

Safety for Intramural Basketball

1. *Why is Basketball Safety Important?*

Nearly half a million basketball injuries are treated by doctors and hospitals each year. The fast paced action of basketball can cause a wide range of injuries, most often to the foot, ankle, and knee. Fortunately very few of those injuries are life threatening. Some (like broken bones, concussion, and ligament tears) can be quite serious, though. ***And while playing through the pain might seem noble, it can lead to serious muscle and joint problems over time.***

Sprained ankles are the most common basketball injuries, but jammed or broken fingers, bruises, bloody or broken noses, and poked eyes are all too common as well.

2. *Proper Preparation for Play:*

Maintain fitness- as with many sports, basketball requires running, jumping, and other athletic movements. Staying in good shape year round will not only make you better at these actions, it will help reduce your risk of injury and improve your stamina so you can play harder for longer periods of time.

Warm up and Stretch before you start playing- always take time to warm up and stretch. Research studies have shown that cold muscles are more prone to injury. Warm up with Jumping jacks, stationary cycling or running or walking in place for 3 to 5 minutes, and then have a good stretching session, paying particular attention to your ankles, wrist, calves, and hamstrings. Slowly and gently stretch holding each stretch for 30 seconds. Remember it's a good idea to stretch after each game also.

3. *Ensure appropriate Equipment- before taking the court and take steps to protect yourselves by wearing the right gear:* The right shoe can go a long way toward reducing ankle, foot, and leg injuries.

- All basketball shoes should have a sturdy, non-skid sole and should be the right size (shoes that fit snugly) offering support, and securely laced at all times while playing.
- Ankle supports can reduce the incidence of ankle sprains.
- Protective Knee and elbow pads will protect you from bruises and abrasions.
- ***(Players with prior injuries can benefit from fitted knee, ankle, or wrist braces to support their joints while playing.)***
- Use a mouth guard to protect your teeth and mouth.
- Players who wear glasses or contacts will want to use protective eyewear made of shatterproof plastic. Use safety glasses or glass guards to protect your eyes.
- Do not wear jewelry or chew gum during practice or games.

4. Prepare for Injuries:

- Coaches should be knowledgeable about first aid and be able to administer it for minor injuries, such as facial cuts, bruises, or minor strains and sprains.
- Be prepared for emergencies. All coaches should have a plan to reach medical personnel for help with more significant injuries such as concussions, dislocations, contusions, sprains, abrasions, and fractures.

5. During Game Play:

- Play within the rules, with no shoving, tripping, or holding, and always obey the officials. Never deliberately or flagrantly foul another player.
- Don't chew gum, toothpicks, or anything else while playing basketball. They could present a risk of choking.
- Never fight with other players or teammates **or Officials**. This will not only get you kicked out of any sanctioned basketball game, it will also increase your likelihood of being injured, not to mention embarrassed.
- Finally, get out there on the court and **have fun** working on your skills and leading your team to victory. With a little forethought and some common sense and etiquette, you can keep things safe and stay injury-free and in the game.

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