

Female athletes injured more than male athletes

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Female athletes experience dramatically higher rates of specific musculoskeletal injuries and medical conditions compared to male athletes, according to exercise physiologist Vicki Harber in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta.

According to her paper, depending on the sport, there can be a two- to sixfold difference in these types of injuries between male and female athletes. That's because many training programs developed for female athletes are built on research using young adult males and don't take the intrinsic biological differences between the sexes into account.

Harber has authored a comprehensive guide for coaches, parents and administrators, entitled *The Female Athlete Perspective*, and published by Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L), which addresses these and other medical issues known to influence women's participation in sport.

The paper is based on a thorough review of the current literature on the subject, Harber's extensive knowledge as a researcher in female athlete health and her work in the development of female athletes.

Musculoskeletal injuries, particularly knee and shoulder injuries, are most prevalent, with increased probability of re-injury, says Harber, noting that many of these injuries are preventable. Building awareness about appropriate support for young female athletes and changes to training programs are critical to help them reach their athletic and personal potential, injury-free.

Harber found the risk of the Female Athlete Triad—three separate but interrelated conditions of disordered eating, amenorrhea and osteoporosis—is another area that urgently needs attention for young female athletes.

For [female athletes](#) to thrive injury-free, attention must be paid to their proper nutrition to ensure both the [athletic performance](#) and healthy reproductive performance associated with [bone health](#) and overall wellbeing, Harber found.

Provided by University of Alberta

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