Football is not just the United Kingdom’s national game, but the world’s game. And with over 240million registered players worldwide, not to mention all those playing recreationally, it would be fair to assume the odd scrape or bump might occur.

While today’s modern game may be lightyears away from 22 hungover men battling it out on a frosty Sunday morning, there are certain things that are universal regardless of level, and one of those is injury.

Chances are, at some point in time you’ve probably experienced the same sort of injuries Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo have. And with ever-increasing technological advancements becoming available in the mainstream, you can now, if not receive the same level of treatment, at least equip yourself with the same level of sports, injury and rehab equipment.

If you do find yourself on the end of an injury, be it short or long term, it’s important to both treat and prevent further injury. That’s why PhysioRoom.com’s collection of supports and braces is ideal for any common, or not so common, football injury. Products range from something to give some comfort on a mild strain, to all out protection for a nasty break or tear.

There’s a very good chance you’ve seen a star player sombrelly making his way from a sporting venue on crutches before, but you’ve maybe always wondered “What’s that ridiculous boot thing he’s wearing?”. Well here at PhysioRoom we’re in a position to clear those muddy waters, so join us while we run through some common ailments, and how you might go about treating them.

Things to remember when buying a brace or support:

• What type do I need? Football appropriate braces come in different shapes and sizes, but can usually be categorised in to four types, sleeves, supports, stabilisers and hinges. Sleeves easily slip over the leg or arm, while supports are adjustable and usually wrap around the affected limb or joint. Stabilisers offer advanced support by featuring steel springs either side of the knee. While hinged knee braces allow the knee to move in a natural motion while offering the most support.

• What style do I want? There are two standard styles of braces, the slip-on or the wraparound. Slip-ons are used by putting your foot through the brace and pulling up the leg. While wraparound braces, of course, wrap around and can usually be adjusted by straps made of such material as Velcro.

• What size do I need? This all depends on which brace or support you choose. Typically, each will feature a size guide, but some may require a bit of DIY measuring for products such as knee braces. If you are between sizes, it’s often recommended you go for the larger size, but this may vary from product to product.
HAMSTRING STRAIN

What is it?
Perhaps the most common injury of them all, the hamstring strain. When you sprint during a game, the hamstring muscles can be forcibly stretched beyond their limits and the muscle can be torn. A tear in the muscle is referred to as a strain, depending on its severity, being classified as a first, second or third degree strain. PhysioRoom.com’s analysis of injuries has shown that hamstring strains can account for up to 40% of injuries in one season alone.

How can you prevent it?
Warming up before games and training is essential should you wish to avoid this injury. It is thought this decreases muscle injuries as the muscle is more extensible when the tissue temperature has been increased by one or two degrees. A good warm up should last at least 20 minutes, starting gently and working up to full pace activity.

Treatment
The immediate treatment of any muscle injury consists of the usual rest, ice, compression and elevation. Depending on the severity of the injury, the leg may need to be rested from sporting activity for between a couple of weeks and three months. In the meantime, you may find the product across useful.

• This PhysioRoom.com Neoprene Thigh Support is made from neoprene to wick away moisture leaving the wearer more comfortable during exercise.

• A soothing heat is retained which helps to ease pain and tightness. Meanwhile, compression supplied to the thigh and hamstring by the Neoprene Thigh Support works to reduce any swelling to the area.

• The combination of these benefits means a faster healing time, and protection against the common injuries suffered by runners and active sports players, like footballers.
SPRAINED ANKLE

What is it?

Another common offender in terms of football injuries, a sprained ankle refers to soft tissue damage (mainly ligaments) around the ankle, usually caused when the ankle is twisted inwards. As well as damage to the ligaments, the capsule which surrounds the ankle joint can also be damaged. The damage causes bleeding within the tissues, which produces the swelling and pain.

How can you prevent it?

Taping and bracing the ankle can help reduce the risk of sprains. Previous research has shown the injury incidence in people with taped ankles was 4.9 ankle sprains per 1000 participant games, compared with 2.6 ankle sprains per 1000 participant games in subjects wearing ankle braces. This compared with 32.8 ankle sprains per 1000 participant games in subjects that had no taping or bracing.

Treatment

In the first few days following an ankle sprain it is important to follow the PRICE protocol: Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation (never apply ice directly to the skin). A safe way of applying an ice pack is the PhysioRoom.com Ice Bag, which you can see across.
KNEE CARTILAGE TEAR

What is it?

A torn cartilage occurs quite frequently in football. They have been known to account for up to 12% of Premier League injuries depending on the season. The term itself, ‘cartilage tear’, is slightly misleading since it is the meniscus within the knee that is actually damaged. There are two menisci within each knee joint that are made from tough fibrocartilage – hence the term cartilage for this injury. As the knee joint bends the thigh bone usually rolls, spins and glides on the top surface of the shin bone. However, if there’s a rotation caused by a twist while the joint is bearing weight, the menisci can get jammed and nipped between the bones, causing a tear.

How can you prevent it?

There isn’t a great deal you can do to prevent a cartilage tear. These injuries occur due to the positioning of the knee in a semi-bent position while it is bearing weight. Having strong quadriceps and hamstring muscles that can deal with the strain on the knee joint may be helpful.

Treatment

Cases of knee pain and knee swelling that are accompanied by locking and giving way should be assessed by a chartered physiotherapist or doctor. Small cartilage tears may settle with physiotherapy treatment, but more significant cartilage tears may require surgery. Surgical removal of the torn fibrocartilage is known as a meniscectomy. Following surgery, a period of 4 to 6 weeks physiotherapy is usually required. Across you can find a suitable brace for your rehab period.

- This PhysioRoom.com hinged knee brace with airmesh four-way stretch fabric for a custom fit, features wrap-around Velcro straps that make it easy to wear. It protects the knee following ligament sprains, cartilage tears and mild arthritis.

- It features a dual pivot hinge which holds the knee in a stable position, helping to prevent flexion and extension, thus protecting the joint from more damage. The brace’s wrap-around straps enable you to put it on without pulling it over the foot and lower leg. A popliteal opening behind the knee makes it comfortable to wear, while a gel-filled surround holds the patella firmly, prevents displacement of the knee cap and provides gentle massage.
HERNIA

What is it?

Hernia and groin problems are regular occurrences in all sports, but particularly football where the pelvic region is subject to large stresses during kicking, sprinting and turning. Two common conditions that affect footballers are the inguinal hernia and gilmore’s groin (usually known as a ‘sports hernia’). Following sporting activity the person with a sports hernia will be stiff and sore in the groin region. The day after a game, getting out of bed or a car will be difficult. In the early stages, the person may be able to continue playing their sport, but the problem usually gets progressively worse.

How can you prevent it?

Core strength and core stability exercises can go a long way to improving muscle function across the trunk and pelvis. This improved muscular strength and stability can help counteract the large forces that are applied to the lower abdomen and pelvis, therefore reducing the risk of developing a hernia.

Treatment

Anyone with the signs and symptoms of a hernia should consult a hernia specialist. Because it requires an expert to diagnose a hernia, it isn’t unusual for several weeks or months to pass before the correct diagnosis is made. In those people who have typical hernia symptoms, an expert can confirm the diagnosis with physical tests and an ultrasound scan. In most cases it is usually possible to continue playing football while wearing some sort of compressions shorts until an opportune time can be arranged for surgery. Check out our compression shorts across.

• The PhysioRoom.com core stability shorts feature an innovative cross design elastic support system and have been specifically designed for the treatment and prevention of sports hernia, gilmore’s groin, pubalgia, osteitis pubis, hamstring injuries, groin and thigh injuries.

• The core stability shorts have been specifically designed to assist the lower abdominal, pelvic and hip areas and provide stability to your core to enhance your performance as well as helping you to recover much faster. They reduce muscle vibration and provide compression to help provide physical support to the groin and pelvis. The lightweight, four-way stretch material improves movement and ensures that moisture is quickly wicked away from the skin, while the breathable material allows ventilation to evaporate any moisture.
What is it?

The Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) lies deep within the knee joint, connecting the thigh bone with the shin bone. Its function is to prevent excessive forward movement of the shin in relation to the thigh and to prevent excessive rotation at the knee joint. The ACL can be injured several different ways while playing football, most notably by landing from a jump onto a bent knee then twisting, or landing on a knee that is over-extended. ACL damage can also occur via direct contact with the knee.

How can you prevent it?

Proprioception training using a PhysioRoom.com wobble board is thought to be very effective in the prevention of knee ligament injuries as well as during rehabilitation. Wobble boards are designed to assist the re-education of the proprioceptive system by improving sensory function around the knee. Previous research has also shown that wobble board training improves single leg stance ability and balance, while other studies have suggested that patients who underwent wobble board training experienced significantly fewer knee ligament injuries.

Treatment

All ACL injuries require the opinion of an orthopaedic consultant. During the immediate aftermath of an ACL injury the PRICE treatment protocol is most effective. This is an acronym for Protection, Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. To help minimise the risk of an ACL injury and strengthen your connective tissues, take a look at the wobble board across.

- Rebuild your sense of balance after injury, to prevent further injury and accelerate your return to sport. The PhysioRoom.com Wobble Board 40cm can also be used to strengthen the core muscles and is suitable for use during general exercise.
- Use during the early to intermediate stages of rehabilitation following surgery or serious injury to improve balance and stability.
- The ability to extend the height of the board enables the user to gradually increase the ‘wobble’ of the board, building confidence and the ability to take on more challenging exercises.
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