

INJURY PREVENTION

Most injuries occur at the beginning of the season.

Some of these injuries could be prevented with comprehensive pre-season training programmes. The importance of coaching cannot be over-estimated. The idea is to gradually increasing the intensity and duration of training.

Injury prevention strategies also include coaching on defence skills, correct tackling and falling techniques, which will help minimize the absorption of impact within tackles.

Players must have properly fitted and maintained equipment to reduce the risk of injury to themselves or others: mouthguards and head guards are two of the most important pieces of equipment to prevent injury within rugby.

*Practice a balanced and structured training regimen involving strength, flexibility and endurance

*Always use proper technique when tackling, rucking and scrumming

*Learn proper positioning during game play to minimize risky moves

*Use a quality, properly fitted mouth guard

*Use a quality, properly fitted head protector

*Participate at a level consistent with your ability

*Adhering to the rules for the formation and execution of the scrummage

What types of exercises help to prevent injury?

Exercises that help prevent injury can be divided into five main areas. They are specific to the joints and muscles involved in rugby:

1. General flexibility exercises of the joint.
2. Muscle strength and stability exercises around any joint which promote good movement control of the joint.
3. Core trunk stability exercises for the transmission of energy. Energy is transferred from lower limbs to upper limbs through the trunk. The pelvis and trunk produce muscular torques (forces) to accelerate smaller joint and muscle actions.
4. Proprioceptive exercises. These exercises help to stabilise joints by ensuring that all the muscles acting across a joint are being used to stabilise and support that joint. Unstable

surfaces are ideal for this type of training, which can progress from non-weight bearing to dynamic weight bearing exercises as the joint is strengthened.

5. Rugby specific technique exercises. This type of exercise recreates patterns of movement and physical stresses that will be encountered during a game of rugby, helping to develop physical co-ordination and mental familiarity with certain actions and conditions.

A series of exercises for strengthening the key joints used in the game can be found on the RFU site, starting at

www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/player-health/injury-prevention/#

CONCUSSION

"The **Rugby Football** Union's chief medical officer says the sport is ... number of **concussions** suffered in English rugby has risen to a record high."

This statement made in January 2017 should be enough to make most clubs put the question of the immediate and medium term treatment of concussion at the front of the queue when it comes to managing player safety.

Concussion, if not recognised and treated immediately, is dangerous. The immediate treatment once concussion is reasonably suspected is the withdrawal of the player from the field. The next is a proper assessment of the player, and if it is clear that the player has suffered concussion, an appropriate recovery period should be implemented according to current guidelines. In severe cases, immediate evacuation of the player to hospital for treatment by trauma specialists is required

The point is that no risks concerning head injuries should be taken. A head injury does not have to be bleeding to be an extremely serious threat to the individual player's welfare.

See:

www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Headcase/01/30/49/57/returntoplayafterconcussion_Neutral.pdf,

<http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/concussion>

Valuable links to safety resources for clubs:

<http://playerwelfare.worldrugby.org/immediatecareinrugby> - immediate care advice for on field injury.

www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/GameSupport/01/30/47/25/RFU_Community_Game_First_Aid_and_Immediate_Care_Provision_Guidance_Neutral.pdf RFU statement on club responsibilities.

www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Players/01/32/06/28/RugbySafeFirstAidImmediateCareGuidelines16-17_Neutral.pdf First Aid immediate care guidelines.

www.firstaid4sport.co.uk/blog/rugby-guide/ A useful first aid info site.

www.irbrugbyready.com/index.php?section=69&language=en World Rugby injury management advice.

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/rugby-codes-preventing-injury Injury prevention the Australian way!

www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/education/first-aid/ First Aid courses details from the RFU.