Sports Injury & Mental Health Awareness Webinar

SafeStrongSport Organization

Safe Strong Sport

OUR BODY

IS
REMARKABLE,
ADAPTABLE

Us

Mental

- Unyielding

Physical

- Discipline

Competition

- Opportunity

Sports

- Passion

Striving for athletic success; **Without harming an athlete's health, Mentally and Physically**

PHYSICAL

ACUTE INJURY

Sudden Trauma

ACL Tears, Ankle Sprains, Fractures etc.

Deliberating

May Require Surgery/Physical Therapy

Symptoms

Immediate Pain, Swelling & Loss of Function

Immediate Action

Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate

Safe Strong Sport

OVERUSE INJURY

Cumulative

Repetitive Stress on Muscles & Joints

Silent but Deadly

Often take months to heal with chance to reoccur

Symptoms

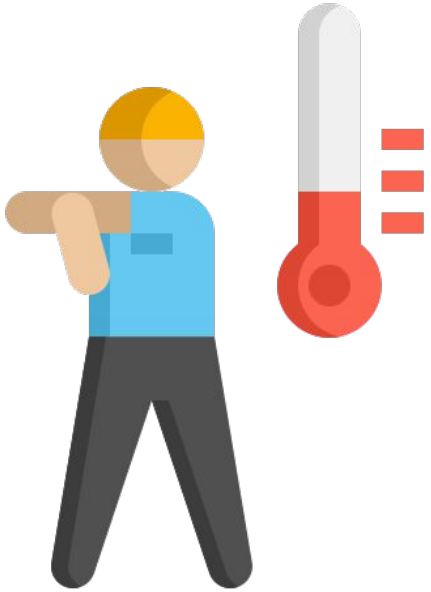
Minor Discomfort in Joints (Wrists, Elbow, Ankle) -> Pain/Swelling

Proactive

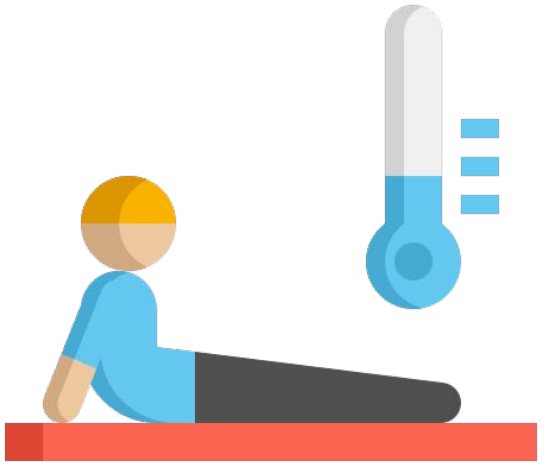
Good Communication with Coaches & Parents

Warm-up

- Increases blood flow
- Prevents Injury & promotes muscle connection
- Warm-up Exercises:
  - Side shuffles
  - High knees
  - Forward/Side lungs



Cool-down



- 5-10 min after the sport
- Removes lactic acid from muscles
- Reduces Soreness
- Cool-down exercises:
  - Butterfly
  - Touch your toes
  - Child's Pose

TENNIS

FORM MATTERS

- Lower chance of Injury
- Sustainability
- Improved Performance

COMMON MISTAKES

- Arming the Ball
- Incomplete Follow Through
- Poor Footwork

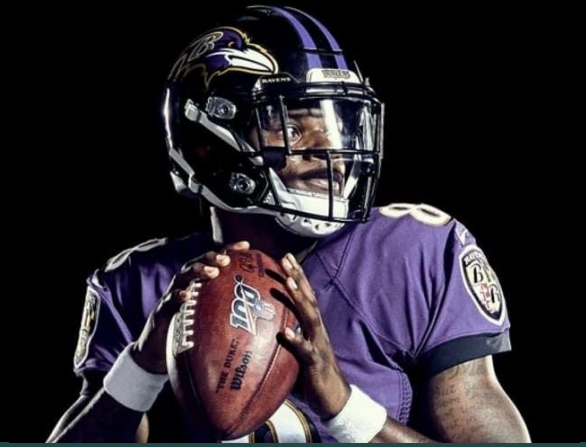
DEVELOPING GOOD FORM

- Listening to Coaches
- Discipline
- Prioritize Big Muscles

BASEBALL

Baseball Injury Prevention

- **Common Injuries:** Shoulder/elbow (pitchers), sprains, concussions.
- **Prevention Tips:**
  - Limit pitch counts for youth.
  - Emphasize proper throwing mechanics.
  - Use protective gear (helmets, face guards).
  - Stretching and strengthening exercises for arms and shoulders.



FOOTBALL

Football Injury Prevention

- **Common Injuries:** Concussions, knee injuries (ACL/MCL), ankle sprains.
- **Prevention Tips:**
  - Use proper tackling techniques.
  - Wear appropriate protective equipment.
  - Strengthen core and lower body.
  - Follow concussion protocols.

SWIMMING

Swimming Injury Prevention

- **Common Injuries:** Shoulder impingement, knee pain (breaststroke), muscle strains.
- **Prevention Tips:**
  - Focus on stroke technique.
  - Dryland strength training.
  - Adequate warm-up and cool-down.
  - Listen to body for signs of overuse.

DANCING

Dancing Injury Prevention

- **Common Injuries: Ankle sprains, knee injuries, hip strain, stress fractures, lower back pain**

- **Prevention Tips:**
  - Build lower-body and core strength to support jumps and turns.
  - Emphasize proper technique, alignment, and landing mechanics.
  - Maintain flexibility and joint mobility, especially in hips and ankles.
  - Use appropriate footwear and safe, well-maintained dance floors.

For Dancing

Dancing is a unique discipline because it sits at the intersection of artistry and elite athleticism. Unlike many sports, dancers are often expected to perform in extreme ranges of motion (over-flexibility) and land jumps on hard surfaces (impact).

- The Physical Demands of Dance
  - Repetition: Thousands of plies, relevés, and rotations.
  - Extreme ROM: Pushing joints beyond normal physiological limits (turnout, extensions).
  - The "Floor" Factor: Impact forces on non-sprung floors can be 3 times to 5 times body weight.
  - Pressure: Balancing high-intensity training with low-calorie intake can lead to fatigue-related injuries.

Common "Hot Spots" for Dancers

- The Foot & Ankle: Lateral ankle sprains, Achilles tendonitis, and "Dancer's Tendonitis" (FHL tendon).
- The Knee: Patellofemoral pain from "forcing" turnout from the knees rather than the hips.
- The Hip: Snapping hip syndrome and labral tears.
- The Lower Back: Spondylolysis (stress fractures) caused by repetitive arching (over-arching in arabesque).

The Foundation: Functional Anatomy

- The Power of Turnout: It must come from the deep lateral rotators in the hips, not by twisting the knees or "gripping" the ankles.
- Core Stability: The "Box" (shoulders to hips) must remain stable to protect the spine during leaps and turns.
- Foot Alignment: Avoiding "rolling in" (pronation) which collapses the arch and misaligns the entire kinetic chain.

The "Safe" Warm-Up vs. Cool-Down

- Avoid Static Stretching Before Class: Holding long stretches when cold actually *decreases* muscle power and can destabilize joints.

- The Dynamic Warm-Up:
  - Leg swings and hip circles.
  - Planks to fire the core.
  - Gentle ankle mobility.

- The Cool-Down: This is the time for static stretching (holding for 30+ seconds) to improve long-term flexibility and flush out metabolic waste.

Cross-Training: Building the "Armor"

Dancers are often ”hypermobile” (too flexible). They need strength to control that flexibility.

- Resistance Training: Squats and deadlifts (yes, even for dancers!) build bone density and explosive power for jumps.
- Pilates/Yoga: Excellent for eccentric muscle control (lengthening while strengthening).
- Proprioception: Balancing on one leg (or a wobble board) to train the small stabilizer muscles in the ankle.

Environmental & Lifestyle Factors

- Footwear: Replacing pointe shoes or jazz shoes before they lose structural integrity.
- Flooring: Understanding the difference between ”sprung” floors (shock absorbing) and ”dead” floors (concrete/wood over concrete).
- Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S): Ensuring caloric intake matches energy output to prevent stress fractures and hormonal imbalances.

Listen to the Body (The Red Flags)

- Dull Ache vs. Sharp Pain: One is a sign of work; the other is a sign of tissue damage.
- Morning Stiffness: If it takes more than 30 minutes to "loosen up" in the morning, you may be overtraining.
- The "Pop": Any audible sound followed by swelling needs immediate medical evaluation.

NUTRITION

CARBOHYDRATES

Break down into glucose, the body's main fuel source

PROTEINS

Build hormones and enzymes and repairs muscles and bones, main contributor to growth

FATS

Give the body energy through calories and help it absorb vitamin A, D, and E

FIBERS

Carbohydrates that cannot be digested; improves digestive system and lowers blood cholesterol

NUTRITION

FATS	20%
CARBS	50%
PROTEINS	30%

This is a rough estimate of general intake, and percentages can vary depending on circumstance.


"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."
—Anne Frank
Safe Strong Sport

MENTAL

WIN

It lies

LOSS

on a thought

RECREATIONAL

- Participation & Inclusivity
- Few Competitive Opportunities
- Less Pressure to Improve

COMPETITIVE

- Build Discipline & Responsibility
- Lead to burnout/Injury
- Pressure to Perform to a Standard

[Chinese Skateboarder Zheng Haohao]

[U.S. gymnast Hezly Rivera]

[U.S. Track Quincy Wilson]

"ELITE"

"The context in which a young person trains and competes, rather than their performance."

(Mountjoy, 2008)

1

performance outcomes > psychosocial development, enjoyment, participation

2

involvement in sports > psychosocial and educational experiences, non-sports relationships

3

explicit/implicit goal of progression to elite, collegiate, or professional sports

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- “free” time spent travelling/practicing
- schoolwork and other extracurriculars
- unnecessary pressure/expectations

DEFINING BURNOUT

- Emotional and Physical exhaustion
- Reduced Level of Accomplishments
- Sport Devaluation

Table 2 Representative Sample Items

Variable	Sample item
Emotional/physical exhaustion	I feel emotionally drained from my swim team participation
Reduced athletic accomplishment	I am not peforming up to my ability in swimming
Sport devaluation	I don't care as much about my swim performance as I used to
Swim commitment	Do you want to keep participating on a swim team?
Benefits	How rewarding is swim team participation?
Costs	To what extent have you experienced costs associated with swimming?
Enjoyment	How fun is swim team participation for you?
Personal investments	How much effort have you put into swimming?
Alternative attractiveness	Compared to swim team participation, there are other things I could do which would be more enjoyable
Social constraints	The people most important to me would be disappointed with me if I were to quit swim team participation
Swim identity	Swimming is the only thing important in my life
Perceived control	I have a say in what I do when participating in swimming

ADVERSE EFFECTS

PHYSICAL

Chronic fatigue, strength and stamina loss, and increased probability of injuries.

AFFECTIVE

Low mood, lack of enthusiasm, and even hostility to the training environment

COGNITIVE

Difficulty concentrating, decreased school performance, and poor sports performance.

THE ONLY **TREATMENT** TO BURNOUT IS **REST**

"RESULTS > EFFORT"

- EXCEEDINGLY high expectations
- OVEREMPHASIS on results
- INAPPROPRIATE pressure to perform

PARENTS, YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S BIGGEST SUPPORT!

AFTER A LOSS...

- vulnerability
- empathy > logic
- active listening
- feedback with sensitivity

Influence of peers

Social support

- Psychological well-being
- Enjoyment to sport
- Self-worth

Harmful experiences

- Bullying
- Isolation
- Cyberbullying

Universal Injury Prevention Checklist

- **Checklist for Athletes:**
  - Do I warm up and cool down every session?
  - Am I using proper technique?
  - Do I get enough rest?
  - Is my nutrition supporting my activity?
  - Am I wearing the right protective gear?
  - Do I communicate pain or discomfort to my coach/parent?

General Principles of Injury Prevention (All Sports)

- **Warm-up & Cool-down:** Essential for all athletes to prepare muscles and prevent strains.
- **Proper Technique:** Reduces risk of both acute and overuse injuries.
- **Rest & Recovery:** Prevents burnout and chronic injuries.
- **Nutrition & Hydration:** Fuels performance and aids recovery.
- **Protective Equipment:** Helmets, pads, mouthguards, etc.
- **Communication:** Athletes, coaches, and parents should discuss pain or discomfort.

THANK YOU

Q&A