

Sports Injuries

Musculoskeletal injuries can result from sports participation. Sports injuries are broadly classified into overuse injuries and acute or traumatic injuries. Overuse injuries (e.g. patellofemoral pain) develops over a period of time and the causes are multi-factorial (e.g. training intensity, frequency, training errors, biomechanical deviations, and muscle imbalances). Acute or traumatic injuries are usually a result of a sudden, traumatic incident (e.g. ankle sprain). Depending on the severity of the injury and the tissues involved, they are either managed conservatively or require surgical intervention.

If injuries are left untreated, the athlete may develop recurrent pain, weakness and stiffness, and are prone to recurrent injuries in the future.

How is it treated?

The physiotherapist will conduct a detailed subjective and physical examination to ascertain the diagnosis and impairments of the athlete. A plan of care is then designed based on the findings and goals are set with the patient, with the aim of returning to sport at pre-injury level. There will be regular follow up sessions where the patient will be re-evaluated and exercises are progressed accordingly. For patients who require surgery, rehabilitation will commence on the same day or the day after surgery. After discharge from the hospital, they will be scheduled to follow up in the outpatient physiotherapy setting.

Other medical and healthcare professionals may also be involved in the athlete's management, such as doctors, dietitians and podiatrists. For patients with cardiac conditions, cardiologists may also be involved in the rehabilitation process, to provide medical clearance to return the athlete to sports.

What does rehabilitation involve?

Sports rehabilitation is an evidence-based discipline which includes injury prevention, rehabilitation of sports-related injuries and performance enhancement, for both conservative and post-surgical conditions.

Based on the assessment findings, the sports physiotherapist may use a combination of techniques such as manual therapy, exercise therapy, electro-physical modalities or taping. In the initial stages of rehabilitation, management goals commonly include reducing pain and swelling, restoring normal joint movements, and regaining normal strength and control for return to activities of daily living such as walking and stairs climbing. Exercise therapy is one of the core treatments in returning the athlete to sports. The physiotherapist will prescribe the athlete with exercises to improve flexibility, strength, coordination, balance and control, agility, and sports specific training. Patient education is also an integral part of rehabilitation as the athlete learns about his or her condition and self-management in the long run.

Useful websites

[Learn about injury prevention during sports](#)