



the Treatment and Prevention of Anytime Athletic Injuries

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Winter is here and with it comes sports injuries. As some athletes move inside for training others are bundling up and heading out for winter fun and games. No matter the season, sports injuries can easily be prevented with simple exercises and education.

When I assist anyone in building a complete training program or when I treat an athletic injury, I really take a close look at one major factor within the program design. I want to make sure that whatever we do, the exercises and training activities look like and function like the sport or activity that the athlete will be performing.

This may seem like a simple concept, but all too often training and exercise programs are not sport or movement specific. More specifically, I mean that many exercise and training activities end up being exercises that train muscles rather than training the movements required to perform athletics. Additionally, many rehabilitation and training routines can overlook a few key training components in preventing injuries and preparing any athlete for the physical demands that each sport can place on the body.

The most important return to sport factors, beyond of course acute injury care for swelling and pain control, are related to whether or not the athlete can quickly and safely stop motion of the body in any direction. This is probably the most overlooked aspect of athletic performance training and or return to sport after injury.

Some good examples of this concept is whether or not an athlete can land from a



Bruce Snell—Owner, NW Sports Physical Therapy, Inc.

jump, quickly stop after running full speed or throw a ball without pain and not feel like their arm is coming off at the shoulder. A complete training program will include simple body weight exercises that require the athlete to safely and efficiently land from a jump, stop, start and change the body's motion and direction without pain or compensation.

Other very important treatment and sports conditioning components include a delicate balance between flexibility, strength, posture and balance activities. When speaking of balance I am not just talking about staying upright or balancing on one leg. I am also referring to balance from the right to left and the front to back side of your body, balancing out your strengths and weakness and finally, balancing your training or rehabilitation routine between what types of activities you do and how you do them. Please read on in this newsletter to find out some simple training tips that can better prepare you for a safe return to a sport or recreational activity or even enhance your current level of performance!

WINTER WARRIORS



PREPARE FOR THE LANDING!



The majority of non-contact injuries in athletes occur as these athletes are trying to stop! No matter how “fast” an athlete might be, the athlete is only as safe as their ability to efficiently stop or perform a proper landing.

Every winter millions of people spend hours participating in winter sports, and every winter emergency rooms fill with sprains, strains, fractures and breaks. Whether you ski, snowboard, skate or sled, injuries can easily be prevented if you prepare by

- Maintaining good physical condition
- Sport specific training and exercises
- Warming up before activity
- Avoid painful movements
- Staying alert
- Knowing how to stop and fall correctly and safely
- Take a lesson (or several) from an instructor, especially in sports like skiing and snow boarding
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after activities
- Listening to your body when it says its time for a cup of hot chocolate or tea at the end of the day

Slippery Slope

Staying upright on your skis requires some balance; make sure to stretch before strapping them on.

Know your surroundings, the snow conditions and don't hit the most difficult run at the end of the day, when you're most

tired. Often injuries occur on the slopes in the late afternoon or evening when people push themselves for “one last run”.

If you snowboard, make sure to wear protective gear, wrists and ankles tend to be injured the most.

Sports Injury Prevention: Coming in for the landing!

The majority of non-contact injuries in athletes occur as these athletes are trying to stop! No matter how “fast” an athlete might be, the athlete is only as safe as their ability to efficiently stop or perform a proper landing. A good analogy would be that you would not want to drive a really fast car that did not have good brakes, would you? Unfortunately, a major emphasis in athletics has been on generating force, improving speed and explosiveness, with little emphasis at all on reducing force, stopping or landing! In the midst of an epidemic of non-contact injuries, it should make sense to do whatever we can to prevent injury.

Here are some suggested activities that athletes and coaches can implement into their existing training programs to emphasize force reduction and improve the athlete's ability to become a better shock absorber. One could equate this type of training to building a spring. In essence, the better you can absorb shock, the more safe and effective you can become. The following activities can easily be used as warm-up and altered to be sport specific



1. Start with form run activities such as: double and single arm skipping, high knee runs, butt kickers, cross over runs, and a lunge walk.

Cover a distance of 30 to 40 yards with each activity.

2. Jumping rope is another simple activity with nice results. Start jumping rope with double leg touches and progress to single, with the emphasis on a tall posture and very light touch.

3. A series of double and single leg hops (straight up and down, side to side or front to back). Start with the double leg hops then progress to single leg hops. 20 reps of each is good number for each movement. Remember to stress a soft full-foot landing (toe to heel) with good control. Stick the landing and keep it quiet, no pounding on the ground!

4. Stopping is the next skill to train. Assigning a stopping point to all your footwork or conditioning drills easily accomplishes this. We like to place a cone on the ground about 10 to 15 yards beyond where the drill ends, instructing the athlete to sprint out and stop on the cone. Emphasize a smooth, quiet stop, and lowering of your hips as you stop.

Tips and Tricks

TRAINING TIPS!!



Focus on big coordinated movements vs. isolating muscles!



< Simple to complex!

Learn movement skills before sport skills!

Train movements not muscles!



Force reduction before force production!

< Learn how to stop and land!

Core strength before extremity strength!

Develop the “go muscles” before the “show muscles”!



5. Finally, make sure you work change of direction activities into your training and conditioning. Very few sports require purely straight ahead activities so you really need to change directions frequently and make your training look like the game!

These simple activities will help reduce the forces that cause injury, improve you or your athlete's performance, while building sport specific strength.

FAQ

How do I know if I am ready to safely return to training or competition following a sports related injury?

One of the best ways to know if you are ready to return to a sports activity is through functional testing of your physical performance in a controlled setting. A physical therapist and or athletic trainer can take you through a series of sport specific tests to make sure you are ready to return. They will look for signs of pain, weakness compensation or reduced performance when testing the injured side and comparing it against the uninjured side. You should put through a series of sport and movement specific tests and be able to perform them without noticeable pain or compensation.

How long will it take for my “pulled muscle” to heal?

Typically it takes 4-6 weeks for a mild to moderate strain or “pulled muscle” to heal but it takes much longer if the muscle is completely torn. You can begin rehabilitation right away after a muscle

injury and may feel much better within the first few weeks but the tissues really need about 6 weeks to adequately begin the rebuilding process. Keep in mind that the healing of the muscle tissue and “taking time off” does not take the place of strengthening and alternate training activities needed to fully recover. You will need to exercise and remain active at the same time that the injured muscle is healing. We call it “active rest” or “active recovery”.

Should I use heat or ice after my injury or during my rehabilitation?

When in doubt use “ICE”. Ice is always used for the first 48-72 hour after an injury and then heat may be used if the swelling and localized internal bleeding of the area is well under control and not still warm to the touch. Heat may be used during your recovery as a “warming up” agent prior to activity to get the blood flowing but always use ice after activity or when you are just not sure which to use.

Would you or your athlete benefit from a performance-training program? Take this simple test...

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you a frequently injured athlete?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you like to be more athletic?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would improved speed provide you playing opportunities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would improved lateral speed and agility provide you playing opportunities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you lack confidence on the playing field?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you like to have more control over your athletic future?



If you have answered **YES** to any of these questions, you should contact a performance specialist at NW Sports Physical Therapy.

Featured Employee

Steve Tollan, CSCS



Steve graduated from Western Washington University with a bachelor's degree in Exercise Physiology in 1987. During his time at Western, Steve competed in both track and cross-country and earned All-American honors in the fall of 1987 in cross-country. Steve has worked for NW Sports PT since 1998 and was recently named Clinic Manager for the Gig Harbor office. Steve became a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist in 1997 and earned his National C license for coaching soccer in 2004.

Although he likes all aspects of physical therapy, he particularly likes working with athletes and takes great pride when he is able to help them return back to their sport.

In his off time from NW Sports, Steve runs his own sports training business called Tollan Sports Training Systems. His business targets soccer players and teams with an emphasis on speed, agility and quickness training. Steve has worked with many of the elite soccer teams in Western Washington as well as UPS, PLU and the Seattle Sounders.

Steve enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He and his wife Stephanie have two children, daughter Claire, 8 and son Connor, 3.

SUCCESSSES

What clients are saying ...

NW Women's Physical Therapy: Gig Harbor

"They took me from barely being able to sit, to doing wondrous things like picking up rugs off the floor and emptying the bottom rack of the dishwasher." - R.E.

"Not only did physical therapy work, but Jill was a breath of fresh air and would relate to the physical burdens a women's body endures after child birth." - T.F.

NW Sports Physical Therapy: Tacoma and Gig Harbor

"What a caring, amazing therapist! From the very beginning, when Bob chose to work exclusively with me because of his background in rehab therapy for people with MS, I knew I was in good hands." - L.O.



"I felt confident I would see 100% improvement due to my trust in my therapists' abilities. I leave here ready to walk, run, skip or hop out the door with a big smile and a THANK YOU!" - G.H.

"I first came into the physical therapy office for a torn ACL... I instantly felt comfortable when I came in. They got

me healed quickly, and I was back out on the field in no time. I am now back with a strained hip flexor...I look forward to being able to come here and recover from my injury." - S.H.



"When I came in I could barely even walk. As the weeks here got harder physically the physical therapy "crew" always pushed us and always had a great attitude. I strongly believe that attitudes are contagious. I don't know where I would be without them." - S.R.

NW Hand Therapy: Tacoma and Gig Harbor

"Brian, my therapist, is so knowledgeable and caring. I certainly appreciate all he did for me. The result is a complete recovery for which I am sincerely grateful!"



"I had carpal tunnel release surgery ... I was referred to NW Hand Therapy a week after the surgery and was seen by Stephanie the same day. I felt immediate relief... Everyone at NW Hand Therapy was friendly, professional and helpful." - S.A.

"I came in to see Cathy for therapy... She helped me get back the strength and mobility in my arm so that I could get back to work and regular sports activities. It changed my outlook on post-surgical therapy and I came to know some very good people at NW Hand Therapy." - D.B.

Perform at The Top of YOUR Game



call today for a
FREE CONSULTATION

Find out if physical therapy can help you ease the pain and help you gain a new outlook on life.

Gig Harbor (253) 851-7472
Tacoma (253) 552-2525



NW SPORTS
PHYSICAL THERAPY, INC.

Caring about **you** is our business at **NW Sports Physical Therapy, Inc.** Our Tacoma and Gig Harbor clinics provide physical therapy for a wide variety of conditions. We use a number of methods to decrease your pain, improve your mobility and make you stronger, healthier and happier.

The feeling you get here is one of caring, helpful staff in a friendly environment, assisting you in your desire to become more active or return to work or play.

NW Sports Physical Therapy, Inc. also has two other clinics which focus

on specific areas of concern. First, **NW Hand Therapy** specializes in the treatment of hand, wrist, elbow and shoulder problems. We have five hand therapists, two of which are Certified Hand Therapists to serve your needs.

Second is our newest specialty area, **NW Women's Physical Therapy**. This clinic is dedicated exclusively to women's health and wellness. We have the ability to care for issues specific to women, in a warm, friendly environment. Our experienced therapists treat issues such as bladder and bowel incontinence, osteoporosis, pelvic floor pain, fibromyalgia and general orthopedics injuries.

WE CARE ABOUT YOU!

Call us today for a **FREE consultation at**

NW Sports Physical Therapy, Inc
Gig Harbor (253) 851-7472
Tacoma (253) 552-2525

NW Hand Therapy
Gig Harbor (253) 851-7472
Tacoma (253) 428-8292

NW Women's Physical Therapy
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