

What to Do if You are Injured



Rest

Place yourself in a comfortable position. Keep the injured area supported. Avoid using the injured area for at least 48–72 hours as continued activity will increase bleeding and damage.



Ice

Apply ice to the injured area for 20 minutes, every two hours for the first 48–72 hours after injury. Ice reduces swelling, pain and bleeding. Ice can be used in the following ways:

- crushed or cubed ice in a wet towel or plastic bag
- frozen pea packet in wet towel
- cold pack wrapped in wet towel

Icy or cold water is better than nothing. **Caution:** Do not apply ice directly to skin.



Compression

Apply a firm wide elastic bandage over the injured area, as well as above and below. Where possible hold ice in place with the bandage. Between ice treatments maintain bandage compression. Applying a bandage will reduce bleeding and swelling and also provides support for the injured area.

Caution: Ensure the bandage is not too tight. Some signs of the bandage being too tight may include numbness, tingling or skin becoming pale or blue. If these symptoms and/or signs develop remove the bandage and reapply again firmly but not as tightly.



Elevation

Raise the injured area above the level of the heart at all times. A pillow can be used to provide support and comfort. Elevating the injured area reduces bleeding, swelling and pain.



Referral

As soon as possible after injury arrange to see a qualified health professional such as a Doctor or Physiotherapist. This will determine the extent of your injury and provide advice on treatment and rehabilitation required.

ALWAYS TELL YOUR COACH IF YOU ARE INJURED

If you are still having problems after 7-10 days you might want to contact our physiotherapist for further advice - as an ex City of Bradford Swimmer he has a special awareness of swimming injuries

Ben Pollard, B.Sc (Chartered Physiotherapist)

For appointments phone Heaton Tennis & Squash Club on: 01274 541508
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Staying Healthy

Swimming is an excellent sport for children's health, and a lot of asthmatic children for example have become very good swimmers. It improves fitness, controls weight, makes children feel better and more energetic, and builds strong muscles and bones.

At higher levels of competition swimmers train almost every morning and afternoon. Long hours of hard training may lead to illness in swimmers and good habits as a junior swimmer can help prevent some of these problems. I hope the following information and advice on this subject from the Australian Swimming Association, English Institute of Sport & the A.S.A. enables you to ensure your child maintains excellent health and is able to fully enjoy the swimming experience. **Please be aware though, this is only very general advice and if in doubt, you should always consult your doctor.**

Ear infections are common in young children because the ear canal is narrow. Swimmer's ear or otitis externa is an infection in the ear canal caused by contaminated water or debris such as wax or dry skin harbouring germs which thrive in moisture. Children complain of a sore ear and it hurts when tugged or pressed. Usually the doctor will prescribe some antibiotic drops. You need to see a doctor to make sure there is no debris in the canal which will lead to a recurrence. Ear plugs may help an early return to swimming.

Sore ears associated with upper respiratory illness are not caused by water. This condition is called otitis media or middle ear infection. The cause is usually a virus which does not need antibiotics but your doctor can examine the ears, nose and throat before deciding whether medication is needed.

Viral infections require rest as early as possible and children should not go to swimming training if they have symptoms of a viral infection. Virus particles are easily transmitted to other children and highly contagious. Typical symptoms of a respiratory viral infection are unusual tiredness, irritability, headache, runny nose, sore throat, sore muscles and after a couple of days a cough develops. If your child wakes up feeling tired and grumpy, put them back to bed and wait a day to see whether they have recovered.

Our immune system fights viral infections. If children have late nights, or stress from exams or assignments, or family problems the immune system does not cope as well and children catch infections easily. One or two days in bed with some Paracetamol will usually be all that is required. It is important not to get up early to go to training when you are sick.

When you return to full training build up the duration and intensity gradually.

Swimmers who have **hayfever and asthma** are prone to respiratory infections unless their asthma is well controlled. Children need to take their medication regularly even when they are well, and always have a Ventolin puffer in their swimming bag in case they have trouble breathing.

Swimmer's shoulder is the most common injury from swimming and needs early treatment as does **Swimmers knee**. A physiotherapist or a GP with an interest in sport should diagnose the problem and arrange appropriate treatment. Sometimes medication is required. It is not normal to have to swim with sore knees or shoulders and the condition will get worse. Sometimes it is related to posture and physiotherapists can prescribe some exercises to do at home.



It is crucial to get children into healthy **hydration** habits while they are still young, to ensure they understand their body and why it is so important to keep themselves hydrated. Normally the first sign of dehydration is thirst, and it is important to ensure your child is having regular 'mouthfuls' of fluids throughout training sessions and immediately after each event regardless of feeling thirsty at that time or not. This should also be followed through at school, home and in day- to-day life. Water is the preferable fluid; however, during an event, a sports drink may encourage a larger intake and provide a lift in energy.

If you experience **leg cramps** during swimming you should stop and try to control the cramps with stretching. If you are very tired or if the water is cold it most probably means that the workout or competition has to finish. If you experience cramps quite often during workouts or while asleep (nocturnal leg cramps), it most probably signifies magnesium deficiency. Magnesium is an important element in the control of proper muscle contraction. Perspiration due to exercise means that you lose minerals in substantial quantities which may lead to cramps. Loss of water itself may also lead to cramps

Swimmers who swim regularly need lots of **hair** protection to keep hair in good condition. Pool chemicals like chlorine strip natural oils from the hair shafts so hair becomes dry and brittle with split ends. There are some things swimmers can do to protect their hair. Start by getting your hair wet in the shower before getting in the pool. The un-chlorinated shower water will fill the hair shafts and make it harder for the pool chemicals to seep in. Wearing a swimming hat in the pool will also help to protect it and you should also shower thoroughly after your swim and use a conditioner.



Prolonged swimming in chlorinated water has a drying effect on the **skin** and this can make it itchy. Some people seem more susceptible than others particularly if a person suffers from eczema. Dehydration makes skin more likely to damage by chlorine as it breaks down its natural defences so ensure you drink plenty of water during a training session and ensure the urine is never darker than light yellow. After completing a training session spend several minutes in the showers to ensure that the skin has been thoroughly washed with fresh water and no chlorine is bound to the skin surface. Similarly wash costumes thoroughly as soon as possible after the swim, not only will they last longer but rashes are often worse under the costumes. Pay particular care to those areas of skin where there is chaffing or rubbing and protect these areas with vaseline as these areas are particularly susceptible. Most importantly it is worth using a moisturiser which will hydrate the skin, keep it soft and in good condition. If there are some very dry eczematous patches 0.5% hydrocortisone can be bought from your local chemist. If it does not improve you will need to see your own GP.

Many swimmers experience a **headache** following training. The main reason with novices is a bad breathing pattern which means that carbon dioxide formed in your working muscles cannot be expelled, and your body is not getting enough oxygen. This makes for double trouble and can give you a headache. The main reasons with well-trained swimmers is dehydration - but if it continues even with good breathing & hydration you should see your doctor.

The recipe for healthy swimming is simple: get a good night's sleep, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of fluids and stay happy. And the formula for doing well in all sporting endeavours is equally straight forward: peak health + peak fitness = peak performance. Those golden rules apply not just to our elite swimmers, but to the juniors as well.

Preventing Illness

During the past few years, a high proportion of swimmers have been ill, particularly during the winter months. Whilst sometimes this is unavoidable, swimmers and coaches should do everything possible to prevent illness and stay healthy all year round, and especially during periods of hard training.

Strategies to Avoid Illness & Infections

- Avoid contact with people who have symptoms of infection (i.e. those 'just coming down with a cold') and may transmit the germs through airborne sources. Minimise contact with children of school age and avoid large crowds
- Wash hands regularly, particularly after touching surfaces that are frequently handled by the public such as doorknobs, handrails and telephone receivers. Never share drinks bottles or cutlery. Remember good personal hygiene and thoughtfulness are the best defences against infection
- Avoid hand-to-eye or hand-to-mouth contact to prevent transferring microbes to sensitive mucosal tissues
- Maintain good oral hygiene – brush teeth regularly and consider using an anti-septic mouthwash in the morning and evening
- Avoid getting a dry mouth; this can be done by drinking little and often to maintain hydration
- Use properly treated water for drinking during swimming
- Avoid shared saunas, showers and Jacuzzis where germs can breed
- Be aware of vulnerability to infection after training and competition when the immune system is low, and especially during the winter months
- Moving from a hot environment (pool) to a cold one (outside) will weaken the immune system: wrap up well and stay warm!

Should you Train During Infections?

- Training should be stopped if the athlete has a fever or symptoms such as aching joints and muscles. Exercising with an infection may increase the severity and/ or duration of the illness and exercise tolerance may be reduced when the athlete has an infection
- It is probably OK to continue light training if the symptoms are all above the neck
- Do not resume training at the same level; build up gradually. Light exercise during recovery from illness may enhance recovery
- Squad members with infection should be isolated as much as possible from the rest of the swimmers
- Iron supplements should not be taken during periods of infection

Personal Management

- Maintain a well-balanced diet adequate energy, carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins & minerals. Carbohydrate solution pre-, during and post-training may help in reducing immune suppression
- Allow sufficient time between training sessions for recovery
- Get regular and adequate sleep every night (ideally 8-10 hours) and additional recovery at weekends. Reduce life/social/psychological stress such as school/ University work; good time management is one of the most important skills an elite swimmer can learn
- Maintain good hydration
- Discuss the possibility of vaccination with a doctor, usually in September each year
- Swimmers who already have a good balanced diet may take additional supplements in an attempt to boost immune function and prevent illness. Multi-vitamins, Cod liver oil, Vitamin C, Iron (e.g. ferrous sulphate), Echinacea, Glutamine, Zinc, Magnesium, and Octacosanol have all been suggested to help prevent illness, although swimmers taking any supplement should be aware of possible contamination of supplements and check carefully against lists of proscribed drugs. However, over-supplementation of vitamins and minerals can actually impair immune function

