

Sports Medicine for Adults and Children

Orthopaedics • Sports Medicine

Injury Prevention for Young Athletes

Children's athletic injuries can often be prevented. Here are a few guidelines to use year-around:

"Prehabilitation"

Instead of rehabilitation after a sports injury, practice "prehabilitation." This means that athletes should get ready for the season with the right sport-specific training. Prepare muscles that will be commonly used in your sport by strengthening and stretching 8-12 weeks before the start of the season. A certified athletic trainer, physical therapist, strength and conditioning coach, or sports medicine physician can help you set up an appropriate program for the off-season. Prehabilitation also should include rehabilitating any injuries from last season. Although an old injury may no longer hurt, there is a good chance that you may have some weakness or poor flexibility that will make you more likely to get another injury this season. So, if you suffered an ankle sprain and you haven't done any strengthening or balance exercises since the injury, now is the time.

The 10% Rule

Following the 10% rule can prevent overuse injuries such as tendonitis and stress fractures. The rule suggests starting slow and increasing training by 10% per week. So, if you normally run 20 miles per week, you may increase to 22 miles the second week. Then, you may increase to 24.2 miles the third week, and so on.

Cross-training

Although basketball players like nothing better than to play pickup ball in the summer and soccer players are willing to play indoor leagues all winter, sometimes our bodies need rest. Year-round sport-specific training can put stress on a body. This means that even pitchers should take a break from pitching during the year. So, how do you stay in shape for the season? Cross-train. This means picking an activity that will keep you in good cardiovascular shape but does not exert the same demands as your usual sport. Excellent choices are swimming, deep-water running, and even biking. All are low-impact but keep you in tip-top shape. Also, it's safe to pick impact activities such as running, basketball, or soccer – just pick something that focuses on different muscles than your primary sport. Instead of dedicating a month to cross-training, you can mix it into your usual sports training routine once or twice a week. Stretching exercises can help reduce the chance of injury.

1-866-UH4-CARE

UHhospitals.org

About Us

University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital Sports Medicine physicians care for both competitive athletes and weekend warriors. Our physicians meet the highest standards possible in specialty training and are focused on the issues that affect athletes of all ages. Our board-certified pediatricians have completed a two-year accredited Sports Medicine fellowship and are among only 100 pediatricians nationwide who have earned their Certificate of Added Qualifications in Sports Medicine.

Common sports-related problems we care for:

- Acute injuries (ankle sprains, muscle strains, knee and shoulder injuries, and non-displaced fractures)
- Overuse injuries (tendonitis, stress fractures, and back pain)
- Growth plate injuries
- Mild traumatic brain injury (concussion) and other head injuries
- Athletes with chronic or acute illness such as infectious mononucleosis, asthma or diabetes
- "Return to play" decisions for the sick or injured athlete
- Athletes with eating issues, menstrual irregularity or bone density loss
- Nutrition, supplements, ergogenic aids and performance issues
- Specialized guidance for youth and women athletes
- Injury prevention for all ages
- Exercise guidance for patients who want to improve their fitness
- Pre-participation sports physicals
- Assessment of sport-specific needs in specialized populations, such as Special Olympics athletes

Locations

- University Hospitals
Case Medical Center – Bolwell Health Center
- University Hospitals Landerbrook Health Center
- University Hospitals
Chagrin Highlands Health Center
- University Hospitals
University Suburban Health Center
- University Hospitals Mentor Medical Center
- University Hospitals Westlake Health Center
- Southwest General Urgicare (Strongsville)

**It's not whether you win or lose.
It's how healthy you stay.**

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