

## Tips to prevent sports and PT injuries:

- » **Avoid training too hard or too long** when beginning a new activity.
- » **Gradually increase how often and how long you train.**
- » **Perform agility (speed and mobility) drills** such as a shuttle run.
- » **Wear a mouthguard** for high-risk activities like combatives, football, basketball, boxing, soccer, and extreme sports.
- » **Wear a semi-rigid ankle brace** for high-risk activities such as basketball, soccer, and parachuting.
- » **Replace lost nutrients** within one hour of high-intensity activity with some protein, carbohydrates and fluid.
- » **Wear synthetic-blend socks** like polyester and acrylic (not cotton) to prevent blisters.



**Train Smart to prevent injuries.**



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# Don't Get Sidelined...

## Train Smart!

to prevent sports injuries

Sports and recreational activities help Soldiers achieve and maintain a high level of physical fitness.

Many of these activities, however, carry some degree of injury risk. Each year, Soldiers are injured, some fatally, while exercising or participating in sports or other recreational activities. Fortunately, many of these injuries can be prevented.



You hear about how injuries on the battlefield take Soldiers out of the fight, but how about injuries on the basketball court, football field or in the weight room? The issue is more serious than you might think and cuts into Army readiness stateside and combat power overseas. Just how big is this problem?

According to the U.S. Army Public Health Command:

- » Sports and physical training (PT) are the third leading cause of injury hospitalizations.
- » More than 20 percent of air evacuations from U.S. Army Central Command (CENTCOM) are injuries from sports and PT.
- » Most (76%) air-evacuated sports injuries are from basketball, football, PT, and weight training.
- » Weight training injuries are more common among deployed Soldiers. One-third are serious muscle tears from the bench press.

Injury risks and hazards are present in most sports and recreational activities. Soldiers and Leaders use composite risk management (CRM) to identify hazards and control risks across all Army missions and activities. They should also use CRM to identify injury hazards in their sports and exercise activities. When hazards are identified, Soldiers and Leaders must implement the controls proven to reduce these injury risks.

## **The following controls have proven effective in reducing injury risk in sports and exercise:**

### **Basketball**

- » Wear a sports ankle brace to avoid re-injuring a previously sprained ankle.
- » Remove trip hazards (water bottles, gym bags, etc.) from the sidelines.
- » Wear a mouthguard.
- » Remove rings, watches and other jewelry.
- » Wear shin guards for soccer.

### **Touch or flag football, soccer**

- » Avoid overaggressive play.
- » Check the field for rocks, holes and other hazards.
- » Wear appropriate footwear for the field and weather conditions.
- » Wear a mouthguard.
- » Remove rings, watches and other jewelry.

### **Weight training**

- » Use caution when loading and unloading the weight plates.
- » Train with a spotter, especially when doing high-weight, low-repetition exercises.
- » Use good lifting form and technique.
- » Warm-up with repetitions of lighter weights.
- » Don't hold your breath; inhale lowering the weight, exhale pressing it back up.
- » Avoid anabolic steroids – they're illegal and cause adverse health effects.
- » Gradually increase the weight and number of repetitions.

### **Softball, baseball**

- » Use breakaway bases.
- » Wear a batting helmet.
- » Wear a mouthguard.
- » Call for fly balls to avoid collisions.

### **Bicycling, rollerskating, skateboarding, inline skating**

- » Wear a helmet.
- » Wear a mouthguard.

### **Boxing, combatives, wrestling**

- » Wear a mouthguard.
- » Wear appropriate headgear.

### **Water activities (swimming, boating, sailing, kayaking, tubing, rafting, diving)**

- » Safety check all equipment before entering the water.
- » Don't enter the water alone – always have a buddy.
- » Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when in open water.
- » No diving into shallow water or close to rocks.
- » Avoid use of alcohol.

### **All-terrain vehicles (ATV)**

- » Wear a helmet, eye protection and proper clothing.
- » Avoid using alcohol.

### **General guidelines for sports and exercise**

- » Gradually increase how often and long you train.
- » Don't train too hard or too long for your fitness level.
- » Vary your workout with cross-training and agility drills.