



Preventing Overuse Injuries

By: Dr. Alexander Lambert

Feeling the burn! Making gains! Expressive statements young and older athletes may make as they are either launching into new physical activities or ramping up their current work-out routine. When starting a new repetitive activity or rapidly advancing a training program, the risk of developing an overuse injury develops. Some of the most common examples of overuse injuries are: tennis elbow, pitching elbow, runner's knee, Achilles' tendonitis, rotator cuff tendonitis, shin splints, and stress fractures.

The human body is absolutely amazing and resilient! Exercising helps build stronger bones, tendons, muscles, and ligaments. However, when the physical stress of exercising overwhelms the body's ability to recover or remodel, then damaging breakdown occurs. Remodeling involves the breakdown and buildup of tissue during the recovery phase of training and is extremely important to prevent overuse injuries.

Fortunately, most overuse injuries can be prevented with proper training, adequate rest, and good nutrition. Most overuse injuries develop during the second to fourth week of new training. By listening to body signals like pain and not trying to push through it or even taking a week off after the second week of a new training program, injuries can be prevented. Real discomfort or pain means the body is unable to remodel and is overwhelmed. In general, by avoiding increasing an exercise program by more than 10% per week and avoid exercising every day, new and even established athletes can prevent developing stress injuries.

Setting new fitness goals by either increasing training or by beginning to exercise is great! Don't let overuse injuries sideline the progress! By working with a doctor, personal trainer, coach, athletic trainer, and/or physical therapist to help ease into a new activity or advancing a current training program, goals can be met and overuse injuries prevented.

Dr. Alexander Lambert is a board-certified orthopedist with Hampton Roads Orthopedics & Sports Medicine in Williamsburg at New Town. He specializes in sports medicine and can treat injuries both operatively and non-operatively. Dr. Lambert's goal is to meet his patients' specific needs by partnering with them throughout the entire treatment process. We often hear that good posture is essential for good health. We recognize poor posture when we see it formed as a result of bad habits carried out over years and evident in many adults. But only few people have a real grasp of its importance.

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