



SPRING CROSS-TRAINING GUIDE

Taking breaks from participating in these sports, allowing your body to rest and fully recover from any injuries, and focusing on gaining strength and flexibility are all ways athletes can avoid serious overuse injuries. Transitioning to another sport that compliments your main winter sport is a great way to take a break and continue building your skills.



COMMON SPORTS SPECIALIZATION INJURIES IN POPULAR WINTER SPORTS

Ice Hockey: Low back injuries (including general pain and muscle strains) are one of the most common overuse injuries players experience due to the posture that players use when skating. Hip and Knee injuries (groin, hip-flexor, and ligament strains) are common due to the motion of the skating stride.

Skiing: Knee injuries are among the most common that skiers experience. The most common types of knee injury are sprains and tears to the ACL and MCL (important ligaments put under pressure by skiing motions. Ski thumb is also an overuse injury frequent skiers could get from gripping their ski poles.

Wrestling: Shoulder and knee injuries are the most common and likely to be the most serious injuries athletes experience. Knee injuries often consist of knee cap pain, inflammation (due to repetitively hitting the mat), and MCL and LCL sprains.

Basketball: Stress fractures (commonly in the lower leg and foot) and knee injuries (mainly MCL and ACL) due to jumping and changing directions quickly are some of the most common overuse injuries in players.

Competitive Cheer: Muscle strains, particularly in the hips, lower back, knees, and ankles, are all overuse injuries that cheerleaders should be cautious of. Repetitive movements, lifts, and stunts are all ways these injuries could occur.

Gymnastics: Back pain and elbow pain or swelling can be common in gymnasts who train and compete all year round.

Swimming: Shoulder overuse injuries are very common among swimmers (the rotator cuff tendons are particularly at risk). Neck injuries are also common due to the overextension of the neck during certain strokes. Muscle strains and ligament sprains are also not uncommon in the lower back of year-round swimmers.

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WHAT SPRING SPORTS CAN WINTER ATHLETES USE TO CROSS-TRAIN?

Ice Hockey: Since ice hockey is such an intense contact sport, it could be a good idea to try out baseball/softball, golf, soccer, or track and field. Soccer and track build endurance, while baseball/softball and golf can build strength in infrequently used muscle groups.

Skiing: Not skiing in the spring can allow you to exercise different muscles and learn a new skill by playing golf, track and field, or tennis.

Wrestling: A lot of strength and stamina is needed to wrestle. Take the pressure off your shoulders and knees and try track and field. Some field events allow you to build strength, while track events can help maintain your endurance.

Basketball: Since leg and knee injuries are common in basketball, take a season off while still staying fit and having fun with baseball/softball or golf. Strength training is also a good option since it's an important part of reducing the risk of injury.

Competitive Cheer: Consider taking time off while building your endurance, agility, and strength with tennis or track and field. Off-season activities like yoga or pilates can also improve your flexibility.

Gymnastics: Taking a break from gymnastics is critical to maintain health and fitness. Spring sports like track and field or golf can keep you in shape or give your body a break from your intense primary sport. Activities like yoga, pilates, or weight training are other terrific options for taking a break while maintaining strength and flexibility..

Swimming: Shoulder, neck, and back injuries common in swimming can hopefully be avoided by taking breaks and participating in a different spring sport like soccer, tennis, or track and field.

Sports psychologist Dr. Eddie O'Connor highly encourages younger children and pre-teens especially, to participate in diverse sports and physical activities. Dr. O'Connor says, "Sampling, or trying out a bunch of sports and activities, is linked to a longer sports career and has positive implications for long-term sports involvement...Early diversification allows participation in a range of settings that most favorably affect positive youth development in areas such as a healthy identity, positive peer relationships, and leadership skills."



HOW CAN CHIROPRACTIC CARE HELP?

Yes, integrating chiropractic care into children's and young adults' regular wellness care can improve their health and performance. The Michigan Association of Chiropractors encourages children and young adults to participate in sports to improve and maintain physical, mental, emotional, and social health.

Matt Barton, D.C. chiropractic physician, and grade-school hockey coach, says that going to a chiropractor can help athletes in several key ways, including preventing injury, improving performance, and healing injuries.