Tips for Prevention and Treatment of Ankle Sprains in High School Sports

Doctor's Corner

Dr. Robert Silverman

By Dr. Robert Silverman

Have you, or anyone you know, ever sprained your ankle? You may have noticed that it never seems to heal completely or that any one therapy offers any complete relief. Lets discuss the facts, causes and the cutting-edge techniques that I use to help athletes get back into their games–faster than you thought possible.

Facts About Ankle Sprains

Ligament ankle sprains are some of the most common injuries across a wide variety of sports. They occur most commonly in soccer, volleyball, basketball and all sports that involve jumping, side-stepping, running and changing of directions. After an acute ankle sprain, residual pain, swelling, weakness, and ankle instability, are typically present. Ankle sprains account for 10 to 30 percent of all sports injuries.

Ankle inversion sprains are the most common sports trauma and they typically occur as the foot flexes downward (plantar flexion) and rolls in (inversion/supination). The outside (lateral) ankle ligaments are typically damaged during an ankle inversion sprain. Ankle sprains exhibit the highest percentage recurrence rate with high subsequent chronic symptoms; the reported recurrence rate for lateral sprains is 80 percent.

Causes and Risk Factors

1. One of the most common causes of ankles sprains is lack of conditioning. If the muscles, tendons and ligaments around the ankle joint have not been trained or conditioned, this can lead to a weakness that may result in ankle sprains. A simple conditioning program that helps to even out any ankle imbalances will help considerably.

2. Lack of proper warm up. Dynamic warm up is always the choice before an athletic event.

3. Inadequate footwear or training on uneven ground.

4. The most common risk factor is a previous history of ankle sprains that haven't been through conditioning/proprioception exercises to strengthen it.

Dr. Rob's Fab 5 Treatment Protocols

1. Active Release Technique® (ART®) for ligaments and edema. ART® is a patented state-of-the-art soft-tissue system/movement-based technique that treats problems with muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia and nerves.

2. Low-level laser used to enhance tissue recovery, effective and significantly speeding up injury recovery time.

3. Exercise rehab. Specific exercises pointed at injured muscles and structures to allow for functional pain-free movements.

4. Proprioceptive training.

5. Nutritional supplements

Balance and Proprioception

Having balance and proprioception is essential to athletes. Proprioception is the ability to determine where a joint is in space. This helps the brain know if the body is off balance. Proprioception is especially important to athletes who have had ankle injuries. Multiple studies have proven that proprioceptive balance board training is effective for the prevention of recurrent ankle sprains. Balance and proprioception can be increased by standing on one or two legs on a flat or wobbly surface.

Nutritional Protocols for Ankle Sprains

In the first 72 hours of injury In the acute phase of the injury, I highly recommend proteolytic enzymes, which are trypsin, chrymotrypsin and bromelain. Many studies show that athletes experience faster recovery rates with these enzymes. Turmeric, ginger and boswelia are useful because they can inhibit inflammation. Finally, for muscle tissue, calcium and magnesium should be used for the purpose of muscle relaxation.

Chappaqua resident Dr. Robert G. Silverman is a certified nutrition specialist, certified clinical nutritionist and certified strength and conditioning specialist. He is also a chiropractor and sports injury consultant with a practice in White Plains and serves as a member of the medical team of New York City's Triathlons and Marathons, Westchester Triathlon and multiple international Iron Man events, and local sports venues. Dr. Silverman can be reached at 914-287-6464 or by e-mail at info@DrRobertSilverman.com. Also visit www.DrRobertSilverman.com.

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