

Netball - preventing injury

Netball is one of the most popular team sports in Australia. Once known as a mainly female sport, in recent years, male and mixed competitions have become increasingly popular.

Netball places many demands on the technical and physical skills of the player. As a result, injuries can and do occur, mostly to the lower leg, wrist, hand and fingers.

Common netball injuries

The most common types of injuries through netball are sprains, bruising, fractures and dislocations. Ankle, wrist, hand, finger and knee injuries occur frequently. Common causes of injuries are awkward landings, slips and falls, player contact/collision, overexertion, overuse and being hit by the ball.

Preventing netball injuries

To prevent injury, you should:

- Be prepared
- Wear the right gear
- Use good technique and practices
- Check the environment is safe
- Know yourself and the sport.

Be prepared

Suggestions include:

- Train before a competition to ensure that you are ready to play.
- Always warm up, stretch and cool down. Not warming up before playing netball increases the risk of injury.
- Undergo fitness programs to develop aerobic fitness, strength, balance, coordination and flexibility.

Wear the right gear

Make sure you:

- Seek professional advice on footwear.
- Consider preventive ankle taping or bracing to reduce injury risks.

Use good technique and practices

Suggestions include:

- Participate in training programs to improve body balance (using wobble boards or balance mats). Poor balance may increase the risk of injury.
- Learn correct passing, catching and landing techniques. Incorrect landing may increase the risk of injury to the knee.

- Coaches should undertake regular re-accreditation and education to ensure their knowledge is up to date.
- Having accredited umpires and following the rules decreases the risk of contact and injury.

Check the environment is safe

Suggestions include:

- Check and maintain the playing surface to remove hazards, such as loose gravel.
- Provide adequate run-off area around the court.
- Make sure goal posts are padded and secured firmly to the ground with no part posing a tripping risk.
- Remove courtside hazards.

Know yourself and the sport

Suggestions include:

- Choose activities that are suited to your fitness level.
- Follow the rules and play fairly.
- Know and use the right techniques for passing, jumping, landing and shooting.

Other safety tips

Suggestions include:

- Drink water before, during and after play.
- Wear broad-spectrum 30+ sunscreen and a hat when playing outdoors during the day.
- Discourage play in extreme hot, wet or slippery conditions.
- Make sure qualified first aid personnel, first aid kits, icepacks and a stretcher are available at all times.
- Telephone access, to contact emergency services, is essential.

Respond promptly to injuries

If you or someone else is injured:

- Seek prompt attention from qualified first aid personnel.
- Make sure you are fully rehabilitated before returning to play.
- Wear an ankle brace for at least three months after serious ankle injury.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Always call triple zero in an emergency, Tel. 000
- Sports physician
- Physiotherapist
- Australian Physiotherapy Association Tel. (03) 9092 0888
- Smartplay Tel. (03) 9674 8777

Things to remember

- Netball places many demands on the technical and physical skills of the player and, as a result, injuries can and do occur.
- The most common injuries through netball are sprains, bruising, fractures and dislocations. Ankle, wrist, hand, finger and knee injuries occur frequently.
- Using the right techniques for the sport can help prevent injury.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

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