

Fall Sports: Staying Active While Being Safe for the Season

Orthopaedic surgeons share tips to help athletes stay clear of sports injuries this fall

ROSEMONT, Ill., Aug. 31, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Summer is coming to an end, and it won't be long before athletes and sports enthusiasts take to the field to play soccer, football, volleyball or some other fall sport.

Staying active is ideal for building strong bones and weight-bearing activities such as running and playing sports helps to achieve that. That is why the [American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons \(AAOS\)](#), the [American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine \(AOSSM\)](#) and the [STOP Sports Injuries](#) campaign is urging everyone to stay active, but to keep safety first when engaging in these activities.

Statistics from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) show the following results for individuals treated in emergency rooms and doctors' offices in the U.S. during 2011:

- More than 581,400 treated for injuries related to soccer.
- Approximately 1.2 million sustained football-related injuries.
- More than 170,600 for injuries related to volleyball.

Unfortunately, 16-year-old, soccer player, Christina Gordon was one of those people. During one of her games, she tore her [anterior cruciate ligament \(ACL\)](#), [medial collateral ligament \(MCL\)](#) and [meniscus](#). Christina had to put playing soccer on pause and undergo ACL reconstruction surgery, so she could get back out on the field. Her full story is available at [anationinmotion.org](#).

EXPERT ADVICE

"Not all injuries can be prevented, however many can be avoided," said orthopaedic surgeon and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) spokesperson Jeffrey Abrams, MD. "The fact is, when one decides to participate in a sport, he or she needs to consider everything that comes with the territory. That includes taking the responsibility to follow proper safety measures such as warming up, and completing a health and wellness evaluation to determine their ability to play in the game before each season."

This season, the AAOS, AOSSM and the STOP Sports Injuries campaign recommend taking the following safety tips into consideration:

- Have a pre-season physical examination and follow your doctor's recommendations.
- When playing, wear protective gear such as fitted cleats, pads, helmets, mouth guard or other necessary equipment.
- Warm-up and cool down properly with low-impact exercises like jogging that gradually increase or lower heart rate.
- Play multiple positions and/or sports during the off-season to minimize overuse injuries.
- Pay attention to weather conditions such as excessively hot and humid temperatures, to help avoid heat illness or wet, slippery conditions that can lead to injuries.
- Consistently incorporate strength training and stretching. A good stretch involves not going beyond the point of resistance and should be held for 10-12 seconds.
- Hydrate adequately to maintain health and minimize cramps. Waiting until you are thirsty is often too late to hydrate properly.
- Don't play through the pain. Speak with an orthopaedic sports medicine specialist or athletic trainer if you have any concerns about injuries or tips on injury prevention.
- Avoid the pressure that is now exerted on many young athletes to overtrain. Listen to your body and decrease training time and intensity if pain or discomfort develops. This will reduce the risk of injury and help avoid "burn-out."

More tips
StopSportsInjuries.org

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