

# back muscle strain

## what is a back muscle strain?

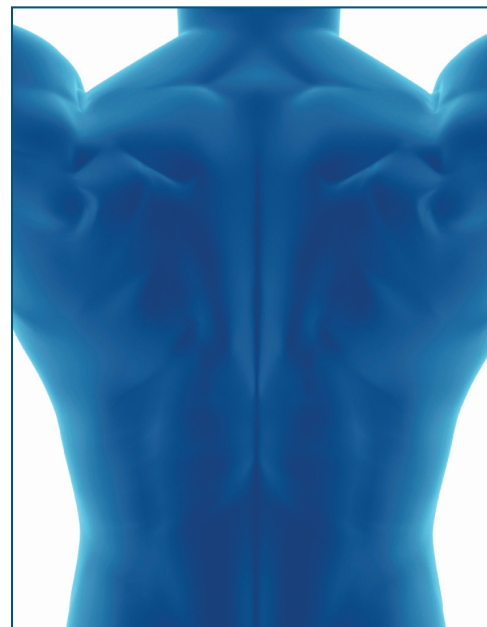
Back muscle strains can happen during any physical activity that requires the back to bend or rotate, including lifting, throwing, kicking, swinging and performing stunts. A strain typically occurs when a muscle is placed in a stretched position and then contracted forcefully in the opposite direction, resulting in a possible pull or tear in the muscle.

## who is at risk?

- Children/adolescents who have participated in physical activities (i.e., football, soccer, track, gymnastics, dance, baseball, basketball, volleyball, etc.).
- Children/adolescents who have learned improper training techniques.
- Children/adolescents who have warmed-up improperly prior to activity.
- Children/adolescents who lifted too much during weight training.

## what are the symptoms?

- Initial and sudden pain in the back muscles.
- A possible tearing sensation in the back muscles.
- When the muscles cool down after activity, a gradual increase in pain, swelling and tightness can occur in the back muscles.
- In severe cases, extreme pain, swelling and weakness will be immediate and activity cannot continue. Often, the child/adolescent will have difficulty walking or sitting upright.



## what are the treatment options?

### Conservative/non-surgical treatment:

- Rest from aggravating activities or “relative” rest.
- Ice the area after activity and when painful for 10 to 20 minutes, once an hour.
- Stretch muscles before and after activity to improve flexibility.
- If the condition does not improve, a visit to physical therapy to address pain, swelling, range of motion, flexibility, strength, gait, bracing and a return to sport-training program will usually improve symptoms.

### Surgical treatment

- Not required.

## what is the time frame for returning to activity/sport?

Depending on the severity of the muscle tear, it may take two to 12 weeks to return to activity.

## what are the long-term side effects?

Recurrent injuries in the first few months are common, illustrating the need for ongoing flexibility training and use of proper warm-up techniques.