

# Ease back into springtime sports, doctor cautions

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Sports medicine specialist offers tips to help keep teens and adults moving.

(HealthDay)—Spring can be a peak time for injuries as people rush back into warm weather sports without being properly prepared, an expert says.

"Many weekend warriors either may not be exercising during the week, or if they are, they're not exercising in ways that help prevent [injury](#) before going full force into a weekend of playing [sports](#)," Dr. Adam Bennett, a primary care sports medicine specialist at the NorthShore Neurological Institute in Chicago, said in an institute news release.

"In these adults, I see a lot of acute tendon or [muscle injuries](#), such as a torn Achilles tendon or a pulled hamstring. Teens tend to have a lot of

[overuse injuries](#). Many teen athletes play multiple sports or play the same sport on multiple teams, so they're at risk for tendonitis, stress fractures and shin splints," he explained.

Bennett offered a number of [injury prevention](#) tips.

"Weekend warriors and recreational athletes should include some type of athletic training during the week, ideally twice a week, to help strengthen the muscles they use in their dominant sport," he said.

Even working out once a week can decrease the likelihood of injury. Training should mimic the sport played and include more explosive types of exercises, such as jumping rope, lifting weights or sprint intervals, he recommended.

Teenagers who play sports multiple days in a row need to take time off for recovery too. He suggested that teens relax and let their muscles and tendons rest on days off.

Besides helping to prevent injury, there's an extra benefit from rest—a positive impact on performance, noted Bennett.

"Teens also should strive for good nutrition to properly fuel their bodies. They should eat meals between practices that include vegetables and lean proteins and stay well hydrated with water and sports drinks," he advised.

It's important to make sure any injury is fully healed before heading back to play. Going back too soon puts athletes at risk of repeat injuries, Bennett explained.

But, he said it's sometimes hard to tell the difference between an injury and soreness. A little soreness for a few days is normal.

"In general, be aware of what feels or sounds like a 'snap' or 'pop,' or any swelling or pain that gets worse. These usually indicate an injury that needs medical attention," Bennett explained.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics offers [sports injury prevention tips](#).

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