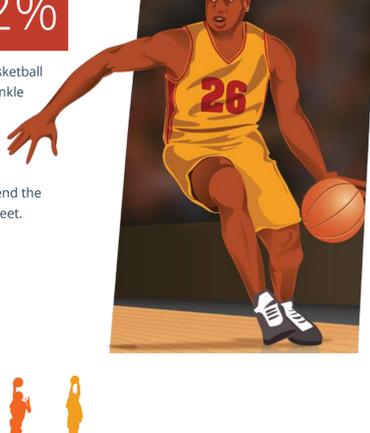
Chapter 01 BASKETBALL

As a fast-paced game where the athletes hardly ever stop moving, basketball is a pursuit that, while fun and rewarding, can cause a number of injuries and bodily damage that could accumulate over time. Since basketball requires players to constantly turn, pivot, and spin as they quickly look for an open pass, injuries to the feet, ankles, and legs can incur. Chief among these is the ankle sprain, which is caused when the foot turns inwards rather than outward, putting stress on the weaker ligaments on the outside of the ankle. This can occur when a player rolls his or her foot, or someone else happens to land on their foot, resulting in stretched and possibly torn ligaments in the ankle.

According to PhysioWorks



of injuries to male basketball players occur to the ankle and foot, so special attention ought to be paid to these areas – particularly since basketball players spend the entire game on their feet.



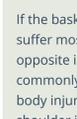
HOW TO TREAT*

Once an athlete has suffered an ankle sprain, it's up to a doctor to determine the severity of the injury by testing the ankle's range of motion. Once broken bones have been ruled out, the attention should go to bringing down the swelling of the ankle, which can be achieved with ice packs (the pain can also be managed with over-the-counter medication such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, as described by a physician). After swelling has lessened, physical therapy is sometimes recommended in order to help prevent the ankle from stiffening up or losing flexibility – and once you're back on the court, you may need to use an ankle brace or wrap in order to keep it stable. The Mayo Clinic notes that unstable ankle sprains may need a walking boot during recovery, and in particularly extreme cases, surgery may be required.



HOW TO PREVENT

Although many athletes would rather get right into the game, a solid warm-up with dynamic stretching will help prep muscles for the long stretch of play ahead. After you've finished your stretches, use athletic performance tracking to note your layup height, hang time length, and acceleration. If you're looking to increase your metrics in any of these areas, take note of where your stats currently stand and improve them over time. Instead of trying to become a star NBA player right away, be patient and work to increase your athletic levels slowly and safely. Rushing through a play on the court may only lead to ankle strains and sprains, which will ultimately hinder your progress.



Chapter 02 BASEBALL

If the basketball players listed above suffer mostly lower-body injuries, the opposite is true for baseball players: they commonly have difficulty with upper-body injuries. In particular, elbow and shoulder injuries are frequent among baseball players due to the amount of throwing motions they have to perform. Pitchers may strain their ulnar collateral ligament (UCL), which can cause pain and a limited range of movement while throwing the ball. Also, tennis elbow isn't just an affliction of tennis players – baseball players can also develop this tendon inflammation inside the elbow, which is caused by the repetitive motion of throwing. Similarly, golfer's elbow is an issue, which causes the inflammation of the tendon on the outside of the elbow rather than the inside.

Although elbow and shoulder injuries are easy to identify, they can also build up additional stress over time, and if the proper course of treatment is not taken, permanent damage can develop.



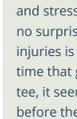
HOW TO TREAT*

Once an elbow or shoulder injury has occurred – either immediately or over a period of time – the first course of action is to put ice on the area to help with soreness and lower any swelling, and to take pain relievers (acetaminophen or ibuprofen as described by a physician) if required. Afterward, the best step to take is to make sure the affected arm gets rest and a break from activity. If the pain worsens, a doctor can diagnose whether or not an MRI is needed, as well as do a simple check of the arm's range of motion. In serious cases, surgery may be necessary to repair torn ligaments.



HOW TO PREVENT

Rest and rotation is the name of the game here, and professional baseball teams have a wide roster of pitchers for a reason – so players don't have their arm tired out or overworked. When you're playing baseball it's smart (if possible) to space out your games so that you're not constantly pitching or throwing – giving your arm time in between games to rest. Speaking of stretching, a warm-up period is important before the game in order to get muscles limbered up and ready for activity. Although elbow and shoulder injuries from baseball may frequently occur, they can be prevented by ensuring that you don't overexert your throwing skills on numerous back-to-back nights.



Chapter 03 GOLF

As the relaxed choice for many weekend warriors, golf may not seem like a particularly strenuous sport, but it too has its fair share of injuries – many of which are caused by repetitive strains and stress on muscles. It should come as no surprise that the most typical of golf injuries is to the lower back; with all the time that golfers spend bent over the tee, it seems like it's only a matter of time before the lower back and spine begin to protest. In an article published by the American Orthopaedic Society of Sports Medicine, 33% of PGA golfers reportedly suffer from lower back pain due to the rotation of their golf swing and how it twists their body.

poor movement while swinging the golf club. The wrist can also be affected, namely due to overextension of tendons and overuse when it comes to the lead wrist. All of this can not only lead to a bad scare – it can also build up over time and severely limit the range of motion in your swing.



Additionally, as with the baseball players listed above, elbow and shoulder injuries are common for golfers, resulting from

HOW TO TREAT*

Your spine is the lynchpin to your entire body, so you're going to want to treat it with care. If you're suffering back pain from playing a few too many links, the best treatments you can undertake are rest, applying a heating pad or a cold pack to the affected area, or taking pain relief medication if needed and prescribed by a physician. While you take some time off from golf in order to let your back and spinal pain subside, it's a good idea to engage in some light exercise and stretching in order to keep the area limber and flexible. The same goes for elbow, shoulder, and wrist injuries – make sure to rest the sore tendons and joints, apply hot or cold pads, and only return to the course once you feel the pain is gone. If pain persists for more than two weeks at a time, consult a doctor to see if additional scans need to be done to identify any deeper issues.



HOW TO PREVENT

The number-one thing a golfer can do to prevent injuries is ensure that they're using the best swinging form. The Mayo Clinic devoted an entire article to preventing golf injuries, and made sure to note a number of ways to adjust one's golf swing, including employing proper posture (spine straight and torso tilted forward; all power should come from the hips), staying smooth by using all your muscle groups to swing correctly, and relaxing rather than overswinging. When it comes to preventing back pain, remember to squat to retrieve a ball rather than bending over at the waist, and if you're carrying your own golf bag, crouch down to pick it up and lift with your knees. A day on the golf course should be slow-paced and enjoyable – make sure you're not driving too hard or putting too much stress on your back, and you'll be hitting the ball for years to come.



Chapter 04 SKATEBOARDING / BMX / MOTOCROSS

Skateboarding, BMX, and Motocross: all require a high degree of skill and athleticism. These action athletes risk injury to one of the most important parts of the body: the head.

bike, and a shoulder can be badly injured during a fall. So even though skateboarding and off-road biking may not be "traditional" sports, the potential for a variety of serious sudden injuries is high.



Practicing any of these sports without proper protective headgear can increase the risk of external damage to the face and internal damage to the brain. Concussions are always a danger, as well as the potential to have teeth knocked out or collarbones bruised or broken. Beyond the seriousness of head injuries, many riders of skateboards or dirt bikes can find themselves injuring their wrists, shoulders, or arms if they happen to fall off. Rotator cuff injuries can be frequent among motocross or BMX riders in particular, as they need their shoulder joints to help them turn and control their

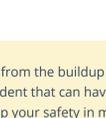
HOW TO TREAT*

In the event of a head injury, visit a medical professional to rule out any concussion risks and see if additional scans may be required. For more basic cuts and scrapes suffered from falls, be sure to cleanse the wounds with antibacterial ointments or sprays and use sterile bandages to help infection. When it comes to repetitive stress motion injuries in the shoulders or wrists, hot or cold packs may help ease the pain, but in many cases, time and rest are the best cures.



HOW TO PREVENT

Wearing protective gear – helmet, knee pads, elbow pads, and so on (there are even specialized motocross knee braces and dirt bike neck braces to help provide additional protection and support) – is a good step towards preventing serious injuries in the event of a fall off your skateboard or bike. Even if you're absolutely confident in your skateboard ollie or dirt bike 360, all it takes is a split second of error for you to end up in the hospital. If you find that you're frequently hitting a jump incorrectly, try using a device such as Action Replay to see how your body is turning to appropriately adjust your position. And lastly, it's important to know your limits, especially in extreme sports – never attempt a jump or a trick that's beyond your capabilities.



CONCLUSION

Whether the risk of injury comes from the buildup of repetitive stress over time or a sudden accident that can have serious results, it's always important to keep your safety in mind rather than putting your body in a dangerous situation. At the end of the day, only you know your body's limits (and if you're having a hard time establishing them, you can always invest in an athletic performance sensor to determine your baseline) – and even though the adrenaline rush may make you feel superhuman, your body can still suffer damage. But with a little caution and being prepared, every athlete can make sure they maintain long and healthy careers in the sport of their dreams.



For more information on athletic tech and performance measurement, visit [Blast Motion](http://blastmotion.com).

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Resources:

- <http://www.webmd.com/men/features/seven-most-common-sports-injuries>
- <http://physioworks.com.au/Injuries-Conditions/Activities/basketball-injuries>
- <http://www.hughston.com/hha/a/basket.htm>
- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sprained-ankle/basics/treatment/con-20032428>
- <http://www.stopsportsinjuries.org/baseball-injury-prevention.aspx>
- http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/5-common-patient-sports_tips/ST%20Golf%20Injuries%2008.pdf
- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/golf/art-20047434>
- <http://www.thebrothersnetwork.net/health/2015/03/prevent-common-bmx-injuries.html>

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