

Triathlon Safety

A GUIDE TO COMMON INJURIES



Tendonitis

Tendonitis is the inflammation, irritation and swelling of a tendon. The most common symptoms are pain, tenderness, and an increase of pain with movement. Apply ice up to 15 minutes every hour for the first day. Continue to apply ice every 3 to 4 hours for up to 3 days.

Hand Numbness/Ulnar Neuropathy

This is a problem with the nerve that travels from the wrist to the shoulder, which leads to movement or sensation problems in the wrist or hand. Symptoms include numbness, tingling, burning, decreased sensation or weakness in the hand.

Fractures

Fractures typically happen due to a fall. Symptoms include a possible deformity, swelling, intense pain, limited mobility and numbness. Contact your health care provider or call 911 if the suspected broken bone is in the back, neck, head, hip, pelvis or upper leg. Immobilize the injury, check for circulation beyond the fracture site and apply ice.

Swimmer's Shoulder

Although most injuries occur due to the running and biking, swimming itself can lead to injury. Swimming, especially freestyle, causes the shoulder to undergo repetitive overhead motion which may compromise microvasculature in the rotator cuff. Symptoms usually are reported as pain at the shoulder during the late recovery phase and early catch phase of your stroke.

Sprains and Strains

A sprain is an injury to a ligament – the tough, fibrous tissue that connects bones to other bones. This results in an overstretch or tear of the ligament(s) supporting that joint. The usual symptoms of a muscle sprain include pain, swelling, bruising and the loss of functional ability (the ability to move and use the joint).

A strain is an injury to either a muscle or a tendon – the tissue that connects muscles to bones. Strains can be acute or chronic. An acute strain is caused by trauma such as a blow to the body; it can also be caused by improperly lifting heavy objects or overstressing the muscles. Chronic strains are usually the result of prolonged, repetitive movement.

First Aid for Injuries

Recommended treatment is the PRICE formula:

Protect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.
Rest the injured area.

Ice the injury for 20 minutes at a time.
Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.

Compress the injured area with a wrap.
Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.

Elevate the injured area above the heart, if possible.

Equipment & Technique

Always wear protective gear such as a bike helmet, cycling shoes, gloves and clothing designed for cycling. Proper technique in all disciplines can also reduce the risk of injury.

Know the Road

Understanding the specific trail type and terrain on which you will be running and riding will help you avoid accidents or unnecessary stress.

Warming Up

Start by running and riding at a slower, more relaxed pace, and gradually work up to full speed. When perspiration begins, the muscles are warmed up and ready for a workout.

Stretching

Stretch only after having warmed up; a cold muscle is more likely to tear when stretched. Stretching after a workout increases flexibility and reduces stress on joints. Perform stretches slowly, holding each position for at least five seconds.

Nutrition

Proper nutrition before and during your workout will help you maintain blood sugar levels and keep you adequately hydrated for peak performance. A physician or physical therapist can assist you in developing proper strength, flexibility and a nutrition plan.