



SAINT FRANCIS SPORTS MEDICINE

Making athletes of all ages BETTER, STRONGER, FASTER since 1995.

- ⊕ Proper Training, Footwear Can Minimize Injuries on Artificial Turf
- ⊕ Stretching Provides Life Benefits for Seniors
- ⊕ Fall Coaches Clinic Scheduled for September 15

Artificial Turf Has Improved, but Training and Footwear Remain Keys to Avoiding Injury

Technology has come a long way since Houston Oilers kick returner Billy “White Shoes” Johnson did his famous touchdown dance on the Houston Astrodome’s rock-hard artificial turf in the 1970s. Today’s artificial turf surfaces are much more realistic than those early carpet-covered concrete versions, but injuries remain a more common occurrence than on good old-fashioned grass fields.

Artificial turf playing surfaces are common today at virtually every level of competition, including high schools and colleges. Made of synthetic grass blades on a bed of top soil created with sand and/or granulated, recycled tire rubber, today’s turf has more give than the old-school version.



Kate Yamada, MS, ATC

“Turf still isn’t the same as natural grass, and we continue to see more injuries sustained on these surfaces than natural surfaces,” said Kate Yamada, MS, ATC, certified athletic trainer at Saint Francis Medical Center. “Your feet are more likely to stick on artificial turf, creating knee, ankle and foot injuries due to the increased torque.”

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Injuries to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) are among the most common for sports contested on turf. Female athletes are four to six times more likely to suffer an ACL injury than their male counterparts in the same sports.

Drills that enhance an athlete's balance, power and agility can reduce that risk. Research shows a strong core can play a major role in avoiding all types of injury, including ACL tears and sprains.

Proper footwear is another primary factor in limiting injuries on turf. Here are some tips to consider if you or your players will be competing on an artificial turf surface:

Respect your injury history – If you have had shin splints or stress fractures, you will need to wear shoes with increased cushioning and support. Turf surfaces lack the give of natural surfaces, which restricts the amount of slide when cutting and creates more force on the lower leg.

Choose surface-specific shoes – This may seem like common sense, but too many athletes still wear cleats designed for dirt and grass rather than those designed for artificial turf. Also, choose sport-specific shoes that support stopping and cutting rather than running shoes designed for straight-ahead movement.

Wear lower cleats – Turf shoes have cleats that look more like small nubs than traditional cleats. The lower cleats allow more slide and reduce the amount of torque on the leg.

Replace worn shoes – Shoes lose their ability to support and cushion effectively after about 500 miles. Since that figure is easier to track for distance runners than football players, plan to buy a new pair of shoes at the start of each season.

For more information about minimizing injuries on artificial turf, please call the Sports Medicine team at Saint Francis Healthcare System at 573-331-5153.

Try Stretching to Improve Quality of Life as a Senior

Older adults looking to improve their quality of life and maintain their independence benefit from including stretching as part of their daily routine.

Unlike the time and stress that often comes with joining a gym, stretching is something you can do in the comfort and privacy of your home. The key is committing to a regular stretching regimen rather than trying it a few times and expecting instant results.

“Our muscles lose their elasticity as we age,” said Steve Logel, PT, senior physical therapist at Saint Francis Medical Center. “The patients I work with who have maintained the most flexibility and muscle strength recover faster and live a better quality of life than those who let their muscles weaken through lack of use.”



Steve Logel, PT

Stretching exercises generate benefits as wide-ranging as relaxation, reduced aches and pains, helping with depression challenges and improved stature. These simple exercises also help seniors maintain range of motion so they can continue to live a life unrestricted by physical limitations.

“Most seniors should do stretching exercises at least two or three days per week, more often if they would like to feel enhanced benefits,” Logel said. “You don’t have to do every exercise, but try to do one or two for each body region.”

Static or Dynamic Stretches?

Static stretching exercises help lengthen the muscles and their surrounding tissues, and are safer to perform for seniors who may not be athletic or exercise regularly. These are the types of exercises you likely have been familiar with your whole life.

Dynamic stretches require more active movements and should be done after you have warmed up sufficiently to avoid overexertion injuries. You may want to consult a physical therapist or athletic trainer before attempting dynamic stretches.

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Remember the goal of any stretching program is to increase flexibility, and static stretches certainly can accomplish that objective. Do the stretches slowly, allowing your body to tell you when you've stretched far enough.

Hold static stretches for 20-30 seconds and perform each stretch three to five times per session for best results. Here are some other quick tips to help you get more out of your stretching:

- Try not to bounce; simply hold the stretch
- Continue breathing; don't hold your breath
- Be gentle with yourself; stretching shouldn't be painful

Upper Body Stretches

Here are some stretches that will improve flexibility and mobility in your upper back, chest, arms and neck:

- Shoulder rolls
- Shoulder circles
- Chest stretch
- Overhead reach (1 arm at a time)
- Reach back (1 arm at a time)
- Neck side stretch
- Neck rotations
- Triceps stretch
- Hand stretch

Lower Body Stretches

These stretches will improve the mobility in your hips, ankles and lower torso. For added safety, perform any in a seated position when warranted:

- Calf stretch
- Hip side stretch
- Hip rotations
- Ankle circles
- Knee to chest
- Seated lifts (raise your knees while seated)

For more information about flexibility exercises for seniors, please call the Sports Medicine team at Saint Francis Healthcare System at 573-331-5153.

Fall Coaches Clinic is Free for Coaches, Trainers and Administrators

Coaches, athletic trainers, principals and superintendents are invited to attend the 12th annual Saint Francis Healthcare System Fall Coaches Clinic, a free event scheduled for Thursday, September 15, from 8:30 am-1:30 pm.

The clinic is designed to help coaches achieve excellence for their programs. The content focuses on topics relevant to today's coaches, athletes and scholastic sports programs, including information designed to help keep athletes safe and healthy.



Jay Schroeder,
former NFL quarterback

This year's featured presenter is former NFL quarterback Jay Schroeder. Jay started 10 league games for the 1987 Super Bowl Champion Washington Redskins. Since retiring from the NFL in 1994, he has coached football and baseball at the high school and college level.

The Fall Coaches Clinic will take place at the Health and Wellness Center on the Saint Francis Medical Center campus. Attendees should use Entrance 8.

Please call 573-331-3996, to save your spot at the Fall Coaches Clinic or [click here to register](#).