

# Tips on avoiding sprains and strains on the court, one step at a time

## PROVIDED BY LOWCOUNTRY ORTHOPAEDICS

For tennis to be a “life sport,” players need to remain injury-free. The experts at Lowcountry Orthopaedics Sports Medicine see many tennis-related injuries throughout the year. However, with the arrival of spring, tennis injuries rapidly increase.

### SPRAINED ANKLES

Requiring quick changes in direction, tennis player sprains and strains are the most common injuries in the sport. Ankle injuries, such as sprains, occur on the courts frequently. A sprained ankle happens when a ligament in the ankle stretches too far or tears.

“For tennis players, sprained ankles result from landing awkwardly or changing direction too quickly,” says foot and ankle specialist Dr. William Corey.

An ankle sprain can happen on any court surface because of the multidirectional nature of playing tennis. While providing less impact, the softer clay court surface has a greater risk for an ankle sprain.

“We treat sprained ankles with rest, immobilization, ice, and, in some cases, with a

stabilizing boot,” Corey explained.

To prevent a sprained ankle, wear supportive footwear and ankle supports. Avoid uneven court surfaces, and always warm up and cool down before and after playing.

### ACL INJURY

A close second to ankle injuries are injuries to the knee’s anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) among those playing tennis. Quickly changing direction is critical to a tennis player’s success. Unfortunately, this same action results in so many ACL injuries.

The ACL plays an instrumental role in the process of stabilizing the knee. “ACL tears have side-lined athletes in many sports. A torn ligament causes an abnormal motion where the shin bone slides forward in relation to the thigh bone. Further injury to the meniscus and cartilage of the knee can result,” says David Johannesmeyer, MD. “Female athletes and athletes playing non-contact sports are prone to ACL injuries.”

#### How to prevent an ACL injury:

- Participate in neuromuscular training programs and physical therapy that uses balance training.

• Add Plyometric exercises to your workout. Plyometrics are explosive exercises that use a large amount of force in a short time, such as box jumps, burpees, and pop squats.

• Warm-up inclusive of stretching before practice and games.

• Avoid ill-fitting shoes.

• Make a sports medicine specialist appointment to identify areas of muscular weakness that may be susceptible to sprains or tears and receive specific activities and exercises that can improve targeted areas.

### TENNIS ELBOW

Athletes in racket sports frequently struggle with tennis elbow. An overuse injury of the tendons and muscles around the outer elbow, tennis elbow results from repeated wrist extension as frequently occurs with a tennis groundstroke. Common in tennis players, hence the name, tennis elbow symptoms include pain, tenderness and a burning sensation on the outside of the elbow.

A first line of treatment can include rest, anti-inflammatories, bracing and regular stretching and strengthening through therapy, explained hand and upper extremity surgeon

Dr. F. Patterson Owings.

Non-surgical treatments including Platelet-Rich-Plasma, or PRP, a biological treatment that involves obtaining a small sample of blood from the arm and centrifuging it (spinning it) to obtain platelets from the solution is another option, Owings said, adding platelets have a high concentration of growth factors and can be injected into the affected area to assist with healing.

Although the vast majority of cases of tennis elbow respond to non-operative treatment, Owings noted, “if symptoms persist there are a variety of surgical options to consider.”

#### How to prevent tennis elbow:

• Always warm-up and cool down before and after playing tennis, wear a supportive brace.

• Check your equipment to ensure your racket is correctly strung (a smaller, more rigid loosely strung racket is best).

• Check your grip technique and ensure it is correct.

For more information, contact Lowcountry Orthopaedics at 843-797-5050 or online at [LowcountryOrtho.com](http://LowcountryOrtho.com).

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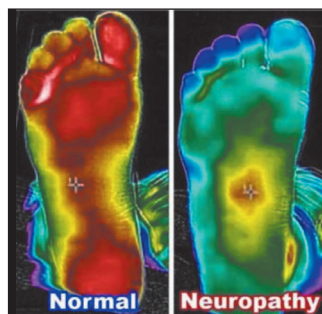
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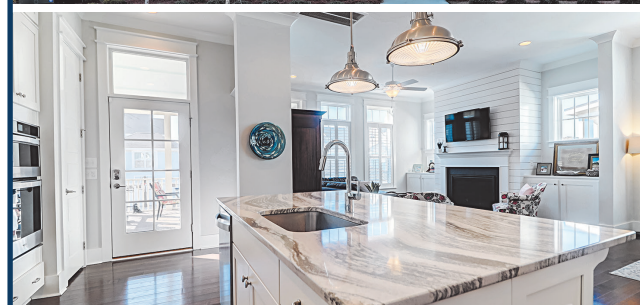
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