

## PHYSICIAN'S CORNER



Stephen K. Storer, MD  
Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon  
Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital /  
U18 Sports Medicine

Sprains and strains are among the most common sports-related injuries. Here's a brief review of what they are, how to treat them and preventative strategies.

### Sprains versus strains

A sprain is a stretch or tear of a ligament, the tissue that connects one bone to another. For example, the most common ankle sprain is a stretch or tear of the anterior-talofibular ligament; the ligament that connects the fibula (outer leg bone) to the talus (a hind foot bone) on the outer side of the ankle.

A strain is a stretch or tear of a muscle or tendon, the tissue that connects muscle to bone. For example, a groin strain usually involves a stretch of the adductor muscles, the muscle group that originates at the femur bone and attaches to the pelvis and helps to move the leg to the midline through the hip joint.

Anyone can suffer a sprain or strain. Athletes are particularly susceptible depending on the specific athletic activity. Running and jumping sports have risks of foot, ankle, and leg sprains and strains. Shoulder, elbow and wrist strains commonly occur with throwing sports.

Signs of both strains and sprains include pain, swelling and bruising. Muscle weakness, spasm, and cramping are also quite common. Intensity can vary from mild to severe. Sometimes you can feel a tear or a pop when the injury occurs. At times this makes movement difficult or impossible. Severe injuries can cause repetitive joint instability and the sensation of joint clicking or giving out.

### Treatment

Rest, ice, compression, and elevation are the initial treatment for the majority of mild to moderate strains and sprains. This will help minimize the damage, control the inflammatory response, and begin the recovery process. It is important to be evaluated by a physician in moderate to severe cases to establish a treatment and recovery plan. Some severe injuries may require temporary immobilization in a cast or brace. Others may even need surgery. Less severe injuries often improve with rehabilitation under the supervision of a physical therapist.

### Prevention

Some tips to help reduce your injury risk:

- Participate in a conditioning program to build muscle strength
- Do stretching exercises daily
- Always wear properly fitting shoes
- Nourish your muscles by eating a well-balanced diet
- Warm up before any sports activity, including practice
- Use or wear protective equipment appropriate for that sport

For more information, log on to our website at [u18sportsmedicine.com](http://u18sportsmedicine.com) or contact us at 954-538-5500. U18 Sports Medicine is part of Memorial Healthcare System and affiliated with Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.

## TESTIMONIAL

I love U18 so much. They make it fun and hard-working at the same time. They pushed me and never let me give up. I will never forget the people at U18.

– Becca  
Patient of U18  
High School Soccer Goalie

