

COMMON SPORTS INJURIES MANAGEMENT

The Summer is a wonderful time to be involved in a sports or recreational activity. Unfortunately, injuries can occur that sidelines us for a day, week or the entire season. The good news is that you can minimize your down time by being able to identify the problem and having early intervention.

ANKLE SPRAINS

Ankle sprains are very common with sports that require running, cutting and jumping. Generally, the anterior talofibular ligament is over stretched or torn from “rolling” the ankle. This causes an inflammatory reaction that causes the ankle to swell, stiffen and become painful. For immediate management of this injury one should use the “RICE” method. R-rest, I-ice, C-compress and E-elevate the injury above the level of the heart. Ice should be applied for up to 30 minutes using a barrier such as a towel to prevent skin burns.

Icing an injury for longer than 30 minutes may have a reverse action and cause increased swelling. Seek medical attention if you are unable to bear weight on the ankle, it becomes discolored or if immediate and severe swelling occurs.

ROTATOR CUFF INJURIES AND TENDONITIS

The rotator cuff is made up of 4 main muscles that work in unison to move your shoulder in various positions. These muscles are called the Supraspinatus, Infraspinatus, Subscapularis and Teres Minor. They originate from the scapula and insert into the head of the humerus (top of the arm bone). The Supraspinatus muscle is the most commonly injured of the group. This is primary because of its location and the path that it runs to attach to the humerus. This muscle is commonly injured with activities that require overhead repetitive movements such as throwing, pitching, overhead serving and swimming. Also it is often injured by falling on an outstretched arm. You may use the R-I-C-E method for immediate intervention, however medical attention should be sought as soon as possible to determine severity in the injury.

ACL/ PCL INJURIES

The Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) combined with the Posterior Cruciate Ligament (PCL) are the primary structures of the knee that give it support. The ACL becomes vulnerable to injury from a force that causes hyperextension (i.e. landing after a jump), rapid change in direction (i.e. cutting), or a blow to the side of the knee. PCL injuries may result from a fall on a flexed knee, and hyperflexion. If you suspect an ACL/PCL injury, which is usually indicative of gross laxity of the knee, pain, swelling and frequent bouts of giving way especially with running and cutting, you should seek medical attention. Your age, lifestyle and degree of injury will determine what medical interventions are required for your rehabilitation.

Early intervention is the key to a good and speedy recovery. Physical therapists are trained professionals, who specialize in rehabilitating people at all levels of fitness. Your therapist will perform a thorough musculoskeletal evaluation to identify your specific problem and based on your goals, develop an individualized program for your recovery. The process of recovery may be difficult in the beginning, but it will be well worth it in the long run. Don't let an injury sideline you. Get back to living without the pain.