

Spring sprains: Sports injury season begins

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As [youth spring sports](#) kick into high gear, it's important to know about injury prevention and treatment, an expert says.

Injury risks and [preventive measures](#) can vary by sport, according to Dr. Marcus Knox, a physical therapist in the department of orthopedic surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Young baseball pitchers are at risk for shoulder and [elbow injuries](#), and [younger children](#) are prohibited from certain pitches—such as curve balls—due to the stress they put on certain parts of the body.

Shoulder injuries can also occur in softball pitchers, as well as hip and low back pain problems, Knox noted.

Hip and hamstring injuries can be an issue for track and field athletes. Runners, long jumpers and high jumpers may be affected by tendinitis or foot strains, while sprinters mainly experience hamstring injuries, he said.

[Tennis elbow](#) and shoulder issues are common among young tennis players due to how they move their racket, but they're also at risk for ankle, knee and other lower extremity injuries, Knox warned.

It's important for [young athletes](#) to follow an [off-season program](#) to work on mobility and stability limitations or impairments, he stressed.

"If you're in a sport that requires you to have a lot of overhead motions like throwing, make sure that you have the right stability and mobility of the shoulder and [shoulder](#) blade, and you want to make sure the spine is moving correctly," Knox explained in a Baylor news release. "There are lots of little things that you'd want to find out about your form before the season starts so you can work on that in the off-season."

Proper warm-up and recovery are also important in [injury prevention](#).

If a youngster suffers a sports injury, it's important to see a physical

therapist as soon as possible, Knox said.

When recovering from an injury, give the body enough time to heal. To rebuild and heal properly, the body requires a certain amount of rest to repair the injured area and an adequate degree of resistance, or load.

"There has to be the perfect combination of rest and stress in order to recover from an injury quickly and safely," Knox said. Before thinking about returning to their sport, an athlete should be pain-free when doing movements that were painful after the injury.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics offers [sports injury prevention tips](#).

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