

Volleyball injury prevention

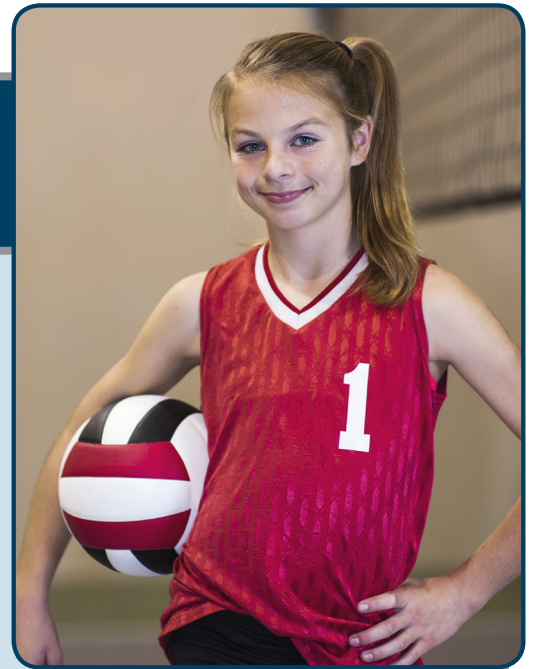
Volleyball is high-energy sport that uses repeated movements. Injuries often happen because athletes do the same motion over and over. Blocking and spiking the ball cause most injuries. Increasing flexibility and strength may reduce injuries by as much as 50%.

What are common volleyball injuries?

- Ankle pain
- Shoulder pain
- Low back pain
- Concussions
- Stress fractures
- Broken fingers
- Muscle strains
- Blisters

How can I prevent volleyball injuries?

- Have a good, total body warm-up program. This will prepare your body for volleyball. Warm-ups should use moving stretches (dynamic stretches) and include arm, leg and back muscles.
- Have a good strengthening program for upper and lower body muscles. Good form in strength training will help prevent overuse injuries.
- Perform drills that challenge your balance and body control.
- Include plyometrics/agility drills during practice that work on explosive, burst-like movements (jumping).
- Wear well-fitted safety gear. This means:
 - Shoes
 - Knee pads
 - Special eyewear, if needed
- Drink plenty of water 30 minutes before games or practices. Drink both water and sports drinks during games and practices. Only drink sports drinks if practice or games are more than 90 minutes.



What should I do before the season starts?

Volleyball athletes need a pre-season plan to help get their bodies ready for play. Start the program at least four weeks before the season starts.

Pre-season plans include:

- Flexibility
- Strength
- Balance and coordination
- Endurance
- Agility
- Special volleyball skills

How should I warm up?

It is important to warm up to help the body get ready to handle the bursts of energy the sport needs. A basic warm-up should take 15 to 25 minutes.

- Start with 5 minutes of light aerobic activity. This helps raise the heart rate and warms up muscles.
- Do 10 minutes of dynamic stretches. Stretch your arms, legs and back.
- Finish with 5 minutes of full-speed sprinting and jumping in different directions.
- At the end of practice:
 - Spend time stretching your whole body.
 - Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds.
 - Stretch for 10 to 15 minutes.

This handout is for information purposes only. It does not replace medical advice from a qualified doctor or physical therapist. Cook Children's Medical Center will not be responsible for any harm or injury resulting from interpretation of the materials.