

INJURY PREVENTION IN SPORT



Whilst sport is generally very beneficial it can carry some risks. If we rush into sport and experience quick changes in pace or direction with cold/tight tissues we can be vulnerable to strain or even damage. For this reason it is very important to warm up and stretch before sport. New research has shown, however, that overdoing "static stretching" (see below) can impede performance as we could lose the elastic "spring" power in our muscles. What is now recommended is "dynamic stretching". For this some gentle jogging can get the general circulation going then move on to slow, controlled movements such as lunges, high kicks and sidesteps for the legs, rolling the arms for the shoulders and twisting for the trunk. These movements should mirror the likely actions that could take place in sport but done in a slower, controlled fashion and done repeatedly to slowly increase the range of movement.

But it doesn't stop there. Sport is traumatic to the tissues and there is always some reaction to this, I'm sure you all have experienced post exercise stiffness for a day or two afterwards. Left unchecked this reaction stiffness can ACCUMULATE to become very chronic. This can happen slowly over a long period of time without being obvious. Chronically tight tissues are then very susceptible to acute strain and injury. For this reason it is VERY important to stretch after sport. For this, what is recommended is "static stretching" where you hold a muscle group on stretch, carefully for thirty seconds, just once but with no forcing, rocking or bouncing.



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