

# TRACK AND FIELD INJURIES

## Common Injuries

### Stress Fractures

Running places significant stress on bones in the legs and feet. Overtraining and ignoring pain significantly increases an athlete's risk. This repetitive stress can eventually result in a small crack of the bone if not taken care of properly.



### Shin Splints

Pain experienced on the shins is often the result of repeated stress and not enough rest. It can be caused by uneven running surfaces, poor body mechanics, muscle weakness, and many other factors.



### Shoulder Pain

Repetitive overhead motions, such as throwing the shot put, discus, or javelin can lead to shoulder problems.



### Achilles Tendinitis

Swelling of the achilles tendon and pain in the back of the leg near the heel can be a result of overuse in running and jumping athletes.



Track and field teaches sportsmanship, ethics, and lifelong health. Whether athletes choose high jump, sprinting, cross country running, or another event, this sport has a position for every athletic make-up and preference. It is essential for athletes to understand the value of taking care of their bodies.

While track and field is not a contact sport, athletes frequently endure injuries that can negatively affect their performance for an entire season. These injuries are especially common in athletes who over train, lack the strength needed for the activity, or perform with improper mechanics. Rest is as important as practice. Common injuries such as sprains and strains can lead to more serious, long-term complications if not allowed to heal.

## Choose the Right Shoes

- **Replace your athletic shoes after 300 to 400 miles of travel**, or when they become visibly worn or torn.
- **Buy a sport-specific shoe.** Visit a shoe store with knowledgeable staff that understands your sports demands.
- **Get the right fit.** Make sure you try sneakers on at the end of the day when your foot is most swollen. This will guarantee that the shoe is not too small for your foot.
- **Make sure the shoe fits snug in the front and back.** Avoid excess space in the toe box and heel slip. If you can fit a finger in between your heel and the back of the shoe, it's too big.
- **Note any discomfort while walking in the shoe.** If you experience pain while walking, it will be exaggerated when you run. If it's not comfortable in the store, it won't be comfortable when you run.
- **Wear socks that wick moisture away from the skin** for comfort and to prevent bothersome blisters.



## Injury Prevention

### Aches and pains are common after a difficult workout or activity.

These can be caused from running too far, moving too much weight, or performing a task too frequently. When aches and pains persist, the athlete should work with their athletic trainer or coach to allow rest.

### When intensity, length, or frequency increase, look for overuse symptoms.

These are the most common factors that result in overuse injury. In youth sports, it is very common for these symptoms to occur during preseason conditioning.

### Be aware of physical maturity levels.

Skeletally immature bodies are vulnerable to overtraining issues that can lead to painful long-term complications. Athletes between 6-13 years old should be monitored for overuse symptoms.

### Poor mechanics stress body structures.

It is important to develop proper body mechanics at a young age to promote healthy performance as athletes get older.

### Multi-sport athletes are less susceptible to overuse injury.

By promoting young athletes to participate in different sports or activities each season, they will experience more athletic success and be less likely to encounter overuse pain.

### Take time off.

Kids should participate in a sport for no more than five days a week, and young athletes should take two or three months off from a sport during the year. This lets the body heal and it fights the mental fatigue and burnout that can cause kids to dislike athletics.

### Fuel appropriately.

Teaching good eating habits early is great for athletic performance and life-long health. Poor diet leads to upset stomach, fatigue, and decreased performance.

## Running Mechanics

**Shoulders** - Keep your shoulders relaxed and back.

**Head** - Keep your head up and looking forward. "Keep your nose over your toes."

**Core** - Maintain an engaged (flexed) abdomen while running.

**Hips** - Don't bend at the waist. From the side your hips should not be moving up and down.

**Knees** - Bend your knees slightly to absorb force.

**Ankles/Feet** - Make sure your foot strikes under your knee and not in front. Step softly - no one should hear you coming.



## Any sports injury, anytime

The EMMC Sports Health Injury Helpline is the fast, convenient way to get help for sports injuries:

**207.974.7400**

Other ways to Contact us:

Web: [sports.emmc.org](http://sports.emmc.org)

Email: [sports@emhs.org](mailto:sports@emhs.org)



**Sports Health**