



Wrestling Injuries

As one of the world's oldest sports, wrestling attracts thousands of young athletes, both males and females. Competition rules require that athletes be paired against each other according to their weight class and some even according to age, experience and gender. This not only allows more people to participate but also decreases the risk for injury.

What are the most common wrestling injuries?

1. Concussion

Wrestlers are susceptible to concussions. A concussion is a change in brain function due to trauma. Not all wrestlers who suffer a concussion will lose consciousness. The athlete should be removed immediately from wrestling and only return when approved by a health care professional. Wearing headgear with a frontal pad can help minimize impact.

Signs of a concussion

- Headache
- Loss of balance
- Confusion/Memory problems
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness/Fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Nausea
- Numbness/Tingling
- Light/Noise sensitivity

2. Cauliflower ear

Severe bruising of the ear structure, or cauliflower ear, may need to be drained and wrapped to retain ear shape. Wearing headgear is the best defense against this potentially disfiguring injury.

3. Prepatellar bursitis

Wrestlers constantly hit the mat with the front of their kneecap (patella), inflaming the sac (bursa). Prepatellar bursitis can be treated with anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen or Aspirin, ice and rest. Knee pads can also help you diminish the impact to the knee.

4. Ligament injuries

When your leg twists outward, the medial collateral ligament (MCL) or lateral collateral ligament (LCL) in the knee can be sprained. Most sprains can be treated with rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE method). More severe sprains should be treated by a physician.

5. Skin infections

The three most common skin infections in wrestlers are herpes simplex, ringworm and impetigo. However, the deadly infection Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) has been spreading across schools. It's extremely important infections are treated promptly with antibiotics or antibiotic creams.

Minimize skin infections

- Take showers before and after practices or matches
- Wear clean clothing
- Sanitize mats with antiseptic solution

How can you properly monitor weight control?

A coach or dietitian should provide you nutritional advice. Emphasis should be placed on a balanced diet based on your age, height and physical activity level. Rapid weight loss methods, such as using laxatives and diuretics, can lead to malnutrition. Any form of extreme weight modification can be very dangerous to your health.

How can wrestling injuries be prevented?

- Have a pre-season health and wellness evaluation
- Perform proper warm-up and cool-down routines
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Create a nutrition plan for before, during and after exercise
- Incorporate strength training and stretching to avoid physical overload
- Wear high-quality equipment that fits, including uniforms, headgear and pads
- Clean small cuts or scrapes thoroughly to avoid infection
- Ensure training mats are cleaned thoroughly after each use
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and mutual respect for your opponents and officials
- Speak with a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer about injury concerns or prevention strategies

Need immediate treatment for a wrestling injury?

The Children's HealthSM Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine offers treatment for all sport-related injuries. Call to book your appointment today. With same-day and next-day appointments, we can get you in and back in the game.

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