



MOUNTAIN UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Information Bulletin – Pre-Season Injury Prevention Tips

Injuries are a part of soccer but a large proportion can be prevented. Pre-season is a common time to experience injuries, especially overuse training injuries. This is frequently due to doing "too much, too soon". Here are some tips to prevent pre-season injuries while maximizing training goals.

Utilize the entire time off/pre-season. Where possible, players should rest for three weeks at the end of the season, then begin a structured running and training program individually for three weeks. Start team pre-season 3-4 weeks prior to initiation of league play. [Example: **July 1-21:** active rest; no soccer but biking, swimming etc.; **July 22-August 11:** *Individual running and training; **August 12-September 6:** Pre-season team training.

Address old injuries and deficiencies. Many players have injuries or physical deficiencies during a season but do not have adequate time or knowledge to address them. Utilize the offseason to correct them, especially in the first six weeks (active rest and individual running and training). An individual **functional assessment** can be useful for identifying these deficiencies and will provide corrective exercises to rectify problems (contact Lynn Valley Physiotherapy or Expert Physio, Burnaby Heights or 8-Rinks, to book an appointment for a functional assessment).

Can't get fit in 3 weeks so don't try! It takes the body 6-8 weeks to make a significant change, but injuries can occur with less time. A progressive, structured training program over 6-8 weeks will get you fit and ready for the new season.

If it doesn't look like soccer, it is probably not useful. Sport specific training or training that best resembles the movements, speed, directions of the sport, has the best carryover to that sport, so make your pre-season training resemble soccer running. Use the ball as much as possible and avoid excessive track and field work or running on pavement.

Running progressions. If you do running without the ball, progress from straight, continuous, one-paced running to more multi-directional, multi-speed, intermittent running to simulate the game. Manipulating the work-to-rest ratios can significantly change the intensity of the work [Example: 30 seconds work with 90 seconds rest (3:1) progressing to 30 seconds work with 30 seconds rest (1:1)].

Include strength training. Even after three weeks, muscles can weaken. Include core and hip strengthening with your pre-season training.

Know your weaknesses. Address weaknesses such as core strength, hamstring tightness or balance. If you have had a functional assessment, work on the recommended exercises. Growing athletes get tight muscles as their bones lengthen. Do some stretching daily.

*For more information or specific examples please contact Nico Berg of Lynn Valley Physiotherapy: nicobergpt@gmail.com or David Sandles of Expert Physio, 8-Rinks Clinic: sanderpoll.physio@telus.net

Links to our two Physiotherapy partners are also found on our website: www.mufo.ca