

Prevention of Sports Injuries

Basketball

Diana Settles, MAT, ATC
Manager, Injury Prevention Physical Fitness Programs
Navy Environmental Health Center, Portsmouth, VA

PERSONAL FITNESS:

- Pace yourself; don't do too much too soon when pre-conditioning for basketball season.
- A conditioning program with emphasis on aerobic and muscular fitness training should be implemented prior to the beginning of basketball season.
- Begin gradually participating in activities specific to basketball, such as motor skill components of fitness: jumping (rope skipping) and agility/coordination/balance drills. This mode of training will strengthen the connective tissue (muscle, bones, ligaments, and tendons) which will assist the body in accommodating to physical stress. These exercises will also assist with neuromuscular coordination, the ability to integrate the senses – sight, sound, and proprioceptive (knowing the position of your body in space) – with motor function to produce smooth, accurate, and skilled movement.
- Add ankle, shin (anterior tibialis), and soleus strengthening exercises to the basic lower extremity muscular fitness exercise program.
- Participate daily in a complete body stretching program.
- Remember to warm-up and stretch at least 5 – 10 minutes before participating in a basketball activity.
- A continued maintenance program throughout the season would also help prevent injuries.
- Contact a local MWR Trainer for additional information on basketball conditioning. Many MWR Facilities provide safety/injury prevention information to coaches, players, and officials regarding preparation, conditioning, and training proper playing techniques.
- NOTE: Prior injury to the body predisposes one to re-injury of that particular extremity.

EQUIPMENT:

- Jewelry, i.e., rings, necklaces, etc. are not recommended during basketball activity participation.
- Clothing attire that contain pockets are not recommended due to the risk of fingers getting caught/lodged in clothing.
- Protective eye goggles would help prevent ocular injury.
- Basketball playing shoes should be used. Shoes specific to other sports are not recommended.
- Basketball goal must be padded; allow space of at least 8-ft. clear area past goal. Ensure bumper guards are installed correctly on glass boards.

TRAINING / TECHNIQUE:

- The style of play by a basketball team may increase risk of injury; the more contact involved, the higher the incidence for injury.
- Trained coaching staff can impact positively upon basketball injury prevention. Coaches should be able to provide safe information to players on the team regarding preparation, conditioning, and training proper playing techniques.
- Officiated games decrease the risk of injury occurrence. Enforcement of rules assists in decreasing the incidence of injury.

ENVIRONMENT:

- Be aware of the environment around you. Prior to participating in basketball, look for predisposing risk factors on the playing court such as foreign objects, towels, gym bags, water, etc.
- Alcohol consumption should be discouraged during any athletic participation.
- Proper hydration during activity is recommended.

REFERENCE: Caine, J., Caine, C., and Lindner, K. Epidemiology of Sports Injuries. Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., 1996.