

Don't Take Me Out of the Ball Game!

Aaron Zavadsky, PT
Physical Therapist
Ham Lake Physical Therapy

Ahhh...It's that time of year again, finally. Summer is coming and people are emerging from their winter hibernation. For many, this is the time when they dust off their softball or baseball gloves and hit the field. Unfortunately, thousands of people every year have their seasons ended because of ankle sprains.

Ankle sprains are one of the most common injuries encountered in baseball or softball. An ankle sprain means that you have torn one or more ligaments surrounding your ankle. The severity of the sprain depends on how much ligamentous tearing occurs.

The likelihood of suffering an ankle sprain can be greatly reduced. Here are some tips on how to avoid injury.

- Before and after games, stretch out your calf and Achilles tendon. Stand with one foot behind the other while you put your hands on a wall. Lean forward while keeping your back heel on the ground. Hold this for 30 seconds and repeat twice on both sides.
- Consider wearing high top cleats. This will give your ankle added support while running and fielding.
- Strengthen your ankles. For example, stand at a table or counter for balance. Come up onto your tiptoes. Hold for a slow count of 10. Repeat 10-15 times twice a day.
- Improve your balance. Stand on one leg with your eyes open for as long as you can. Build up to 30 seconds. Then progress to standing on one leg with your eyes closed.

These are just a few tips to help you prevent ankle injuries this summer. If the unfortunate does happen, immediately follow the RICE protocol: R-Rest, I-Ice, C-Compression, and E-Elevation. If symptoms do not improve, consult your physician.