



# Preventing Sports Injuries

## Sports injuries and pain

Pain from sports injuries comes in many shapes and forms. Because the types of sports injuries are varied, so too are treatment options. Some of the most common sports injuries include:



**Bruises:** An injury to the soft tissue which causes discoloration, pain and swelling



**Sprains:** A tear or stretch of the ligaments, often seen in the ankles, wrists and knees



**Strains:** Twisting, pulling or tearing of a muscle or tendon

*Some common strains include:*

- Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis)
- Golfer/baseball elbow (medial epicondylitis)
- Lumbar strain
- Runner's knee (patellofemoral stress syndrome)



**Fractures:** Breaks in the bone

*These vary from:*

- Hairline fractures are thin breaks that don't run through the entire bone
- Compound fractures are full breaks where the bone pushes through the skin
- Stress fractures are small breaks in the bone from overuse



**Dislocations:** When connected bones separate due to extreme force on a joint

## Preventing sports injuries

There are several factors you should consider to protect yourself from injury. All play important, but different, roles in protecting your joints, tendons and muscles.

### Nutrition

A key nutrient for strong bone health is vitamin D. While you may associate vitamin D with the sun, there are several foods with naturally occurring vitamin D that should be included as part of a balanced diet.



**Salmon**



**Tuna**



**Swordfish**



**Sardines**



**Beef liver**



**Egg yolks**

You can also consider taking a vitamin D supplement to get your daily recommended dose.

### Exercise

The more active you are, the stronger your bones and muscles will be. We recommend a mix of cardio-based movement and weight training with lighter weights to build strength without putting stress on the body. However, sustaining regular exercise routines can be challenging, so whatever movement you choose should be one you enjoy.

## Stretching

Stretching and activities like yoga are a great way to maintain flexibility in the joints, which in turn means muscles are less likely to strain. We recommend warming up your body for a few minutes before performing the following stretches:



**Forward lunge:** Kneel on one knee while placing the other leg forward at a right angle. Lean forward to stretch the inner thigh and hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat on both legs.



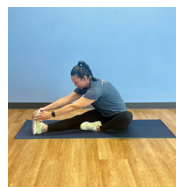
**Side lunge:** With feet far apart, bend one leg and lean toward that knee. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds and repeat on the other side.



**Standing quad (thigh) stretch:** Using a chair or wall for support, lift one foot behind you and use your hand on the same side to grasp the ankle, pulling it towards the buttocks. Keep knees close together and hips forward. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds then switch legs.



**Seat straddle lotus:** Sit down with the soles of your feet together in front of you. Press your knees to the floor while placing your forearms on the inside of your knees. Push down as you lean forward from your hips to the ground. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds.



**Side seat straddle:** Sit on the floor with legs apart. Put your hands on one of your shins and lean forward, chin to knee. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds before switching legs.



**Seated stretch:** Sitting with legs stretched out in front of you, hold the shins or ankles and lean forward from the hips. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds.



**Knees to chest:** Lying on the floor, bend your knees bringing them towards the chest. Rock gently and hold for 20 to 30 seconds.

## How to relieve pain

Depending on the severity of your injury, there are several approaches to pain management, from at-home care to provider-administered programs.

### At home

When caring for an injury at home, follow the **RICE protocol** and consider taking anti-inflammatory over-the-counter medication such as aspirin, naproxen or ibuprofen.

<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>E</b>
Rest	Ice	Compress	Elevate

**Rest** by avoiding activities that will hurt the injured body part for two to three weeks.

**Ice** the area for 20 minutes at a time, covering the ice pack with a towel to avoid skin contact.

**Compress** in the area with a wrap that isn't too constricting will provide support and help with swelling.

**Elevate** your injured body part higher than your heart, if possible, to reduce swelling.

### Rehabilitation

Rehab programs can be important for sports injuries depending on the type and severity of your injury. These programs are personalized to your injury and recovery goals and designed to return you to your highest level of function.

*Rehabilitation programs vary, but can include:*

- Limits on activity
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Exercise and conditioning programs to strengthen the area and prevent further injury
- Hot and cold therapy
- The use of crutches, wheelchairs, braces or splints to limit movement
- Pain management techniques
- Patient and family education

## Steroid injections

In some cases, corticosteroids can be used to reduce pain and swelling. These can come in the form of pills, creams, sprays and injections. Corticosteroid injections can treat bone and muscular problems and may be performed by your health care provider, a pain doctor or another specialist. Steroid injections can typically treat the following conditions:

- Low back pain that's caused by a ruptured disc, spinal stenosis and other conditions.
- Neck pain that travels into the shoulder, arm or hand (cervical radiculopathy). This pain happens when vertebrae in the upper spine move too close together or if a disc bulges or tears.
- Bursitis, a common condition where the small sacs of fluid (bursae) that cushion the spaces between bones, muscles and skin are inflamed and painful.
- Tendonitis, another common condition where the tendons around the muscles and bones are inflamed. Tendonitis is commonly found in the elbow, knee, hip, shoulder, wrist and hand.

Repeated use of steroid injections is typically not recommended, and your health care provider may limit the number of shots you can get. Long term side effects include weakening of the tendons and an increase in high blood sugar among other side effects. Those with diabetes should always tell their provider before taking any steroid medications.



## When to see a doctor

### When should you see a doctor?

Use the following as a guideline:

- The pain hasn't improved after two to three weeks of rest
- The pain has become intolerable
- A soft tissue injury (like sprains and strains) that hasn't improved after 48 hours
- You have chronic pain in the knees, elbows, neck or back
- You are stiff and have limited mobility
- You're unable to do everyday tasks

## Questions you should ask your doctor

If your doctor recommends a test, procedure or medicine, be sure to know the following before agreeing to any recommendations:

- What is the name of the test, procedure or medicine?
- Why am I having it done?
- What will the results look like?
- What are the risks and benefits?
- Are there any side effects or complications?
- Where and when will the test or procedure happen?
- Who will perform the test or procedure and what are their qualifications?
- What will happen if I decide not to go ahead with my doctor's recommendations?
- Are there any alternative procedures, tests or medicines that I can try?
- When and how will results be available?
- Who can I call if I have questions or concerns?
- How much will I have to pay?



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## BJC Orthopedic locations

### Alton Memorial Hospital

One Memorial Drive  
Alton, IL 62002  
618-463-7311

### Barnes-Jewish Hospital

One Barnes-Jewish Hospital Plaza  
St. Louis, MO 63110  
314-747-3000

### Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital

10 Hospital Drive  
St. Peters, MO 63376  
636-916-9000

### Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital

12634 Olive Blvd.  
Creve Coeur, MO 63141  
314-996-8000

### BJC Outpatient Center at Edwardsville

2122 Troy Road  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
618-800-4500

### BJC Outpatient Center at Sunset Hills

3844 South Lindbergh Blvd.  
Sunset Hills, MO 63127  
314-525-0500

### Center for Advanced Medicine South County

5201 Midamerica Plaza  
St. Louis, MO 63129  
314-273-1000

### Christian Hospital

11133 Dunn Road  
St. Louis, MO 63136  
314-653-5000

### Memorial Hospital Belleville

4500 Memorial Drive  
Belleville, IL 62226  
618-233-7750

### Memorial Hospital Shiloh

1404 Cross St.  
Shiloh, IL 62269  
618-607-1000

### Missouri Baptist Medical Center

3015 N. Ballas Road  
St. Louis, MO 63131  
314-996-5000

### Missouri Baptist Sullivan Hospital

751 Sappington Bridge Road  
Sullivan, MO 63080  
573-468-4186

### Northwest HealthCare

1225 Graham Road  
Florissant, MO 63031  
314-953-6000

### Parkland Health Center

1101 W. Liberty St.  
Farmington, MO 63640  
573-756-6451

### Progress West Hospital

2 Progress Point Parkway  
O'Fallon, MO 63368  
636-344-1000

### Washington University and Barnes-Jewish Orthopedic Center

14532 S. Outer Forty Drive  
Chesterfield, MO 63017  
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