

Injury Prevention

Course by Clare Carrick from Back in Motion Physio

Types of injury

Acute:

An injury that happens suddenly, such as a torn muscle, fracture or sprained ankle.

Chronic:

Injuries that come on gradually through repetition or from long periods of stress such as achilles tendon, tennis elbow. This type of injury is common for distance runners.

Common causes of chronic injury are:

A sudden increase in training.

High intensity training where there is a loss of technique.

Bio-mechanical – such as hips or spine alignment.

Footwear – get advice from a specialist shop.

Environment – running on cambers, slopes etc.

Stages of healing for muscular injuries.

(Bones, ligaments and tendons require more healing time and you should see a physio for treatment advice.)

Acute: 48 hours

Sub-acute: 48 hours – up to 5 days

Chronic: 5 days +

Treatment for acute injuries

Acute phase: **RICE**

Rest – stop the activity immediately.

Ice – apply ice for 3-4 minutes only initially, repeat after an hour. After 24 hours this can be increased to 10 minutes and repeated after 3 hours. If you use an ice-bath don't stay in for more than 3 minutes.

Compression – bandage towards heart. Make sure for an ankle the bandage goes right up to the calf. If you use a tubigrip make sure the correct size is used.

Elevation – Put your foot up, to minimise the swelling and increase help the blood flow.

After the first 24 hours begin to move the injury.

Sub-acute phase:

If there is swelling for too long this can create scar tissue. To keep the swelling down apply ice and heat – for 10 minutes, starting and finishing with ice. (Do 2 minutes ice, 2 minutes heat...) You can repeat this every 3 hours; try to do at least twice a day.

At this stage you can use an anti-inflammatory. Get advice from a doctor on this. Gel is only useful for ankles as it can't penetrate very far.

Move the injury and try to build up some strength. Use a resistance band on ankles. Wrap round your ankle and gently try to rotate, or push the toes forward and back.

Chronic phase:

If the injury is not too severe you could return to walking jogging with some support or strapping. Continue to use support until your confidence returns.

Massage the injured area to increase the blood flow.

Stretching.

Treatment for chronic injuries

Refrain from activity that aggravates the injury.

Treat in the same way as the chronic phase of acute injuries.

Chronic injuries are due to long periods of stress and therefore take a long time to heal so be patient.

Returning to sport

Reduce your speed.

Reduce the length of your sessions.

Build up strength gradually to prevent re-injury. (Resistance band, stand on one leg, wobble board, one leg squats etc.)

Progress the stress levels.