PHYSIO ROOM

COMBAT SPORTS AND PHYSICAL INJURIES GUIDE
Although many perceive combat sports to be quite brutal and dangerous sports, medical evidence has shown that compared to other contact sports, boxing is relatively safe.

Indeed in 1996 the National Safety Council accident report ranked amateur boxing 23rd on its list of injury-producing sports and rated it the safest of all contact sports behind football, gymnastics and in-line skating.

As with all contact sports there are risks of injury with some more common than others depending on the type of sport. With boxing the focus is fist fighting wearing boxing gloves where blows are focused at the upper body and head. Naturally, this can lead to injury but rarely is there severe lasting damage. Along with bruising to the face, hands and ribs, the most common boxing injuries are Boxers Fractures, Carpal Bossing, Cuts (Lacerations), Shoulder Dislocation and Concussion.

This guide is aimed at the professional and amateur boxer and it explains each of these injuries with tips on diagnosis, prevention and recovery.

So, come join us as we tell you about some injuries...

Things to remember when buying a brace or support:

- **What type do I need?** 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 knee. Stabilisers offer advanced support by featuring steel springs either side of the joint. While hinged braces allow the joint 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 limb through the brace and pulling up the hand/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 may require some 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.
BOXER’S FRACTURE

What is it?

A ‘Boxers Fracture’ is a break in the hand at the “neck” (just below the knuckle) of either the fourth or fifth metacarpal (ring or little finger). It gets its name because this injury commonly occurs when punching an immovable object with a closed fist. However, some doctors may also include fractures to the second and third metacarpal.

Symptoms of ‘Boxers Fracture’ could include, but are not exclusive to: Instant pain coupled with hand swelling, an area on the hand which is tender to the touch, difficulty moving the affected fingers and discolouration of the skin and/or bruising.

Interesting Fact: Boxers Fracture occurs in about 20 per cent of patients that punch a hard object.

How can you prevent it?

For boxers learning to punch correctly is the key to safe long term healthy hands. Bone density is another key factor and as we age the body will naturally decrease in size and strength so a healthy active lifestyle with adequate dairy products or calcium supplements will help.

Treatment

Immediately look to seek medical attention where an X-Ray can confirm the diagnosis. If the bone is still aligned then the finger may be immobilised within a cast or a splint to allow the bone to heal. If the bone is misaligned then the finger may need to be set and held in place with pins which requires surgery.

Patients can expect healing time to take between six to 10 weeks but this is quite often determined by age and sport. For swelling and pain ice therapy can be used in the form of a cold compress coupled with elevation.

For a splint option, check out the below product…

- The Neo G Easy-Fit Finger Splint is a lightweight and firm splint ergonomically designed for optimum finger immobilisation and recovery. Its flexible and soft cushioned shell can be bent/moulded to the desired shape for best fit and comfort.

- The innovative and patented design provides effective ventilation, protection and support to the affected finger. Helps immobilise finger during recovery.

- Useful in rehabilitation, it helps protect and stabilise the finger and helps encourage correct alignment of the joint. Be it breaks, sprains, every-day or sporting injuries such as mallet or baseball finger, the patented easy-on, easy-off design makes it quick and easy to apply and comfortable to wear. No messy tape needed.
CARPAL BOSSING

What is it?
Carpal Bossing is the name given to a condition which causes a lump on the back of the hand at the junction of the long finger bones and the small wrist bones. Arthritis, as a result of the thinning of the articular cartilage lining, encourages spurs of new bone which are produced as a natural response causing this prominence and swelling.

Interesting Fact: Carpal Bossing is most often seen among adults age 20 to 40-years-old.

How can you prevent it?
Carpal Bossing is typically caused after a knock to the back of the wrist so for a boxer technique and wearing the correct equipment is vital.

There is no standard procedure for preventing Carpal Bossing other than taking care of yourself. Respite is a key component of injury prevention, allowing the body to recover fully and rest between activities. Cold therapy or ice will help reduce inflammation and soreness after a workout. Lastly, always wear hand wraps and try wherever possible to use at least 16oz gloves during sparring sessions.

Treatment
In the first instance treatment should start with non-operative options, activity modification can be an effective way to manage pain coupled with anti-inflammatory medication.

A wrist brace will also help during certain activities or a steroid injection may be recommended by a doctor.

Surgery is rare but can be done under a local anaesthetic and usually takes between two to three hours. Success rates are as high as 85 per cent for good / excellent results with most patients having normal hand movement within a couple of days and returning to work within a week or so.

For a heat pack option, check out the below product...

• The Hatton Pro Sparring Leather Velcro Gloves were developed for sparring without punishing your opponent. They are leather constructed with an outer injected moulded design for improved fist formation, whilst also providing added comfort and protection.

• Use the Hatton Pro Sparring Leather Velcro Gloves during boxing training to help prevent and limit the effects of Carpal Bossing.

• These gloves are 16oz, making them the perfect glove to spar with your opponent while keeping your hands, and them, safe.
CUTS / LACERATIONS

What is it?
Cuts (also known as lacerations) are when the skin splits and bleeds and are common place within boxing, usually occurring as a result of contact from an opponents’ glove or head. Rarely is this type of injury seen as enough to stop a bout on their own, but they can seriously impair a fighter’s ability to box. Generally, cuts themselves are not particularly problematic however deep tissue damage can mean a visit to the plastic surgeon.

During boxing, if bony prominence of a persons’ brow takes the brunt of the damage, which in exceptional circumstances can lead to eye muscle damage, even after rest and recovery scar tissue can be a threat.

How can you prevent it?
As well as wearing protective head gear a boxer needs to rely on their own defensive skill to prevent damaging knocks to the face, where cuts and lacerations usually happen.

Keeping the skin soft, smooth and supple will also help to maintain a healthy natural lustre - oils, lotions and body butters are ideal for this.

Treatment
During a bout, cuts can be filled with petroleum jelly in order to prevent further bleeding, but post bout with a high risk of infection it is important to have the area cleaned and dressed appropriately.

If the wound has dead or damaged skin attached this may need to be removed or trimmed as it can form a breeding ground for bacteria. Large wounds will need to be closed with sports tape, medical glue or stitches. Massage therapy has been shown to be a very effective way of breaking down scar tissue and the adhesions which are produced as a result of injury.

To help tend and protect your wounds, try the below product...

• Every home should have a PhysioRoom.com Mini First Aid Kit. It’s the best value compact first aid kit on the market. It has enough space to carry everyday first aid kit and we’ve packed in everything you’ll need for basic first aid treatment. It’s perfect for holidays, carrying in the car, or in your sports bag.

• Ideal for the immediate first aid treatment of injuries. Keep the Mini First Aid Kit to hand in the event of an accident or incident. It’s ideal for the first aid treatment of wounds, grazes, lacerations, fractures, dislocations and sports injuries.

• The Mini First Aid Kit is a small zipped bag that is packed with first aid kit. The lightweight nylon material is shower proof and easy to wipe clean.
SHOULDER DISLOCATION

What is it?

Shoulder dislocation is a common injury among boxers and participants of other contact sports which involve heavy knocks to the body.

A dislocated shoulder is when the humerus bone (that’s the long upper section of the arm) has come away from the scapula (also known as the shoulder blade). This separation occurs at the glenohumeral joint.

It is characterised by pain in the shoulder, loss of moment in the shoulder, a change in the usual rounded appearance of the shoulder often replaced by a squared off look, and the sufferer protectively cradling their arm across their chest. There are three variations of shoulder dislocation: Anterior is the most common with more than 95 per cent of dislocations categorised by forward separation of the humerus. Posterial dislocation is when the humerus is forced backwards. This form of dislocation can result from contact sports but is more common from seizures, electric shock or weakness in the rotator cuff muscles. Inferior dislocation is the rarest from of shoulder dislocation and is a result of hyperextension in the upper limb when it is under resistance. This type of injury can lead to ligament damage.

How can you prevent it?

As a boxer using the correct form is important. Over doing a movement or blocking incorrectly can lead to injury. Shoulder dislocation is however a risk with boxing and other contact sports because of the nature of these games. The best preventative measures are regular exercise with stretching at the beginning and end of workouts and conditioning.

Treatment

Anterior dislocation is most common with boxers and is the easiest type of dislocation to recognise. This means they can be dealt with fast. As with all dislocations a sufferer should never attempt to set the joint back in place themselves. This should only be done by a trained doctor. After the shoulder has been set right rest is the next step on the road to recovery. Wearing a shoulder support or placing the arm in a sling for about two to three weeks will help to immobilise and protect the joint allowing it time to heal. Pain should be noticeably reduced when the joint is repositioned but any prolonged discomfort can be dealt with by applying an ice bag or cold compress to the affected area as needed.

For a shoulder immobiliser option, check out the below product…

- Offering maximum support and comfort, the Neo G comfort shoulder immobiliser eliminates unwanted shoulder, clavicle and arm movements by stabilising the forearm against the torso. The shoulder immobiliser can be used for right or left shoulder injuries. It works by helping to immobilise the shoulder and collar bone joints to allow a comfortable healing position for joint and soft tissue recovery.

- This bilateral support (can be worn on left or right shoulder) warms the shoulder while giving stability and joint flexibility to quicken the healing process. Made from soft neoprene, it can be worn all day for comfort against tendonitis, shoulder instability, shoulder dislocation and arthritis.
CONCUSSION

What is it?

Concussion is a traumatic brain injury that results in a sudden but often short lived loss of mental function after a blow or other injury to the head. During a head injury that is severe enough to cause concussion the brain is moved out of its normal position disrupting electrical activity in the brain cells and the brain stops working properly for a short period. The most common symptoms of concussion include headache, memory loss, disturbance in vision and confusion.

How can you prevent it?

In day to day life, concussion happens typically by accident and chance so there are no real preventative measures other than keep aware and safe. Work or physical activities such as cycling or working on a construction site, requires people to wear head protection so always follow safety protocol.

With boxing a risk of concussion is accepted with protective head gear a requirement of amateur boxing.

Treatment

An uncomplicated concussion may simply need time to heal but severe cases may take several days / weeks to heal due to the number of potential complications that may arise. A doctor should be contacted if the patient has been unconscious for more than a couple of minutes, if speech becomes slurred and if the patient vomits or begins to fit.

The only true way to recover from concussion is to rest and give your brain enough time to recuperate and heal. In order to do this, you’ll need to stay away from activity for some time, especially activity that involves contact. Most doctors suggest, at minimum of two weeks.

For more severe concussions:

- Apply ice to the head injury to help reduce swelling. Do not apply ice directly to your scalp as this could damage the skin. Instead, wrap the ice in a washcloth or towel. Apply the ice every two to four hours and leave in place for 20-30 minutes.
- Take paracetamol to control pain. Do not use the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) type of painkillers, such as ibuprofen or aspirin, as these can sometimes cause bleeding at the site of the injury.
- Take plenty of rest and, where possible, avoid stressful situations.
- Avoid drinking any alcohol or taking recreational drugs.

For an effective way to ice an injury, try the product below...

- The PhysioRoom.com Ice Bag is a handy injury aid that is small enough to fit into any gym bag or first aid kit. Ideal for on-site injuries and direct response, the ice bag allows the user to treat acute or chronic pain and assists in the reduction of pain and swelling during the early stages of injury.
- The Ice Bag is directly filled with either ice cubes, crushed ice or ice water and applied directly onto the wound to reduce pain and swelling. The fabric bag is reusable and moulds to the skin allowing it to be used on most body parts including; the shoulder, elbow, hip, lower back, thigh, knee, calf and ankle.
Group First House,
12a Mead Way,
Padiham,
Lancashire,
BB12 7NG.

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Group First House,
12a Mead Way,
Padiham,
Lancashire,
BB12 7NG.