



## Stay in the Game! 5 Helpful Injury Prevention Tips from a Physical Therapist.

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As a former athlete myself, I can without a doubt say that the worst feeling during a sports season is not being able to show up and play with your teammates. Win or lose, it's always better to be out there competing, developing your skills, and making lasting memories with your friends. While there is no way to "bulletproof" your body, here are five tips that can help significantly reduce the risk of developing an injury at practice or during your next game.

### 1. Don't Skip the Warm-Up or the Cool-Down

- o Warm up doesn't need to be fancy. 5-10 minutes is enough at the start of your practice or game. These activities can be simple – jogging, jumping, stretching, anything that makes you move like you would do in your sport. Check out my last blog post for some more specific recommendations to warm up in a crunch for field and court sports!
- o Just as important but often overlooked, the cool down helps your body recover and stabilize after a tough game, practice or workout. Again, this can be an incredibly simple task, such as going for a walk or performing a stretching routine after your game.

### 2. You Are What You Eat

- o Consuming a balanced diet is important to keep our bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments and nerves strong for the demands of our sport.
- o We need to make sure we're not just fueling our bodies with the right nutrients, but also with an adequate amount of those nutrients.
- o Make sure you opt for lean proteins, fresh leafy greens and clean carbohydrates to make sure that you're treating your body right before and after you play.
- o Proper hydration is key before, during and after games and practice as well. Be careful with some sugary sports drinks as they may do more harm than

good. Water is always your best bet if you're not sure what to have, but adding electrolytes is never going to hurt if it is done in moderation!

### **3. There's Nothing Wrong with Getting Strong**

- o Strength/resistance training is one of our greatest tools to reduce injury risk.
- o Strength training has the potential to reduce overuse injuries by up to 50% and acute injuries by up to 66%
- o Strength training is a great way to help prepare our body for what our sport of choice will ask it to do for hours at a time, multiple days per week, over many weeks and months of a season.
- o Consult with a doctor, physical therapist, or other health care professional before embarking on a resistance training program as they can help you find the correct entry-point.

### **4. Variety is the Spice of Sport**

- o There is a lot of talk these days about specializing in one sport to excel, but some of the world's best athletes played multiple sports growing up. A great example is that Tom Brady was drafted to Major League Baseball out of high school.
- o Doing the same tasks too often without proper rest intervals and without "flexing" our other "sport muscles" can lead to overuse injuries that often are trickier to heal than acute injuries.
- o Trying other sports likely will make you a more well-rounded athlete not just physically but mentally as well!

### **5. No Pain = No Gain? No Way!**

- o You don't have to fight through that nagging ache or pain that is limiting your full potential on the field or on the court.
- o Addressing it sooner than later might even save your season by stopping it from developing into a bigger issue!

[Contact us at Joint Ventures Physical Therapy in Peabody](#) in order to schedule an initial evaluation and get started on a personalized treatment plan with one-on-one, 40-minute appointments where your health and fitness goals are our top priority.

