
Cricket - preventing injury

Summary

- The most common types of injuries suffered through cricket are strains, sprains, fractures, bruising and open wounds. Many of these injuries affect the upper body, particularly the hands and fingers.
 - Cricket is often played in hot conditions over many hours, so it is important to protect players and spectators from dehydration, heat stress and sun damage.
 - Using the right techniques and equipment for the sport can help prevent injury.
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Cricket is one of the most popular sports played over the Australian summer. Although cricket is not a contact sport, injuries can and do occur, often due to overuse. Cricket is often played in the heat, so players and spectators need to be protected from dehydration, heat stress and sun damage.

Common cricketing injuries

The most common types of injuries suffered through cricket are strains, sprains, fractures, bruising and open wounds. Many of these injuries affect the upper body, particularly the hands and fingers.

Injuries to the face, finger and hand from a cricket ball are the most common types of hospital-treated injuries, followed by falls. Bowlers are inclined to suffer overuse injuries, such as back and shoulder injuries.

Preventing injury while playing cricket

To prevent injury, you should:

- be prepared
- wear the right gear
- keep the playing environment safe
- know yourself and the sport.

Be prepared to play cricket

Remember to:

- Attend training so your body is ready.
- Warm up and stretch before playing.
- Cool down and stretch after playing.
- Make sure you are adequately hydrated. Drink water.

Wear the right gear for playing cricket

Make sure you:

- Wear a mouthguard, preferably custom-fitted, at all times.
- Wear shoes designed for cricket.
- Wear protective gear at all times, including training.
- Wear body padding, including gloves, leg pads, boxes and forearm guards while batting.
- Wear a cricket helmet with a faceguard when wicket keeping, batting or fielding in close.
- If you have a history of injury, speak to your doctor or physiotherapist about appropriate bracing or protective gear.

Keep the cricket-playing environment safe

A safe ground is important, so remember to:

- Remove hazards, such as stones and water, from the playing surface.
- Make sure the pitch is smooth and clean.
- Make sure the netting in practice nets is adequate to stop cricket balls.

Know yourself and the sport of cricket

Suggestions include:

- Know and use the right techniques for bowling, batting and catching.
- Get your coach to teach you the proper sliding stop technique.
- If you are a pace bowler, you should restrict the number of overs bowled during play, taking into account your physical maturity and fitness.
- Know how to use the equipment properly and safely.
- Follow the rules and play fairly.

Other safety tips for playing cricket

Suggestions include:

- Wear a hat and use sunscreen.
- Drink water before, during and after play.
- Don't play in extreme heat or wet conditions. Where possible, games should be rescheduled.
- Make sure everyone, including coaches, players and parents are aware of the symptoms of heat-related illness.
- Check that qualified first aid personnel, first aid kits, icepacks and a stretcher are available at all times.
- Check that telephone access to contact emergency services is available.

Respond promptly to cricketing injuries

If you or someone else is injured:

- Remove injured or bleeding players from the ground immediately.
- Seek prompt attention from qualified first aid personnel.
- Make sure you are fully rehabilitated before returning to play.
- Wear a brace for at least three months after serious joint injuries.

Where to get help

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

Things to remember

- The most common types of injuries suffered through cricket are strains, sprains, fractures, bruising and open wounds. Many of these injuries affect the upper body, particularly the hands and fingers.
- Cricket is often played in hot conditions over many hours, so it is important to protect players and spectators from dehydration, heat stress and sun damage.
- Using the right techniques and equipment for the sport can help prevent injury.

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