



Common cricket injuries

Overuse injuries, fractures and head injuries

The game of cricket is considered a non-contact sport, but players can be injured by playing and training too much and by being struck by the ball. With appropriate training, proper technique and the right protective gear, the game can be enjoyed safely.

Sprains, fractures and bruises are the most common injuries in cricket. In most cases, these injuries are the result of a direct blow from a hard cricket ball. Some players are hurt when they fall, collide with other players or run into boundary fences. Concussions are rare, but they do occur. Overuse injuries, such as strains and soreness, happen when players run, throw, bat or bowl too much or repeat motions using poor technique.



Player Safety

Common accidents, serious injuries

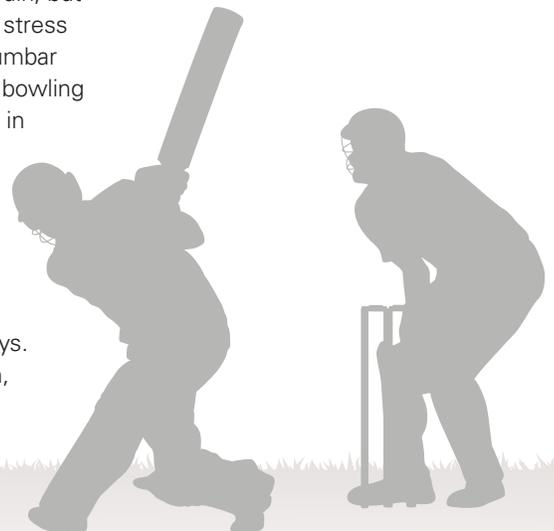
Head A hard cricket ball making contact with the head may cause injuries. Concussions are rare, but they may occur in cricket when players collide with each other or with fences. Concussion symptoms include headaches, dizziness and nausea.

Shoulders Some cricketers complain of "thrower's shoulder," an injury to the tendons around the shoulder joint known as the rotator cuff. The injury may be caused by too much throwing or repetition of improper throwing technique. Bursitis, or inflammation in the shoulder joint, may also occur. Shoulders may also be hurt in cricket when players dive for balls and land on their outstretched arms. Tendon tears, cartilage damage and dislocations may occur.

Lower back Lower back pain is one of the most common injuries in bowlers—particularly fast bowlers. The injuries may be a minor strain, but more serious bone stress injuries of the lower lumbar vertebrae are reported. Incorrect bowling technique and excessive bowling in young players are specific risk factors.

Sun and heat Cricketers spend a long time outdoors, as matches can stretch over several hours or, in some cases, even days. Players are at risk for dehydration, heat stroke and sunburn.

Face, teeth and jaw A blow to the head may cause severe bruising or broken noses, teeth and jaws.



How can you prevent cricket injuries?

Get ready

- **Take part in pre-season conditioning** that emphasizes strength, endurance and flexibility.
- **Most sports leagues require a physical exam before play begins.** Make sure you're cleared to play.

Wear the right equipment

Standard protective equipment for cricket includes:

- Batting helmets with facemask and visor
- Batting gloves
- Leg guards
- Forearm guards
- Wicket-keeping gloves with inners and boxes
- Make sure equipment is in good shape and fits properly.
- Wear protective gear in practice and in matches.

Play the game right:

- **Practice proper technique** for bowling, batting and throwing.
- **Limit excessive bowling** in young fast bowlers
- **Seek out teams, leagues and coaches that emphasize fair play and good sportsmanship.**

Be prepared:

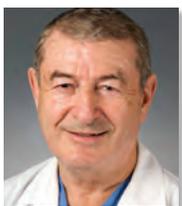
- **Have a first aid kit handy** to deal with minor injuries.
- **Coach and staff should monitor their players closely** and pull them out of games and practices if they are injured.
- Also, coaches and staff should be prepared to **contact medical personnel should a serious injury arise.**

What Causes Overuse Injuries?

These days, cricketers, along with athletes in many other sports, train longer and harder than ever before. The desire to push yourself to be the best may result in better performance, but it may also cause overuse injuries.

In cricket, a number of factors may cause sprains, strains and soreness:

- **Too much** Running, throwing, batting and bowling too much may lead to overuse injuries. Cricketers need time to rest and recover between matches and practices.
- **Warm up** To get the muscles loose and ready for action, stretching and light aerobic activity is recommended before practice and games.
- **Poor technique** Coaches should emphasize proper throwing, batting and bowling technique. Doing the wrong thing over and over may cause injuries.
- **Hard surfaces** Feet, ankles and legs take a pounding on artificial surfaces and hard ground. To prevent soreness and shin splints, warm up properly, get plenty of rest and wear footwear with proper support and padding.



Reviewed by Lyle Micheli, MD, Director, Sports Medicine Division Boston Children's Hospital

This piece is part of an informational series on sports injury prevention produced by the Orthopedic Center/Sports Medicine Division at Boston Children's Hospital. For materials on preventing injuries in other sports, call 617-355-3501 or visit bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed.



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