

# Avoiding Injuries

**Success in Triathlons depends on consistency and consistency depends on avoiding injuries.**

Supplements to avoiding injury:

- **Light weights for legs, shoulders, and core strength.** These exercises should include leg curls (for the hammys) leg press, leg extensions, adductor and abductor exercises (groin and hip muscles). For the shoulders internal and external rotator cuff exercises (especially for you swimmers).
- **Stretch following a good warm up.** (10-20 min.): Most important stretches are the hamstrings, calf and soleus muscles. Find a rhythm: that stretches all the muscles and stick with it.
- **Massage any tight and sore muscles.** You can do this by hand or use a fascial roller or hand held roller. Roll back and forth over the whole muscle staying on the most tender spots for 10-15 sec. (this is known as ischemic compression and will help reduce any trigger points).
- **ICE, ICE, ICE, ICE!!!!** Just accept that ice is your new best friend!!! **Any aches or pains should be iced immediately** to reduce inflammation and accelerate the healing process. 15-20 min. w/ a paper towel barrier, following any activity that is causing the pain. Contrast therapy is O.K. (that's the heat - cold - heat - cold... but it is best to finish with cold).
- **Anti-inflammatories will also help with the healing process.** A great supplement to Ibuprofen is Bromelain. Bromelain is a natural anti-inflammatory (proteolytic enzyme) made from Pineapple stalk.

If the pain continues for up to one week following anti-inflammatories, massage and ice, than seek professional help. Sports Chiropractic, Physical Therapy and Orthopedists are some of the better choices for sports related injuries. The doctor should:

Give a thorough history and exam to find the underlying cause for the injury. Muscle imbalances, scar tissue, foot, shoulder and hip biomechanics and overall structural stability of the patient need to be evaluated. Treatment of the condition may involve Ultrasound, Muscle Stimulation, adjustments and Soft Tissue Therapy. **Once the healing process is started we can then ensure all predisposing factors are managed.** Depending on the patients cause of the injury they may be advised to supplement with exercises, orthotics, cho-pat straps and given advise on what activities (swimming, biking, running) would be best to work through the injury.

Dr. Howell has been running for the last 16 years and has not crossed over yet to the triathlon world. A four-time All-American in indoor, outdoor track and cross country. Dr. Howell has competed in numerous national championships and the 1996 Olympic Trials for Track and Field. Dr. Howell has now shifted his goals to try and qualify for the 2008 Marathon Olympic Trials and to helping athletes/patients achieve their highest potential.

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