

How to prevent and treat common sports injuries

1. Ankle sprains

The biggest risk factor for getting an [ankle sprain](#) during sport is having had a previous sprain. You may have 'rolled' your ankle in school for example, and this can lead to ongoing problems later on.

For some, strength may completely return, but for others – 70% of us in fact – this can turn into chronic ankle instability.

How to prevent and treat ankle sprains

Building stability is the most important thing to do when recovering from an ankle ligament injury, as strengthening and balance work can also minimise the risk of recurrent ankle sprains. It's important to note that, although ligaments will heal to an extent, there is still a risk of re-spraining if strength and balance aren't addressed. Here are some things you can do:

- **Work on your balance:** Standing on one leg, on something soft and squishy like a bosu ball or balance pad, will help you to build strength and balance. If you've experienced a sprain, you'll need to retrain the muscles and nervous system to work together again to reduce the risk of rolling your ankle again.
- **Don't neglect your calves:** This is the main muscle group around the ankle, so strengthening it can help to build ankle resilience. Calf raises (seated and standing), calf presses and calf extensions can all help to increase strength in this specific area.
- **Focus on the muscles on the outside of the ankle:** We normally sprain our ankles on the outside (lateral ankle), so again building strength in these muscles (evertors) will support the area. To do this, you can tie a resistance band around a sturdy piece of equipment, wrap around the front of the toes and push your foot outwards. Return and repeat.

TASK 1

Read part one of the text and answer the following questions.

1. What is the most common cause of an ankle sprain?
2. How many people can have a permanent problem with an ankle sprain?
3. What exercises can reduce the risk of recurring ankle sprains?
4. Which body systems need to be worked on if you want to lower the risk of spraining your ankle again?
5. Which muscles should be strengthened to build ankle resilience?
6. Which part of the ankle is usually sprained?

2. Knee injuries

One of the most serious knee injuries is an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) tear, a common issue in football and skiing.

An ACL tear can happen when you twist suddenly on a bent knee or stationary foot, and it's one that you'll instantly recognise as you'll experience physical symptoms such as knee swelling and difficulty walking/weight bearing.

It can be a frustrating injury as it results in instability of the knee – that feeling of your knee 'giving way'. Sometimes [knee surgery](#) is needed, but other times it can be treated conservatively. This should be assessed by a professional, so that you know all of your options.

How to prevent and treat knee injuries

It's about strengthening the quads and hamstrings to support the stability of the knee, as well as increasing your balance. You can do this through:

- squats, single-leg squats and jumping squats
- lunges and jumping lunges
- bridges and single-leg bridges
- single-leg deadlifts
- step ups

If this is part of conservative treatment, it's important to build up strength in the area gradually, going from static to dynamic tasks, such as standing through to running to jumping/hopping. I'd advise that this be under the guidance of a [physiotherapist](#).

TASK 2

Read part two of the text and answer true or false questions.

1. An ACL tear is the most common in sport. (T/F)
2. You can observe symptoms of an ACL tear after a while. (T/F)
3. The only way to treat an ACL tear is knee surgery. (T/F)
4. Quads and hamstrings should be strengthened to recover. (T/F)
5. Dynamic tasks should go at the beginning of exercises. (T/F)

3. Groin strain

Groin strains are really common in football as these types of injuries often occur due to a change of direction and cutting activities (fast change of

movement when tackling). If muscles in this area are tensed too suddenly or quickly, they can strain or tear.

These injuries can be incredibly painful. Physical symptoms can include pain when moving your leg sideways, difficulty walking up and down stairs, and sometimes bruising on your inner thigh.

How to prevent and treat groin strain

Strengthen the inner thighs. Quads, hamstrings and glutes are all standard practice in the gym and support strength in the lower body, but in order to minimise the risk of injury to your groin, you need to focus on the adductor muscle group.

One [study](#) showed that professional footballers who completed adduction strengthening had a 43% reduced chance of a groin strain compared to those who didn't.

Exercises to incorporate in your next leg day:

- **Medial leg raise:** Lie on the leg that you want to strengthen – you can place the other leg behind or in front for comfort – and raise the leg. This can be done both with either weights or your own bodyweight.
- **Copenhagen hip adduction:** Rest on your side, place the leg you want to strengthen on the floor, with the opposite leg on a bench. Rest on the elbow and, when ready, raise the lower leg up. You'll notice a hip raise on the leg that is resting against the bench as you do this. This is adaptable to either beginner or advanced level depending on your confidence.

<https://www.nuffieldhealth.com/article/how-to-prevent-and-treat-common-sports-injuries>

TASK 3

Read the third part of the text and answer the following questions.

1. When does a groin strain occur?
2. What are common symptoms of a groin strain?
3. Which muscles should be exercised to avoid a groin strain?
4. What do footballers who strengthened their adductor muscle group gain?
5. What two exercises should you do to lower the risk of a groin strain?

TASK 4

Match the English terms with their Polish equivalents.

No.	Answers	English words	No.	Polish translations
1.		sprain	a)	równowaga
2.		instability	b)	zachowawczy
3.		ligament	c)	lekceważyć
4.		balance	d)	zerwanie
5.		neglect	e)	skręcenie
6.		sturdy	f)	kierownictwo
7.		tear	g)	przywodzenie
8.		weight bearing	h)	wiązadło
9.		conservative	i)	ściągnąć udowę
10.		squat	j)	brak stabilności
11.		guidance	k)	pachwina
12.		hamstring	l)	dający się przystosować
13.		groin	m)	noszenie ciężarów
14.		adduction	n)	przysiad
15.		adaptable	o)	silny

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