



Dr. Kuzma's health tip of the week

How to effectively manage muscle strains and ligament sprains.

Definitions:

A **strain** is when you tear muscle fibers or tendons (fibrous band that connects muscles to bones) as a result of overuse or over stretching. This is the most common injury of all sports. The symptoms of a strain include; stiffness, localized soreness, bruising and restricted range of motion. The most common muscle strain is the hamstring but can be at any muscle in the body.

A **sprain** is the equivalent to a strain but it involves the ligaments which connect bones together so sprains always occur near a joint. Sprains are much more difficult to manage because they are tough fibrous tissues that do not have a very good blood supply so it takes much longer for sprains to heal. The symptoms are similar to that of a strain. The most common area to sprain is the ankle but can occur in any joint.

Immediate treatment for sprains/strains:

****For any significant injury it is important to consult with a sports doctor that will be able to put together a treatment and rehabilitation program to maximize healing and to help prevent the injury from reoccurring. For mild injuries follow these simple steps to help minimize swelling...**

Rest: The athlete should avoid stressing the area that was injured for at least the remainder of that evening and possibly into the next day. ****Important**** do not rest the injury for too long because muscle atrophy can set in within several days of inactivity.

Ice: Immediately put ice on the area for 20-30 minutes along with a compressive wrap which will help minimize swelling and help with pain management. This can be done 3-4 times a day for the first 2-3 days.

Compression: Wrapping the injury with an ace bandage or other support will help reduce swelling as well.

Elevation: Elevate the injury preferably above the level of the heart whenever possible.

Functional Rehabilitation is a very important component of managing sprains/strains. This will help speed the recovery process, improve muscle strength and help prevent future injuries. This is especially critical for more severe strains/sprains. My clinic specializes in sport specific rehabilitation so if your child is injured and is not recovering, be sure to contact our office and we will get him or her on their way to better health. If you're interested in more information on sprain/strain or other areas of concern check out our website at www.kuzmachiro.com or call at (763)684-1111.

Prevention: The best way to prevent a sprain/strain injury is to have your team perform regular moderate intensity warm-ups prior to competition and/or practice. Also, supportive taping or wearing a brace may help reduce re-injury. Keeping the muscles and joints strong and flexible is the best medicine!

*Call or email with any questions or concerns for your child. drtom@kuzmachiro.com

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