

Athletes! (Parents, Coaches and Trainers as well)

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Your Best **Prevention** Against Serious Injury:

- Pre-Participation Screening,
- Muscle Strengthening and
- Sport-Specific Conditioning Programs

A REPORT ON SPORTS INJURIES IN SCHOOL

Over 65% of all sports injuries happen on the practice fields where there are no professionally trained personnel around to examine and diagnose the injury! The number of injuries per year from participation in team sports events is growing as is the number of participants in these sports.

A study done in two academic years showed that 1,197 injuries occurred from 3,049 participants in 19 sports...**that's over one third!** A different study broke down the number of injuries per 100 participants in high school sports, (males and females). Some of the highlights of that study are: Football – 81 injuries and 25 female injuries per 100 participants; Softball – 18 male injuries and 44 female injuries per 100 participants.

What can parents, friends, and athletes do to insure that their injuries are kept to a minimum while they are participating in all these school intramural and team-sport activities? One of the first things is a pre-participation physical examination/evaluation with a definite purpose according to the type of athlete being examined, and the sport in which he she is participating. For instance, the examination of a young teenager entails a different orientation form that of a professional football player. The purpose of the examination is to:

1. Determine if any defects or conditions exist which might place the athlete at risk or increase the chances of injury in that particular sport.
2. Bring to the athlete's attention any weakness or imbalance, so that correction of these weaknesses may be undertaken before beginning a particular athletic activity.
3. Determine whether an athlete may participate safely in spite of having a recognizable problem. The physical examination should be conducted as soon as possible before the beginning of the season in order to allow (a) further investigations of any questionable findings elicited during examination, and (b) sufficient time to correct problems such as muscle weakness, infections, and other conditions.

If you, your children, or any other member of your family are planning on participating in any sports activities this season, I recommend that you (through your family physician) make an appointment with us so that we can do this examination.

Remember, proper exercise, diet and training are the best regimen for good health and prevention of injury. Also, and just as important, is immediate and professional care of any injury. Don't try to treat the injury yourself...especially by exercising it! You may do more harm if it is not properly treated!

Sport-Specific Physical Conditioning

You cannot compare a male athlete and a female athlete. There are similarities, but in general, the male is obviously larger, but not necessarily the better, athlete of the two. The most important thing to remember: **All training and conditioning programs should be sport-specific, not gender-specific.** Muscles, blood and connective tissue are made up of cells - cells without gender.

The female athlete should not attempt to become equal to the male athlete. Females have an average of 10

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percent more body fat, and she tends to be 10 percent smaller in size than her male counterpart.

Although it is an accepted fact that females are weaker in upper body strength, their training programs can be identical in those for males. Adjustments need only be made in the workload (weight and stress) depending on the athlete's current strength level.

All athletes, both male and female should have exercise programs for muscle strengthening that include skill components of the specific sport for which they are participating. We can design a sport specific exercise training program for you that will include all of the essential ingredients you need to develop your body and especially your soft-tissue muscles to enable you to perform at your highest level with minimum risk of injury.

Hydro-what?

Heat, cold, water, motion. All of these and more are used in today's physical therapy offices and training rooms in treating and rehabilitating injuries. Here's a quick refresher of some of those "technical terms":

Cryotherapy is treatment with the use of cold (cryo = cold)

Cryokinetics is treatment with cold and movement (kinetic = relating to motion)

Hydrotherapy is treatment using water (hydro = water).

Thermotherapy is treatment using heat (thermo = heat).

Muscle Soreness

Early season muscle soreness is a common occurrence among athletes. Acute muscle soreness that results from the initial stages of both strength training and running activities is normal. Especially when the muscles involved have been unused, infrequently used, or are not accustomed to the amount or type of stress being placed on them.

Most early-season muscle pain is temporary and can be relieved with proper warm-up and cool-down activities. The athlete needs to know how to properly warm-up and cool-down activities. The athlete needs to know how to properly warm-up, cool-down and stretch before and after every athletic activity. It is important in "flushing" or removing some of the cellular debris that accumulates in the muscle tissue. The techniques are part of our conditioning program.

What Physical Therapy Can Do...

Sports, by their very nature invite injury. Each year, millions of injuries occur of the more than 4 million boys and almost 1 ½ million girls who participate in interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics. More than 1 million boys at 14,000 high schools participate in football alone. Yearly, these players sustain over 110,000 major injuries that result in 3 weeks or more of inactivity. Most of these injured athletes never see a physician.

The American Physical Therapy Association describes physical therapy as a form of health care that **prevents, identifies, corrects, and alleviates acute or prolonged dysfunctions of movement of an anatomic or physiologic origin.**

Begun in time, physical therapy can often prevent permanent damage and relieve pain and discomfort. If a serious injury is neglected, it might cause life long disability or even complete loss of function.

The physical therapist is a key member of the total health care "team", trained to improve movement and function, relieve pain and expand mobility potential. Through evaluation and programs of treatment, physical therapists can help existing problems and provide preventive health care for young (and older) athletes.

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Our staff can design a specific program for you (or a member of your family) that will strengthen muscles and be sport-specific so that serious injuries will be held to a minimum. We can and will work with you and show you strengthening exercises, and teach you how to maintain your fitness and to alleviate muscle soreness and pain.



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