

7 Tips to Prevent Sports Injuries

Certified athletic trainer **Christina Haupt** and Dr. **David Jones** of the Institute for Western Surgery provide tips for avoiding injuries



4 Cool Down

After any workout a cool down is essential. Once your heart rate and breathing have returned to normal levels, take 15 minutes to stretch and walk. Cooling down properly will help reduce lactic acid build up and in turn prevent stiffness and soreness.

5 Listen to Your Body

Before, during and after engaging in physical activity always listen to your body. It is normal to feel some general soreness and stiffness when exercising, but if you experience strong or sharp pain, take a rest. If the pain persists, seek assistance from a healthcare professional.

6 Purchase Good Footwear

Not all feet are the same and sports shoes need to be carefully selected depending on whether your feet have a tendency to be flat or have a high arch. As a general rule, new running shoes should be purchased approximately every 6 months or after 800-1,000km of use.

1 Warm Up

A dynamic warm up is essential for injury prevention. This should include stretching, sport-specific movement activities and a gentle cardiovascular exercise such as jogging. Warming up improves performance and increases blood flow to soft tissues, helping to prevent sprains, strains and tears.

2 Improve Your Technique

Practicing sports with the correct technique significantly reduces the likelihood of injury. If you are starting a new sport, like tennis, it is a good idea to take lessons from a professional coach. If you are working out in the gym, try a few sessions with a personal trainer to ensure you are using proper work out techniques.

3 Stay Strong

In order to maintain proper form, it is important to have strong core muscles, including the deep muscles of the hip, pelvis, trunk, abdominal region and low back. These muscles contract in unison to maintain spinal alignment. A good exercise program should include at least 15 minutes of core activities at least three times a week.

7 Rest

It is important to take rest from exercising. Ideally, you should give your body two days rest before performing the same type of exercise in the same region of the body. Cross training is a great way to avoid repeated stress injuries. Try replacing a session of gym exercise or running with pool exercises every week.