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

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

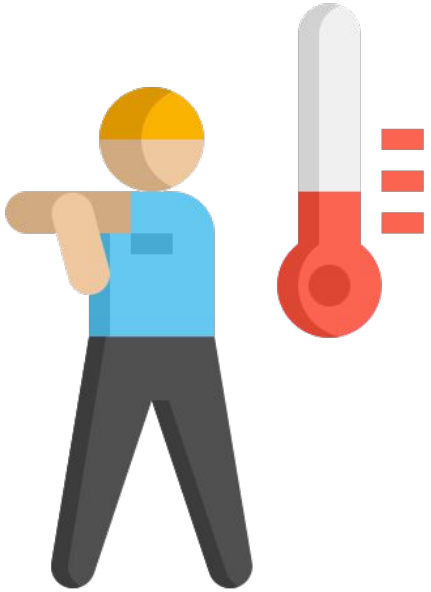
Symptoms

Good Communication with Coaches & Parents

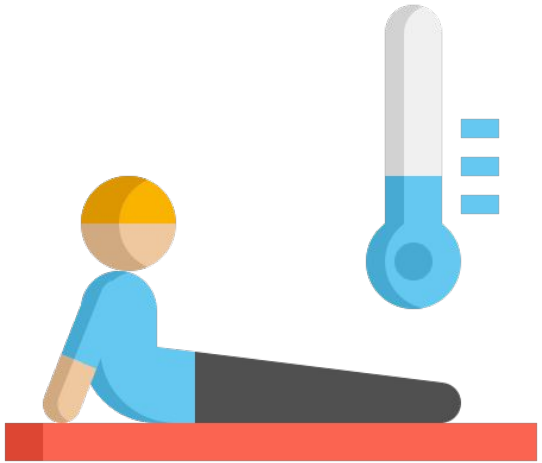
Proactive

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 a hit
- Removes lactic acid from muscles
- Reduces Soreness
- Cool-down exercises:
  - Butterfly
  - Touch your toes
  - Child's Pose

CROSS COUNTRY

FORM MATTERS

- Lower chance of Injury
- Sustainability
- Improved Performance

COMMON MISTAKES

- Overstriding (The "Braking" Effect)
- Sudden Surface Transitions
- Ignoring the "Kinetic Chain" (Weak Hips)
- Overtraining: The "More is Better" Fallacy

DEVELOPING GOOD FORM

- Listening to Coaches
- Discipline
- Prioritize Big Muscles

Common injuries

- Running and Cross Country are sports of high-volume, repetitive impact. Unlike contact sports, most injuries here are "overuse" injuries
  - **Runner's Knee (Patellofemoral Pain):** Pain under or around the kneecap.
  - **Shin Splints (MTSS):** Aching or throbbing along the shinbone.
  - **Plantar Fasciitis:** Sharp heel pain, especially during the first steps of the morning.
  - **Achilles Tendonitis:** Inflammation of the tendon connecting the calf to the heel.
  - **I.T. Band Syndrome:** Sharp pain on the outside of the knee.

Efficiency = Safety

- Poor form increases the "pounding" on your joints.
  - **The Overstride Mistake:** Landing with your foot too far in front of your body acts like a "brake," sending shockwaves through the shin and knee.
  - **The Fix:** Aim for a "Midfoot Strike"—land with your foot directly underneath your center of gravity.
  - **Cadence:** Increasing your steps per minute (aiming for 170–180) naturally shortens your stride and reduces impact force.

The 10% Rule & Load Management

- The #1 cause of running injuries is doing "too much, too soon, too fast."
  - **The Rule:** Never increase your total weekly mileage by more than 10% from the previous week.
  - **Listen to the "Niggles":** There is a difference between "good" muscle soreness and "bad" joint pain. If a pain changes your running gait, **stop.**
  - **Surface Variation:** Cross country involves uneven terrain. Train on grass or trails to build ankle stability, but avoid switching surfaces too abruptly.

The "Pre-Run" Activation (Dynamic)

- Static stretching before a run can actually make muscles less "springy."

  Switch to these:

  - **Leg Swings:** Forward/backward and side-to-side to loosen the hips.
  - **A-Skips & B-Skips:** To prime the nervous system and practice midfoot striking.
  - **Glute Bridges:** To ensure the "powerhouse" muscles are firing so the knees don't take the load.
  - **Calf Raises:** To "wake up" the lower legs and Achilles.

Strength Training for Runners

Running alone makes you a runner; strength training makes you a "bulletproof" runner.

- **Single-Leg Stability:** Running is essentially a series of one-legged hops. Practice single-leg deadlifts to prevent hip dropping.
- **Core "Anti-Rotation":** A strong core prevents your torso from swaying, which saves energy and prevents lower back pain.
- **Toe & Foot Strength:** Strong feet prevent arches from collapsing (overpronation).

Footwear & Recovery

- **The "300–500" Rule:** Replace running shoes every 300 to 500 miles. Even if they look clean, the foam cushioning loses its ability to absorb shock.
- **Rotation:** If possible, rotate between two different pairs of shoes to give the foam time to "decompress."
- **Sleep & Nutrition:** Soft tissue repair happens during deep sleep. Ensure adequate protein and vitamin D for bone density.
- **Post-Run:** Use a foam roller on the calves and quads to manage muscle tightness.

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

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