

Prevention of Overuse Injuries

Problem #1: Increasing level of activity too quickly

Commonly causes:

- Shin splints (pain in medial shin)
- Stress fractures (small breaks in shin bone)
- IT band tendonitis (inflammation of iliotibial band at hip and knee)
- Plantar fasciitis (inflammation of soft tissue of bottom of foot)

How to correct this:

1. Regular weekly exercise
2. Start with low-intensity exercise
3. Increase intensity of exercise by 10% per week

Problem #2: Repetitive movements and lack of rest

Commonly causes:

- Little league shoulder (growth plate separation)
- Most tendinopathies (inflammation of tendons, which connect muscle to bone)

How to correct this:

1. Planned rest days/weeks
2. Follow pitch count guidelines/coaches' advice
3. Try to avoid sports specialization too young
4. Cross training with different sports

Problem #3: Improper form and mechanics

Commonly causes:

- Lower back pain

How to correct this:

1. Keep back and upper body straight while lifting
2. Bend and lift with your legs

Problem #4: Muscle Development Inequality

Commonly causes:

- Impingement syndrome (shoulder pain from decreased space under acromion)
- Rotator cuff tears
- Hamstring strains
- Ankle and knee sprains and dislocations

How to correct this:

1. Be sure to build strength in all muscles surrounding joints
2. Balance of extensors and flexors around joints is important in protection from injury
3. Proper posture

Problem #5: Poor balance and neuromuscular training

Commonly causes:

- ACL/MCL/PCL sprains (damage to the ligaments that stabilize the knee)
- Ankle sprains
- Knee and ankle dislocations

How to correct this:

1. Balance training programs have prevented future ankle sprains in athletes with a history of prior ankle sprain
2. Neuromuscular retraining programs – work by changing the way your muscles react to jumping, landing and pivoting to improve their protection of the joints

Specific types of neuromuscular training programs:

- FIFA 11+
- PEP program
- KIPP program