Common Tennis Treatment, Injuries, and Prevention

P.R.I.C.E. Treatment Method

P. Protect – Protect the injury from further harm by using a brace, splint, immobilizer, or ACE bandage.
R. Rest – Rest the injured area by not participating in activities that are painful to perform.
I. Ice – Ice the area for 20 minutes every 2 hours. Never use heat because it increases swelling.
C. Compression – Compress the swelling using an ACE bandage or compression wrap to limit any further swelling. When wrapping the injured area, start at the furthest point away from the body and move toward the body. Be sure that you are not cutting off circulation.
E. Elevate – Elevate the injured area above the heart to pull blood flow away from the injured area.

Common Injuries

Tennis Elbow
Lateral epicondylitis, also referred to as “tennis elbow” is a very common cause of elbow pain. It is an injury that occurs over time from repeated use of the muscles of the arm and forearm, leading to small tears of the tendons (Tendonitis). In racket sports, overuse of the forearm muscles and repeated impact can increase the risk of tennis elbow.

Other contributing factors include lack of strength, poor technique, increased duration or intensity of play.

Rotator Cuff Tendonitis
Rotator cuff tendonitis is an inflammation (irritation and swelling) of the tendons of the shoulder that can occur in sports requiring the arm to be moved repeatedly overhead as in tennis. Chronic inflammation or injury can cause the tendons of the rotator cuff to tear.

Wrist Tendonitis
Tendonitis of the wrist commonly appears in the form of de Quervain’s disease, an inflammation of the tissue or ‘tunnel’ that surrounds the tendons of the thumb. Common symptoms include pain and possible swelling in the front of the wrist and pain with bending and extending. If the hand is made into a fist with the thumb tucked inside and the pain gets worse, the diagnosis is likely tendonitis. Tendonitis of the wrist can be caused by biomechanical problems, injury to the arm, overuse, poor equipment, and new activity or exercise.

Shin Splints
The pain of shin splints is caused by swelling or inflammation of the muscles, tendons and the thin layer of tissue that covers the shin bone. The common cause is overuse from activity or training and then not enough recovery time. Sudden change in activity or playing surface may be the cause.

Dehydration
Tennis players are at risk of dehydration if they don’t get enough fluid to replace what is lost during hot matches. It is important to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after a workout or exercise.
game. An athlete’s performance can be impacted by even mild dehydration.

It is important to be well hydrated prior to the workout. In addition:
- Water should be readily available when working out.
- Athletes should ideally drink every 15 to 30 minutes.
- Sports drinks are recommended for activities lasting longer than one hour.

Early signs of dehydration can be non-specific, including:
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Thirst
- Apathy
- Irritability
- Nausea

*Athletes with any of these signs should rest and drink plenty of water

Signs of advanced dehydration include:
- Dark urine
- Disorientation
- Dry lips and mouth
- Pale skin
- Decrease in reaction time
- Inability to drink

*Seek emergency treatment if any of these symptoms occur

Ankle Sprain
The most common injury in sports is a lateral ankle sprain. This injury occurs in tennis by rolling the ankle over the outside of the foot when planting for a sudden change of direction. The ligaments that support the ankle can be torn, which leads to swelling, inflammation and bruising around the ankle. An ankle sprain may take a few weeks to a few months to fully heal.

Prevention
Equipment
Tennis players need a well-fitting pair of shoes with good ankle support. This gives ankles the extra support they need when running and cutting. The right socks may help you avoid blisters. Performance athletic clothing can also help you deal with hot or cold playing conditions. A sporting goods store can help you find the proper tennis equipment.

Training/Conditioning
Proper conditioning and flexibility may reduce the risk of non-contact injuries. Proper technique may also reduce the risk of repetitive use injuries.

Warming Up
Start by jogging a few laps around the court and lightly hitting tennis balls. As the level of activity increases, the muscles burn more oxygen and their temperature rises. 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 match 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 doctor or physical therapist can assist you in developing a proper strength, flexibility and nutrition plan.

The AMITA Health Orthopedics Institute is a national leader in musculoskeletal care, offering comprehensive and advanced care for a wide range of conditions. We are proactive about keeping you active. That is why our multi-disciplinary orthopedic teams enlist a comprehensive leading edge approach to the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of musculoskeletal injuries.

Our team of highly-experienced board-certified physicians, surgeons, therapists and nurses are dedicated to providing patients of all ages with a personalized treatment program that is customized for your condition, lifestyle and personal preferences.

We work hard to prevent sports-related injuries, which have become increasingly more common among athletes, especially children. AMITA Health Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons keep kids active and participating in the extracurricular activities they enjoy by delivering educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic care.

For more information, or to contact one of our Sports Medicine Outreach Liaisons, email us at SportsMedicine@amitahealth.org or call us at 847.385.7120 or 708.245.6051

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