

WINTER UPDATE

HOCKEY: STAYING IN THE GAME

Hockey is gaining popularity as a recreational sport for players of all ages and abilities, who enjoy the fitness and social benefits of a fast-paced team sport. Due to the high speed and aggressive play involved, hockey has been called a dangerous sport. Most of us can probably remember hearing about hockey-related injuries, either at the professional or recreational level. Some basic information can help you develop preventive strategies to make the sport safer.

Common Causes of Hockey Injuries

Although sticks, pucks, and skate blades can cause damage, most hockey-related injuries occur due to collisions with other players and the boards. Fatigue and low energy of players due to poor endurance, insufficient rest, or too much ice time can also increase susceptibility to injury.

Who Gets Hurt?

Alarming, nearly half of hockey-related emergency room visits involve recreational players between the ages of 12-17. Worse still, players under the age of twenty account for half of all hockey-related spinal cord injuries, caused mainly by colliding with the boards after being checked from behind. Interestingly, studies show there is no significant difference in injury rates and causes between men's and women's hockey leagues.

What are the Most Common Injuries?

Most hockey injuries involve the upper body, and can include fractures, sprains and strains of the collarbones, hands, arms, elbows, neck, and shoulders. Concussions are the most common type of head injury, followed by facial cuts, dental, and eye injuries. Low back, groin, hip, knee, and ankle injuries also occur frequently.

Since hockey players are susceptible to such a wide range of injuries, you may be asking if there is anything you can do to minimize your risk of getting hurt. Yes! Some simple tips may be helpful in keeping you on the ice:

Training

A good training program should involve cardiovascular, stretching, and strengthening exercises. Cardiovascular training will increase endurance and decrease fatigue, which has been linked to injuries. Even the fittest players should take breaks often to rest, drink fluids, and stretch stiff muscles. A comprehensive stretching program for the back, arms, shoulders, thighs, and legs should be performed both before and after games to keep muscles limber and prevent stiffness and soreness.



Equipment

Although hockey equipment is expensive, properly fitting gear, including helmets, mouth guards, shoulder, and elbow pads, can make a world of difference when it comes to avoiding injury. Helmets have a life span of three to five years, depending on how often they are used. When purchasing a helmet, make sure to choose one with a full face shield, since face shields have been proven to reduce the severity of concussions regardless of the wearer's experience level and position, when compared to visors alone.

Ten Tips for Preventing Hockey-Related Injuries

1. Stretch both before and after the game.
2. Participate regularly in an exercise program to improve your strength and endurance.
3. Play year-round.
4. Obtain proper treatment for old injuries before returning to play.
5. Choose a helmet with full face shields.
6. Make sure all your equipment fits properly.
7. Replace worn out equipment.
8. Make sure your rink temperature and ice surface are well-maintained.
9. Play fair and support a zero tolerance rule for illegal checks and maneuvers.
10. Consult your chiropractor if you are injured or experience pain while playing.

WHAT'S DRIVING BACK PAIN?

GET POSITIONED FOR SAFETY AND COMFORT



Ninety percent of journeys in North America are made in vehicles. Yet we pay little emphasis on our safety and comfort while in them...until pain and discomfort sets in. If you feel stiff or experience back, thigh, or leg pain after a drive, you could be at risk for developing driving-related injuries.

In recent surveys of taxi-cab and truck drivers, 50% were shown to have low back pain related to their jobs. Other at risk employees include couriers, fork lift operators, and commuters who drive more than 1.5hrs most weekdays.

Sitting for long periods of time can cause the natural curve of the low back to flatten. This flattening places pressure on the discs that lie between the bones or vertebrae of the spine, which become stretched and slackened; the result is pain and muscle fatigue. All these factors leave the body less prepared to handle the effects of continuous vibrations from bumps and potholes in the roads.

Don't despair! These simple tips can be very effective in reducing musculoskeletal problems related to driving.

The Driving Seat:

- Position the seat so that you can hold the steering wheel, and depress the gas and brake pedals without leaning forward
- When your feet are at the pedals, your knees should be at the level of, or slightly higher than your hips
- The seatback should recline at an angle of 100-110° in order to relieve pressure on the discs of the spine

The Headrests:

- Ensure the top of the headrest is level with your eyes
- The back of the headrest should be a maximum distance of 2-5cm from the back of your head

Exercises:

- While holding the steering wheel, try to shrug and move your shoulders in small circles
- Regularly tighten the muscles of your thighs, buttocks, and legs to engage circulation



Take frequent breaks!

Aim to take a break at least 5 minutes every hour. Perform gentle activity and stretches during your breaks (i.e. walk around, stand on your tiptoes and then heels). Take your low back through its natural range of motion by leaning back, bending forward, and bending sideways at the waist.

From the Ontario Chiropractic Association's "Public Education: Mat Stories"

TRAVELLING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON?

PACK IT LIGHT, WEAR IT RIGHT!

Over-packing luggage and improper lifting or carrying techniques are common causes of injury to the neck, back, and shoulders. When travelling this season, use these tips to take the pain out of your vacation!

Choosing Luggage:

- Find a sturdy, light-weight, high quality and easily transportable piece; avoid luggage that is heavy or bulky when empty
- Choose a bag with wheels and a handle
- A good quality backpack is an ideal carry on because it helps distribute weight evenly; look for adjustable padded shoulder straps and a waist strap

Packing your Luggage:

- Over-packing is easy, but remember that heavy luggage increases your susceptibility to neck, back, and shoulder injuries. Try to pack only what is necessary.
- If possible, place items in a few smaller bags rather than one large bag
- Ensure that carry-on luggage does not exceed 10-15% of your body weight
- Keep contents of carry-on luggage to a minimum; pack heavy items at the bottom and use pockets effectively

Lifting and Carrying your Luggage:

- Move slowly, and when possible break the action into smaller parts
 - E.g. when placing luggage in an overhead compartment, first lift it on top of the seat
- Get close to the load and stand with your feet shoulder width apart
- Bend your knees and lift with your legs, not your back!
- Hold the load close to your body
- Avoid twisting your body; turn your feet and entire body in the direction you are headed
- Carry light pieces in each hand rather than a single heavy item on one side; if using a shoulder or duffle bag, switch sides often to avoid strain



Injuries from improper lifting or carrying techniques can become chronic if left untreated, and can impact your quality of life. If you have pain that lasts more than two or three days, call your chiropractor for an evaluation.

Adapted from the Ontario Chiropractic Association's "Pack It Light. Wear It Right." Program.

For more information, visit:

[OCA - Pack It Light Wear It Right On the Go](#)

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT: *IMMUCORE*

Provide your immune system with both long and short-term natural support this winter season. ImmuCore contains:

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- **Zinc:** supports white blood cell production, supports mucosal integrity, provides anti-oxidant protection
- **Nourishing Mushrooms:** targets multiple organ systems to promote healthy immunity, and provides protective support for a stressed immune system
- **Oleanolic Acid:** supports immune system
- **Selenium:** supports immune mechanisms (neutrophils, macrophages etc.), and provides anti-oxidant protection

Ask your healthcare provider if *ImmuCore* is right for you!



For more information, visit: www.metagenics.com



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