**Tennis Injuries and how to prevent them - Part 1**

**By West Norwood Therapies Team, Jul 12 2017 08:00AM**

Sports massage therapist Tessa Glover challenges you to match tennis players to their injuries and shares some advice on dealing with a common tennis injury



Can you match the tennis players with their past injuries?

Answers at the bottom of the page.

Sprained Ankle

Shoulder Pain

Wrist Pain

Back Pain

Tennis Elbow

Sprained Ankle

Ankle sprains account for as much as one-fifth of injuries in athletes. The sudden sideways movements that are required during tennis can cause the ankle to twist, particularly if the surface is slippery or the player is fatigued.

A twisted ankle usually causes a strain and sometimes even a tear of the ligaments as well as damage to other soft tissues around the ankle. This is called a sprained ankle. The injury can cause bleeding within the tissues and the swelling can be extremely painful. Simple sprained ankles usually get better on their own given enough time but having the right treatment can considerably speed up the process.

Prevention

Warm up before exercise and warm down afterwards

- Stretching before exercise is no longer recommended, but many people find stretching afterwards helps them

-Do exercises that strengthen the muscles around your ankle and foot (<http://www.aofas.org/footcaremd/how-to/foot-injury/Pages/How-to-Ankle-Sprain-Strengthening-Exercises.aspx>)

-Regular sports massage maintains excellent tone in the muscles of the leg, foot and ankle.

-Do exercises to improve your balance (in one big study it was found that this was the single best way to avoid re-injury!)

-Apply an ankle brace to the ankle before exercise if it feels unstable

Immediate Sprain Treatment

RICE principle: Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate

This principle seems to go in and out of fashion, but studies continue to show that this is a safe way to care for a sprained ankle. Of the four, ice is the one you can probably afford to drop, and remember to keep your ankle moving if you possibly can to stop the muscles weakening. Don’t splint it, though, but a firm elastic wrap such as a tubigrip does an excellent job of providing just enough support.

If you cannot weight-bear on the affected ankle after 24 hours then either visit your GP or make an appointment with an osteopath who will carry out an assessment known as the Ottawa Ankle Rule. The tests in this rule will diagnose whether you need an ankle or foot X-Ray.

Chronic (longer term) sprains

About 2 in 10 people who sprain their ankle will go on to develop chronic ankle instability. The key here is to improve balance and strengthen the muscles. Strong ankle and foot muscles protect the joint and good balance is associated with a fewer repeat strains.

Depending on the severity of the sprain, a rehabilitation programme may well be necessary to return strength and stability to the ankle. Experts agree that not all sprains are the same, and a patient-centred treatment plan is the best way to care for a sprained ankle.

Answers: Sprained Ankle/Andy Murray . Shoulder pain/Maria Sharapova . Wrist Pain/Rafa Nadal . Back Pain/Juan Martin del Potro . Tennis Elbow/Serena Williams