

**THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY**

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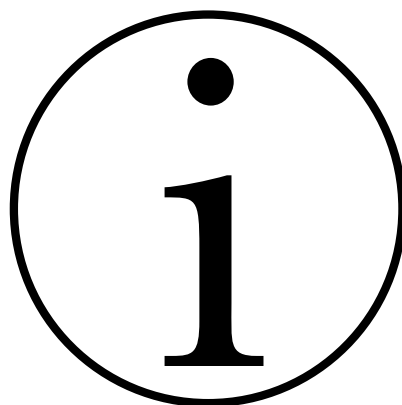
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## **Give Your Body A Sporting Chance**

CSP 71

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## **Sports injuries can hit sports-men and women of all ages and abilities.**

### **Physiotherapy offers effective treatment and can help you reduce your risk of injury.**

Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. However, sportsmen and women of all ages and abilities can run the risk of injury. Although accidents can and do happen, many injuries result from inadequate and/or inappropriate preparation for sport or playing on after being injured.

Chartered Physiotherapists can help you overcome many of these problems. They are experts in body movement and understand how muscles and joints work and why injuries can occur. Chartered physiotherapists are trained to a high clinical standard, typically three to four years at degree level and some physiotherapists have postgraduate qualifications in sports medicine. Physiotherapists use their expertise to advise on preventive measures and treat existing conditions. In fact, they treat more sports-related injuries than any other health professional.

## **What are the most common causes of sports injuries?**

Most sports injuries affect soft tissue, for example muscles and ligaments.

Common causes of sports injuries are:

- Inadequate and/or inappropriate preparation for sport. Warm-up exercises are essential to increase the blood flow to the muscles and make them more flexible. It is also important to cool down after exercise to prevent next-day stiffness.
- Too much training or repetitive activities. Pain during or after exercise is a signal that your body may be having problems and shouldn't be ignored.
- Improper equipment, for example wearing the wrong type of sports shoes or using an unsuitable racquet.
- Incorrect technique, common in golf and weight training.
- Collision, notably in contact sports such as rugby.
- Returning to sport too soon following an injury.

## **What should I do if I have a problem?**

The seriousness of an injury is usually indicated by the level of pain; the worse the pain, the more serious the injury is likely to be. If you experience severe pain or immediate swelling, you should seek medical attention. However, many sports injuries, including mild sprains and strains, can be self-treated. Apply the PRICE principles as soon as you can.

**PRICE** stands for:

- **Protection** – support the injured part by taping or strapping it to protect against further damage.
- **Rest** – continuing to exercise a damaged muscle or ligament immediately following an injury can turn a minor problem into a major one. A rest from sport for the first 72 hours, including liniment or soaking in a hot bath, as it will make things worse.
- **Ice** – apply an ice pack to the injury as soon as possible. Frozen vegetables make a good substitute. Make sure you protect your skin by wrapping the ice pack in a damp towel or cloth. Apply for about 20-30 minutes, 10 minutes if applying to a bony area like an ankle. Repeat every two hours.
- **Compression** – although a compression bandage will help reduce swelling, make sure you use a stretchy bandage and don't apply it too tightly.

- **Elevation** – elevate the injured part whenever possible. Ideally this should be above the level of heart.

## When should I see a physiotherapist?

The best policy is to apply the PRICE principles immediately following injury. If the injury does not improve significantly within 48 hours, make an appointment with a chartered physiotherapist.

## What sort of help can a physiotherapist offer?

A chartered physiotherapist will be able to help relieve your symptoms and to promote tissue healing. Before any action is taken, the physiotherapist will assess and diagnose the problem, help you understand what's wrong and how you can avoid further problems. They will work with you to develop an effective treatment plan that takes into account your lifestyle, leisure activities and general health.

Treatment options include joint and tissue mobilisation and electrotherapy for pain relief. The physiotherapist will also advise on how you can help yourself by suggesting exercises and other techniques to help you return to your sport more quickly. Throughout the process, you will be regularly consulted and have a say in the type of treatment used.

## Where can I find a physiotherapist?

There are 29,000 chartered physiotherapists in the UK working from hospitals, GPs' surgeries, sports clubs and many other venues. Most are NHS based, but a growing number work privately. If you belong to a sports club or gym, they may be able to recommend a chartered physiotherapist. Or ask your GP. Alternatively, you can find private physiotherapists listed in directories such as Yellow Pages or contact the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice on 01327 354441.

**When choosing a physiotherapist make sure they have at least one of the following sets of initials after their name:**

- MCSP (Member of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)
- SRP (State Registered Physiotherapist).

This will guarantee that they are properly qualified, governed by a professional code of conduct and covered by professional liability insurance.

### **For further information contact:**

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
14 Bedford Row London WC1R 4ED  
Tel: 020 7306 6666  
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### THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 35,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and assistants.

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