

## Preventing Sport Injuries

Sport is a vital part of the Australian lifestyle – it promotes good health, stress relief and is fun.

Sometimes injuries may occur through sport. Fortunately most injuries can be effectively treated by your physiotherapist. Physiotherapy treatment will enable you to return safely to sporting activity more quickly than just 'rest and see what happens'. Your physiotherapist also provides advice to prevent sporting injuries.

Most sporting injuries are a result of a direct blow (bruise or contusion) or an indirect force like a twist (sprains, strains, tears). Some injuries are due to over-use stresses (tendinitis, stress fractures).

One of the main things you can do to prevent yourself from getting any injuries is to warm up before you start playing the game. It is not a good idea to start exercising, or playing the game without warming up first. Warming up is very important because it helps get your body ready for activity. Warm ups include doing things such as taking a light jog to get loosened up and perhaps actively stretching important muscle groups. Warming up prepares your muscles for exercise and increases your blood flow and muscle temperature. That way, your body is ready to go; and it is less likely to get hurt.

### How can you minimise injury?

- Correct warm up and warm down procedures.
- Protective strapping or bracing.
- Correct footwear and sporting equipment.
- Specific conditioning for your particular sport.
- Good aerobic fitness.
- Good muscle control and reactions.

### Getting back into action

If you are really into sports, it might be tempting for you to jump right back into activity even after an injury. Playing if you are hurt or before an injury is fully healed is a bad idea. It can lead to an even worse injury, which will keep you from being active for even longer.

Before you can safely return to your sport it is essential to regain strength, mobility, balance and co-ordination.

Your physiotherapist will assess these areas and show you how to improve them.

