

PREVENTION IS THE BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH SPORTS INJURIES

As many people, young and old, are getting more and more health-conscious, they try hard to seek out numerous ways that help them live longer and healthier. The most important keys to good health are adequate rest, proper nutrition and consistent exercise. However, all of these should be done with the right understanding.

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"Keeping people healthy should not be merely a booming trend; it is a necessary part of life," says Clin. Prof. Dr. Viroj Kawinwonggowit, Vice President of Nakornthon Hospital and orthopedic specialist at Ramathibodi Hospital.

"Playing sport is an excellent way to improve and maintain a person's health but we need to learn thoroughly how to execute the proper basic skills and, most importantly, how to avoid and reduce injury risk."

Warm-up and cool-down activities are crucial parts of any sport. A proper warm up can increase the blood flow to the working muscles which results in decreased muscle stiffness, less risk of injury and improved performance. Additional benefits of warming up include physiological and psychological preparation. The cool-down helps the body clear lactic acid that builds up during any activity. Less acid means less soreness and stiffness the next day.

"No matter how old we are, we should never underestimate the importance of the warm-up and cool-down. Its pattern will depend on your kinds of sport, the level of competition and the age of the players."

There are hundreds of different sport injuries, but certain parts of the body are more prone to damage than others such as knees, shoulders, ankles and the lower back. Generally, due to overuse and an unwise movement, the injuries are very common in most kinds of sport, including soccer, horse riding, golf, badminton, hockey, swimming and rugby.

Dr. Viroj insisted that whether an injury is acute or chronic, there is never a good reason to try to "work through" the pain of an injury. When you feel pain from a particular movement or activity, STOP! Continuing the activity only causes further harm.

Often, overuse injuries seem less important than acute injuries. You may be tempted to ignore that aching in your wrist or that soreness in your knees, but always remember that just because an injury is not dramatic, it does not mean it is unimportant or will go away on its own. If left untreated, a chronic injury will probably get worse over time.



Despite the fact that some injuries can be self-treated, some patients require prompt medical treatment, particularly from orthopedic specialists or sports medicine doctors. Many cutting-edge technologies are developed to help them in accurate diagnosis, improved treatment and the rehabilitation process. Arthroscopic surgery has arguably been the biggest orthopedic advancement and is recognised as a highly effective means of treatment. The technology of arthroscopy is now widely utilized in complex and difficult joint surgeries.

Arthroscopic procedures can be performed either to evaluate or to treat many orthopedic conditions including torn floating cartilage, torn surface cartilage, ACL reconstruction and trimming damaged cartilage. It allows the surgeons to treat patients' conditions or injuries by making a couple of small incisions, about the size of a buttonhole, thus avoiding large painful incisions previously associated with many orthopedic surgeries. The arthroscope, a special camera and lens, is inserted into one of the incisions, and allows the surgeon to view inside of the joint on a television screen during the procedure. Other small incisions are made in which the surgeon inserts small arthroscopic instruments to perform the surgery. As new developments are made, this technology can examine nearly all joints in the human body. The joints that are most commonly examined and treated by arthroscopy are the knee, shoulder, hip, elbow, ankle and wrist.

"Think of avoiding injury as just another part of playing by the rules because the best way to deal with sport injuries is to prevent them. By using the proper equipment, sport participants need to know not only the rules of the games, but also how to play it safe," concluded Dr. Viroj.