

SPORTS SHORTS

Avoid Ankle Sprains From Sports

(NAPSA)—People who love to play sports can reduce their risk for ankle sprains by following three tips from FootPhysicians.com, the most reliable medical Web site for foot and ankle information.

Doctors with the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, which sponsors FootPhysicians.com, say those who play basketball, tennis, soccer and baseball face the greatest risk for a sprained ankle. Foot and ankle surgeons often refer to warm weather months as “ankle sprain season” because so many patients suffer this injury playing sports.

An ankle sprain is an injury to ligaments in the ankle. Ligaments are bands of tissue that act like rubber bands, connecting one bone to another. Sprained ankles often result from a fall, a sudden twist or a blow that forces the ankle joint out of its normal position.

Anyone who injures an ankle requires prompt medical treatment. Using the R.I.C.E. method—**R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression and **E**levation—can reduce swelling and pain until the ankle can be evaluated and treated by a foot and ankle surgeon.

It's important to have a qualified doctor examine an injured ankle, because a “sprain” may not always be a sprain. In some cases, bones in the ankle could be broken.

Players of all skill levels can reduce the risk for ankle sprains by following these tips:

- Perform warm-up stretches and exercises before playing sports.
- Wear the right shoes for the sport. For example, don't wear



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Taking ankle sprains seriously can help prevent foot problems later on. Some athletes develop ankle instability.

running shoes for sports that involve a lot of side-to-side movement, such as tennis and basketball.

- Wear an ankle brace if you're recovering from an injury or have repeatedly sprained your ankle.

Many athletes develop chronic ankle instability from repeated ankle sprains, causing their ankle to frequently “give way.” In some cases, these players may require surgery. Proper rehabilitation of an ankle sprain reduces the likelihood of developing chronic ankle instability.

Ankle sprains are one of the most common sports injuries. But foot and ankle surgeons say you can stay in the game if you use common sense.

For more information on ankle sprains and to search for a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootPhysicians.com.