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TECHNIQUE

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TECHNIQUE

Good technique is essential for players to fully participate in and enjoy their sport – safely. Poor technique can expose players to the risk of acute injury e.g. rugby tackling with the head in front of the ball carrier's leg rather than behind it. Poor technique used for a prolonged time can cause persistent injuries such as sore shins, tennis elbow and lower back pain. It also increases the risk of strains and sprains.

Good
practice
makes
perfect



It's important to **LEARN** the correct techniques, **PRACTISE** them and **USE** them during the game. It's also important to learn the techniques early to ensure a long-term involvement in the sport, and to avoid developing bad habits. Keep checking techniques to ensure they are always used and,

if necessary, seek expert advice (e.g. a senior coach or perhaps a specialist in biomechanics). Many sports have “risky” elements such as tackling, jumping, landing, stopping and catching. Identify the risky elements in your sport and make sure players learn and use the correct techniques at all times.

Best practice techniques*

Best practice techniques have been developed through coaches' experience and from analysis by sport scientists. They aim to improve performance and reduce the number and severity of injuries in sport.

1. JUMPING AND LANDING

Forces as high as six times the body weight are transmitted through the body when jumping or landing from a jump. Having the trunk and legs in alignment and not twisting in landing or during take-off are characteristics of good technique.

Encourage players to:

- Bend and flex the hips, knees and ankles when landing to spread the impact over time and to transfer the impact to the muscles. This will avoid jarring at the joints
- Keep legs aligned, with knees over the toes.

Players should avoid:

- Excessive twisting movements in the upper or lower body while landing
- Turning while landing.

2. THROWING AND KICKING

Large muscular forces are created in kicking or throwing an object such as a ball. A co-ordinated “step-turn-whip” action is characteristic of good throwing and kicking. This involves a sequence beginning with large muscle groups and finishing with smaller muscles of the limb in contact with the object.

Encourage players to:

- Involve all the body parts to achieve maximum power when the goal is maximum distance
- Move the body parts in sequence – i.e. one after the other starting with the large body parts and

ending with the part of the body in contact with the object – to reduce the risk of injury to smaller muscles

- Involve body parts simultaneously in a “push-like” motion when the goal is accuracy.

Players should avoid:

- Throwing with the arm fully extended
- Throwing or kicking without an adequate warm-up.

3. GRIP AND POSTURE

Holding equipment such as an oar, bat, stick, club or racquet incorrectly may lead to poor performance, tissue damage and the development of overuse injuries. Using mid-range joint positions is characteristic of good gripping technique.

Encourage players to:

- Learn the correct grip as soon as they start playing the sport to reduce the risk of injury
- Use good posture in play and at school or work
- Work at maintaining posture.

Players should avoid:

- Grips that place the joint in a fully flexed or extended position e.g. fully extending the wrist when trapping a hockey ball places the player's wrist and elbow at risk of injury
- Incorrect grip sizes
- Twisting and bending while performing under load or at high speed e.g. a “mixed” delivery stride in fast bowling or excessive twist and bend in tennis serving.

4. OTHER

a. Catching

Incorrect catching technique results in poor performance and is a frequent cause of injury to the fingers and hands.

Encourage players to:

- Stretch out the arms and pull them back towards the body when catching a ball. This will minimise the risk of injury to the small joints of the fingers, as the larger muscles of the arms can absorb the impact of the ball.

b. Co-ordination

Good skills improve performance and reduce the risk of injury. Skills are easier to teach and learn when players have a good base level of co-ordination.

Encourage players to:

- Develop co-ordination early with practice on the fundamental skills in the sport
- Develop the basic skills first before refining any technical aspects
- Practise the basic skills regularly with variety.

c. Equipment

Using a racquet or bat that is too large or too heavy limits performance and may increase the risk of injury.

Encourage players to:

- Use the appropriate equipment for their age and ability level.

d. Footwear

Slips and falls in many sports such as netball and tennis can be minimised with good footwear.

Encourage players to:

- Use the correct footwear for the sport
- Consider the surface conditions when choosing footwear.

THE 10-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR SPORTS INJURY PREVENTION



* Use video to record the players' performance when checking techniques.