



Understanding common sports injuries and their treatment

By Dan Myer, MD

With the weather in Northeast Ohio steadily improving, many young athletes and “weekend warriors” will be ramping up their sports activities. Along with becoming more active comes the risk of sustaining sports injuries.

Common sports injuries fall into two categories: overuse and acute. Overuse injuries develop slowly over time when an activity is repeated frequently. Acute injuries are more unexpected and the result of what I call a “holy cow!” moment where there is a sudden, traumatic event that has caused bruising, fractures, sprains, strains or tears.

Of course, overuse injuries can affect anyone, regardless of age, even twenty-somethings who are in their athletic prime. With active children, it’s not unusual to see growth plate inflammation and stress fractures. In the older population, chronic overuse can exacerbate a degenerative problem like arthritis.

While any part of the body can be affected, the knee and shoulder are more susceptible to injury. With both knees and shoulders, I see a lot of patients with bursitis and tendinitis as a result of overuse. Patellofemoral Pain Syndrome is another common overuse injury, which causes pain at the front of the knee and around the kneecap. I often see rotator cuff injuries, as well.

As for acute injuries, many athletes—especially those playing basketball, football, and soccer—come in with ACL, MCL, tendon and cartilage tears in their knees caused by quick pivoting and sharp, cutting movements. In contact sports, cartilage and labrum tears, torn rotator cuffs and dislocated shoulders can

occur when there is a direct blow to the shoulder or you have fallen awkwardly on an outstretched arm.

Deciding when to see a doctor boils down to whether you have an acute or chronic injury. You want to see a doctor or an athletic trainer (if you’re a student athlete) sooner rather than later if you have an acute injury that greatly restricts your movement or causes pain and swelling. Generally, we consider acute injuries to require immediate, urgent care. In contrast, seeing a doctor for an overuse injury depends on how it’s affecting your daily life. If you’ve stopped going to the gym as part of your routine or are having trouble sleeping because of pain, it might be time to get checked out.

Although your primary care doctor can be a good first step in getting treatment, seeing an orthopaedic specialist is even better for any type of sports injury. At the Crystal Clinic, we take a multi-disciplinary approach to treating sports injuries. This team approach is especially important because we’re plugged in with more conservative, non-surgical treatment that our therapists and trainers can provide. Oftentimes, surgery isn’t needed. We know when to get MRIs, x-rays and other diagnostic tests and what non-surgical treatment options are available. We are also trained in newer technologies in the field of “biologics,” such as platelet rich plasma (PRP) injections, bone marrow concentrate (BMC) injections, and cartilage transplant surgery. Due to our extensive training and experience, we are better able to determine what treatment will be the most effective for you.



Dr. Myer is a board-certified, fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine. He graduated from The Ohio State University College of Medicine and performed his residency at Summa Health System and his fellowship at Orthopaedic Research of Virginia.



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