



S M A R T P L A Y

Preparation is the key

Every year hundreds of people suffer sporting injuries – sprains, strains, fractures and broken bones. More often than not most of these injuries could have been prevented had the correct preparation been undertaken.

To help you prepare for activity and help reduce injury risks, Smartplay, Sports Medicine Australia's sports injury prevention program funded by VicHealth and the Department of Planning and Community Development (Sport and Recreation Victoria) provides you with the following injury prevention advice:

Avoid doing too much too soon

Make sure you prepare for activity by starting at a level and pace you're comfortable with. Gradually increase your workload over a series of sessions. Without undertaking the proper preparation for your activity, your risk of injury increases by 35%. If you're unsure of how to increase your fitness level see a qualified fitness professional for advice.

Always warm up, stretch and cool down

Always remember to warm up and cool down when undertaking activity. Warming up prepares you both mentally and physically for performance and decreases your risk of being injured. To warm up, simply start your chosen activity at a slower pace. Also remember to cool down after activity sessions to help reduce muscle soreness and stiffness. Research shows that cooling down after activity may reduce injuries by almost 10%.

Drink the right amount of fluids

Thirst is a poor indicator of fluid needs, so don't wait to feel thirsty before having a drink. Always drink fluids (water or a sports drink) before, during and after activity. Drink at least 2 cups (500ml) an hour before exercise, 150ml every 15 minutes during exercise and enough to fully re-hydrate yourself after exercise. Not only will fluids prevent dehydration but research has shown that sports drinks containing carbohydrates and electrolytes can enhance sporting performance in some endurance activities.



SMARTPLAY

Wear the right gear

Everyone needs to prepare for the activity ahead. Wear protective equipment such as helmets, padding and/or mouthguards, where required. Good quality footwear are also a must as a number of studies have found a relationship between the type of footwear worn and the incidence of injuries to the lower limb. Properly fitted protective equipment and footwear should be specific to the type of activity you are doing, your size and age. Always seek professional help to make sure your protective gear and footwear fits correctly.

Avoid exercising in hot conditions

Exercising in hot conditions can cause heat injury with symptoms of fatigue, nausea, headache, confusion and light-headedness. Avoid exercising in very hot conditions, particularly in the middle of the day. During activity, try to rest in the shade whenever possible and protect yourself by wearing light clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat.

Know how to treat injuries

When undertaking activity, you should know what to do if an injury occurs, especially if you have suffered an injury in the last 12 months. Injury statistics have found previous injury increases the risk of further injury by 57%. Those who suffer a soft tissue injury should treat it with RICER – Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation and Referral. Commence RICER immediately after injury occurs and continue for 48-72 hours. You should also avoid HARM factors – no heat, no alcohol, no running and no massage and see a sports medicine professional to help you get back to your activity as quickly as possible.

To assist in helping you prepare for activity, visit www.smartplay.com.au or contact Smartplay on phone (03) 9674 8777 or email smartplay@vic.sma.org.au