

Your Sports Injury & Performance Guide

Sensible, honest steps to recover from a sports injury — and how to know when it needs a closer look.

Most sports injuries are musculoskeletal — strained muscles, sprained ligaments, and overworked joints that heal well when you respect how the body recovers. The trick is that recovery isn't a switch: it moves through phases — calm the injury, restore motion, rebuild strength, then return to play. Skipping ahead is the most common reason an injury lingers or comes back. Here's where to start.

Recover the smart way

- 1 Start with R.I.C.E. for a fresh injury.** In the first day or two, Rest the injured area, apply Ice to calm swelling, add gentle Compression, and Elevate the limb. It settles an acutely inflamed sprain or strain so the healing can begin.
- 2 Protect it, but don't freeze it.** Total shutdown stiffens the joint and weakens the muscle around it. Back off the movements that hurt, but keep the rest of you moving in pain-free ways so you don't lose fitness while the injury calms down.
- 3 Restore motion before you load it.** Once the sharp pain eases, ease the joint gently through its comfortable range. Being pain-free at rest isn't the same as being ready to load — near-full, comfortable motion that matches your uninjured side is the real green light.
- 4 Rebuild strength gradually — this is the step people skip.** Reload the tissue in stages, building strength on the injured side until it genuinely matches the other. An area can feel fine day-to-day yet not be ready for sport; deliberate strengthening is what keeps the injury from returning.
- 5 Warm up, then return to play in stages.** Warm up properly before every session, and reintroduce your sport gradually — light and controlled before fast and full-intensity, straight-line before cutting and pivoting. Return is earned by pain-free full motion and restored strength, not by a date on the calendar.

Common sports injuries

- **Muscle strains** — an overstretched or torn muscle, often from a sprint, sudden effort, or an inadequate warm-up.
- **Overuse injuries** — nagging aches from repetitive load, like runner's knee or a cranky shoulder, that build up over time.
- **Ligament sprains** — a stretched or torn ligament from a twist or awkward landing; the ankle and knee are common spots.
- **Sports-related back & neck strain** — a tweaked lower back or neck; restoring motion where a spinal subluxation limits a segment can help it settle.

⚠ **Get evaluated or seek urgent care if...**

- You **can't bear weight, walk on the limb, or use it normally** after the injury
- A joint or limb looks **visibly deformed or dislocated** — out of place or misshapen
- There's **significant, rapid swelling** or the joint **feels unstable or gives way**
- You feel **numbness or tingling**, or a limb turns pale, cold, or dusky
- Any **head injury with concussion signs** — confusion, a worsening headache, or vomiting — stop play and get checked

These aren't things to work through. Some injuries need imaging or a physician — go to urgent care or the emergency department.

How we help at Thrive

At Thrive Chiropractic in Troy, care for a sports injury is conservative and built around your exam, matched to the phase you're in. Dr. Rubinstein typically combines **soft-tissue and massage therapy** to calm a guarded, injured area, **gentle adjustments or mobilization** to restore motion to stiff joints and spinal segments once the acute flare allows, and **a staged strengthening and return-to-sport plan** that tells you, by milestones, when you're truly ready.

We're honest about scope: chiropractic supports how you move and recover — it doesn't promise specific performance gains or "cure" an injury. Care is coordinated with your coaches and sports-medicine team, and if the exam suggests a fracture, a significant ligament tear, or a concussion, that's referred and co-managed, not treated as a simple strain. You'll get a specific plan and timeline after your exam.

Call us

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Book a visit

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