



*Sports Injury &
Mental Health
Awareness
Webinar*

SafeStrongSport Organization

Safe Strong Sport



OUR
BODY
IS
REMARKABLE,
ADAPTABLE





Mental

- Unyielding



Physical

- Discipline



Us



Competition

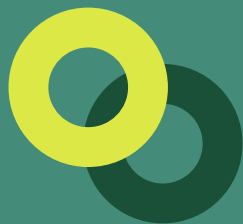
- Opportunity

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



Immediate Pain,
Swelling &
Loss of Function

Symptoms

Rest, Ice, Compress,
Elevate

Immediate Action

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

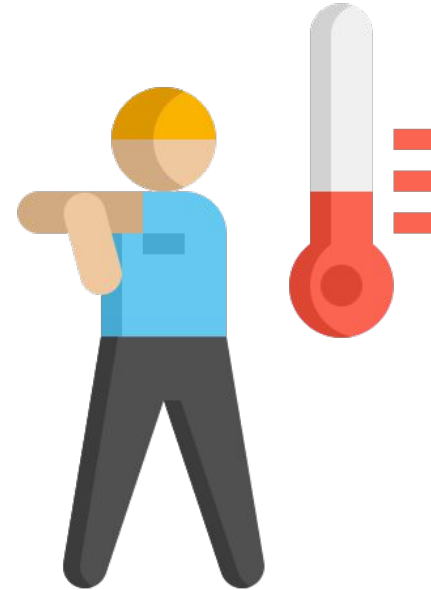
Symptoms

Good Communication
with Coaches & Parents

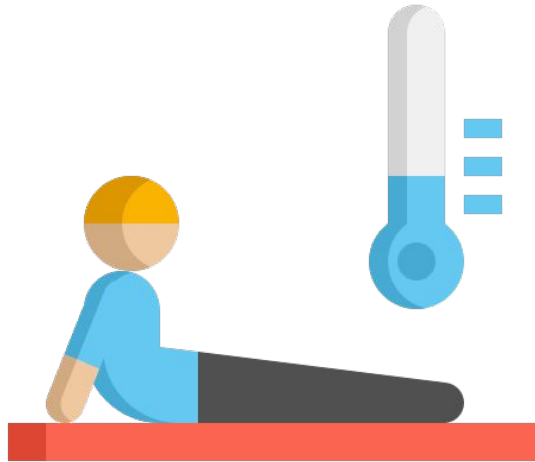
Proactive

Warm-up

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



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



FENCING

FORM MATTERS

- Lower chance of Injury
- Sustainability
- Improved Performance

COMMON MISTAKES

- The "Locked" Back Leg in the Lunge
- Front Knee Over-Extension (Caving In)
- "Death Grip" on the Weapon

DEVELOPING GOOD FORM

- Listening to Coaches
- Discipline
- Prioritize Big Muscles

Common Injuries

- ❖ Fencing injuries are often asymmetric, affecting the dominant side more, and a mix of acute and overuse.
 - **Knee Injuries:** Ligament sprains (MCL/ACL) from lunges and patellar tendonitis (Jumper's Knee) from repetitive push-offs.
 - **Ankle Sprains:** From awkward landings after lunges or footwork drills.
 - **Dominant Shoulder/Elbow:** Tendonitis from repetitive weapon movements (e.g., epicondylitis).
 - **Groin/Hamstring Strains:** From explosive lunges and lateral movements.
 - **Lower Back Pain:** Due to the asymmetrical stance and forward lean.

Stance & Footwork



Your athletic stance is your first line of defense.

- **Balanced En Garde:** Maintain a wide, stable base with weight evenly distributed. Avoid over-rotating the back foot or locking the front knee.
- **The Lunge:** Focus on pushing from the back leg, landing with the front knee tracking over the second toe, and ensuring the back knee remains bent, not locked.
- **Recovery:** Emphasize bringing the front foot back with control, rather than snapping it back, to protect the hamstring and groin.



Blade Sharpening warm up

- ❖ Before you pick up a foil, epee, or saber, activate your body with a dynamic routine:
 - **Linear & Lateral Shuffles:** To prime the lower body for forward/backward and side-to-side movements.
 - **Arm Swings & Circles:** Especially for the dominant arm, preparing the shoulder and elbow joints.
 - **Light Shadow Footwork:** Performing basic advances, retreats, and lunges without the weapon to engage muscle memory.
 - **Hip Openers:** Dynamic stretches like leg swings (front-to-back and side-to-side) to prepare the hips for the open stance.

Unilateral Strength & Core Control

- ❖ Because fencing is so one-sided, focused strength training is key.
 - **Single-Leg Exercises:** Pistol squats, single-leg Romanian deadlifts (RDLs) to build stability in the dominant leg.
 - **Rotational Core:** Cable rotations or medicine ball twists to strengthen the oblique muscles that stabilize the spine during weapon movements.
 - **Glute Medius Activation:** Lateral band walks to keep the hips stable and prevent knee collapse during lunges.
 - **Scapular Stability:** Resistance band pull-aparts and face pulls to protect the shoulder joint.

Equipment Check

Equipment & Court Safety

- ❖ **Well-Fitting Shoes:** Fencing shoes offer specific lateral support and a rounded heel for smooth footwork. Running shoes lack this.
- ❖ **Weapon Maintenance:** Ensure blades are straight, guards are secure, and tips are functioning properly. A poorly maintained weapon can break or cause unintended injuries.
- ❖ **Floor Check:** Inspect the piste (fencing strip) for uneven spots, loose mats, or debris that could cause slips or trips.
- ❖ **Mask & Jacket:** Ensure your mask fits snugly and your jacket provides full coverage and freedom of movement.

Recovery

- ❖ **Cool Down:** 5–10 minutes of static stretching, especially for the hamstrings, hip flexors, and shoulders.
- ❖ **Active Recovery:** Light cardio (e.g., cycling) on off-days to promote blood flow and reduce muscle soreness.
- ❖ **Listen to the Body:** Persistent pain in the knee or shoulder is a signal, not a challenge. Consult a coach or medical professional.
- ❖ **Nutrition & Hydration:** Fueling muscle repair and maintaining fluid balance is vital for tissue health.

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

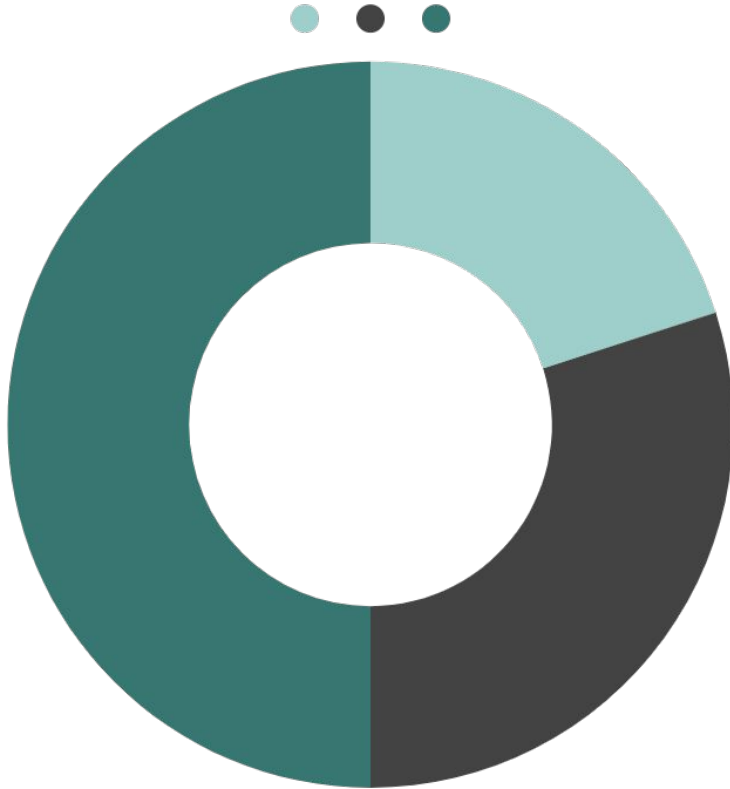
Give the body energy through calories and help it absorb vitamin A, D, and E



FIBERS

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

NUTRITION



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

A nighttime photograph of a city street, likely in New York City, featuring a large, multi-story building on the left and a row of palm trees on the right. The street is illuminated by streetlights, and a few cars are visible in the distance. A semi-transparent dark blue rectangular box is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image, containing a quote and the name Anne Frank.

“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 performing 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