While the late 1800’s dubbed baseball “America’s Pastime,” if one were to walk the streets of an urban neighborhood today, it would quickly become apparent that basketball is quite possibly the widest played sport in the country. From kids playing backyard ball to professionals getting paid to play the game they love, basketball has recently become one of the widest played games in the world.

Basketball began in 1891. Played five versus five on a hard court, the sport has had a long and interesting history of development that has lead to our current understanding of the game—a game ruled by strategy and team-oriented play.

There are many different levels of basketball these days. While street ball is a commonality among many levels of play, competitive basketball starts with lower school teams outside of school and continues through high college-age teams, semi-professional teams, and for topnotch players, the NBA—the world’s highest level of competition.

Getting into good athletic shape before you hit the hard basketball court is a good way to strengthen muscles and help to prevent serious injury on the court.

For any basketball player, there is no sweeter sound than the snap of the basket after a shot swishes in. However, dreams become nightmares when that once dulcet snap becomes the terrifying snap of injury. Injuries in basketball are as commonplace as the three-point shot. However, there are many ways of preventing injuries, and it all starts with proper preparation. From proper equipment to good training habits and appropriate nutrition, certain off-court steps will help you avoid problematic injuries.

Picking out the right shoe can be tough, from Air Force Ones, to And1s, to Air Jordan’s the styles for a good make are wide and many. As a player gets older it is important to find a shoe with the best ankle support. Choosing a shoe for the whole team has its benefits, however as you get older players tend to imitate their favorite player’s footwear; guards like light shoes so that they can run fast and be quick on their feet, where forwards...
prefer heavier shoes with firm support for under the basket rebounding. The best idea for picking out the right basketball shoes is to try on several pairs until you find the most comfortable ones for yourself.

**Knee Pads:**

One piece of equipment which often gets overlooked in basketball is the knee saving pads. It’s a player to player choice, but if you find yourself on the floor diving after balls at the expense of your knees, you might want to consider this protective gear.

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**Trauma-Induced Injuries**

**Ankle Injuries:**

Basketball injuries to the ankle are the most common ailment of the sport. Perhaps it stems from the no traveling rule, the quick turn around from change in direction of play, or the intense contact nature of the sport. Whichever way you look at it, basketball is rough on your ankles. When faced with an ankle injury, you are most likely going to want to find a brace that works best for you. A brace provides support to the ankle in order to reduce stress on the already strained ligaments, tendons, or muscles. Injuries range from a strain when a muscle or tendon is overstretched, to a sprain when a ligament connecting one bone to another is overstretched. The ligament may tear and require surgery. If the ligament pulls a piece of bone with it when it tears, this is an avulsion fracture.

Finding the right brace for your specific need can be a challenge. Epinions.com ranked the top three ankle braces this year as Active Ankle T2, Body Glove Ankle Support, and Mueller Adjust-To-Fit Ankle Brace. For a complete review of ankles braces check out [http://www.epinions.com/sprt-All-Ankle_Braces/show~top_sellers](http://www.epinions.com/sprt-All-Ankle_Braces/show~top_sellers)


This site dispels harmful myths about foot injuries which could keep you from getting the proper medical attention. It also recommends that before you see the doctor follow “RICE”:

- **R**est. Restrict your activity and get off your foot/ankle.
- **I**ce. Gently place a plastic bag of ice wrapped in a towel on the injured area in a 20-minute-on, 40-minute-off cycle.
- **C**ompression. Lightly wrap an Ace bandage around the area, taking care not to pull it too tight.
- **E**levation. To reduce swelling and pain, sit in a position that allows you to elevate the foot/ankle higher than your waist.

**Collateral Ligament sprains:**

Hate playing with that clunky knee brace? Thinking of ditching it? Well maybe you have been wearing the brace too long. Talk to your doctor before ditching it entirely, but here are some interesting sides of the brace to consider: [http://www.sportsinjurybulletin.com/archive/0032-knee-braces.htm](http://www.sportsinjurybulletin.com/archive/0032-knee-braces.htm)

**Fingers and Noses:**

Basketball players and enthusiasts alike understand the importance of rebounds in basketball. Rebounds lead to additional offensive opportunities, such as second-chance opportunities off the offensive glass, as well as trigger a fast-break which might end in a breathtaking dunk. In the same regard, fingers are essential to a basketball player, acting as key agents in the fundamentals of the game such as shooting and dribbling. Thus, it is not a stretch to link finger injuries to boxing out for rebounds. Players’ aggression under the basket often leads to stray fingers and elbows flailing about. As a byproduct of this reckless abandonment, jammed fingers and broken noses are an omnipresent risk while fighting for rebounds. When a player boxes out, their fingers are over-stretched, which increases the chance of the player jamming his/her finger while grabbing the ball or by another player’s body. Additionally, elbows tend to jut out, which may end up hitting someone in the face, the side, or anywhere on the body. While these injuries are difficult and often impossible to prevent, they can be serious and should not go overlooked. See your doctor if a jammed finger continues to hurt, or a hit nosed persists to give you pain.
Overuse Injuries

Even if you have not recently taken a trip to the ER, basketball may induce equally serious but more commonly overlooked injuries. Overuse injuries from years on the court may cause severe pain from normal wear and tear. Swelling in a joint should be looked into and treated appropriately. Here are some common problem areas for basketball players:

**Foot:**
A personal afflication and cause of pain, Plantar Fasciitis is a common overuse injury caused by micro-tears in the tissue running along the arch of the foot. Plantar fasciitis may come on due to a genetic disposition of having flatter feet. While some prefer to have costume orthotics made molded to the foot, many have found the Power Step Orthotic insert to be the most corrective. With this condition, as most overuse injuries, flexibility will decrease strain on the tissue and thereby decrease pain. Weakness of the surrounding muscles place stress on the tissue and further tearing can result in heel pain known as heel spurs. Icing after use may reduce swelling, and anti-inflammatory drugs may be recommended to decrease pain. Talk to your physician if you think you may be experiencing these symptoms.

A list of products which may be helpful for plantar fasciitis includes:
Ortho Flex, Ibuprofen Cream, Night Splints, Prostrech, Active Wrap, Athletic Tape, and heel pads. In extreme cases surgery may be required to remove scar tissue.

**Ankle:**
Achilles tendonitis is another common injury to basketball players. It is an inflammation of the tendon which connects the back calf muscle to the heel bone and causes a sharp burning pain just above the heel in the back of the ankle. This condition can come about from flat feet, different leg lengths, failure to adequately stretch your calf, or improper footwear.

In some cases the ankle may appear swollen. Many protects for stretching, icing and bracing this condition have been designed.

**Knee:**
"Jumper's knee" or patellar tendonitis, is a common plague on basketball players. If you experience pain in the area, tightness of the knee, subtle swelling, or a creaking in the knee, you could be suffering from tendonitis. Tendonitis can come on from a number of different reasons. According to David Edell tendonitis can come on from a
- sudden increase in the intensity or frequency of training,
- transition from one training method to another,
- repeated training on a rigid surface,
- improper mechanics during training,
- genetic abnormalities of the knee joint, and/or poor base strength of the quad muscles.

In my own experience with tendonitis, I have found that certain activities lessen the affect of the pain. Walking lounges build quad strength taking some of the stress off of the knee. Also training on an elliptical machine, both forewords and backwards, works to lessen the strain on the knee. Increased flexibility can also help. Taking up yoga is a good way to increase flexibility and strength. There are braces, as pictured above on Leila Schwartz-trauber, which will apply a pressure to the swollen area, and braces may help you get back to the game sooner. Talk to your physician if you think you may have patellar tendonitis to find out what treatment is right for your case.