

Preventing Netball Injuries



Facts and Safety Tips
for Netball

For further information contact

Smartplay – Sports Medicine Australia

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References

For a full list of references, contact Smartplay.

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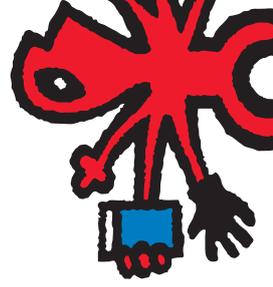
Photos courtesy of Netball Victoria.

Other safety tips

- Drink water before, during and after play.
- Wear broad-spectrum sunscreen and a hat when playing outdoors.
- Discourage play in extreme hot, wet or slippery conditions.
- Qualified first aid personnel, first aid kits, ice packs and a stretcher should be available at all times.
- Enforce and adhere to a strict blood rule.

If an injury occurs

- Players should seek prompt attention from qualified first aid personnel.
- Ensure players are fully rehabilitated before returning to play.
- An ankle brace should be worn for at least three months after serious ankle injury.



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Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



Facts on netball injuries

Netball is one of the most popular team sports in Australia, with participants of all ages and skill levels taking part.

Statistics from the Australian Sports Commission's 2006 survey showed an estimated 593,900 Australians aged 15 years and older played netball in the previous 12-month period. Netball Australia recorded 324,992 registered Australian players in 2006.

Netball places many demands on the technical and physical skills of players, with injuries occurring predominantly to the lower leg, wrist, hand and fingers.

How many injuries?

- From 2002-2003, 1,129 people were admitted to hospitals across Australia for netball-related injuries.
- In Victoria, from 2002-2004, 2,316 people visited Victorian emergency departments for netball-related injuries.
- The rate of injury for netballers is 14 injuries per 1,000 hours played.

The causes and types of injuries

- Common causes of injuries are awkward landings, slips/falls, player contact/collision, overexertion, overuse and being hit by the ball.
- Ankle, wrist, hand, finger and knee injuries occur frequently.
- The most common types of injuries are sprains, bruising, fractures and dislocations.

Safety tips for netball

Good preparation is important

- Undertake training prior to competition to ensure readiness to play.
- Always warm up, stretch and cool down. A recent netball study found that not warming up before a game increases the risk of injury by 48%.
- Undergo fitness programs to develop aerobic fitness, strength, balance, coordination and flexibility.

Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- Participate in training programs to improve body balance (using wobble boards or balance mats). Poor balance may increase the risk of injury.
- Learn correct passing, catching and landing techniques. Incorrect landing may increase the risk of injury to the knee. Further information on landing is available in the University of Ballarat *Down to Earth – A Practical Guide to Safe and Effective Landing in Netball* publication, available at www.smartplay.com.au.
- Coaches should undertake regular reaccreditation and education to ensure their knowledge is kept up-to-date.
- Accredited umpires and adherence to the rules decreases the risk of contact and injury.

Wear the right protective equipment

- Seek professional advice on footwear.
- Consider preventive ankle taping or bracing to reduce injury risks.

Check netball environment for hazards

- Use Netball Australia's Game Day Checklist (available at www.netball.asn.au) to ensure a safe playing environment.
- Check and maintain the playing surface to remove hazards e.g. loose gravel.
- Provide adequate run-off area around the court.
- Goal posts should be padded and secured firmly to the ground with no part posing a tripping risk.
- Remove courtside hazards.

Modify rules and equipment for children

- Encourage children to participate in a Net Set GO! program (incorporating FunNet and Netta) to develop good skills and techniques.
- Use lower goal rings for relevant age groups.

