

Ankle Injuries in Skating

Have the increased boot strength caused an increase in ankle injuries in skaters on and off the ice?

To many parents, skaters, and coaches opt to put young, developing skaters in boots that are extremely stiff. The stiffness of the boot is NOT the same as having a boot that properly fits. Providing too much strength in the boots inhibits the ankle from developing additional strength that should occur.

The priority of achieving multi-revolution jumps has accelerated at the expense of the skater learning to properly control the take off edges of jumps. The result is that the skater frequently skids or changes the edge producing a wobble in the air that places additional strain on the ankle to land on an edge in which the rotation of the jump has not been fully completed (under rotated).

There is an increase in the number of injuries that are occurring at and above the top of the boot. Consult a physician if there is a noticeable restriction in the leg size below the top of the boot compared to the size of the leg above the top of the boot.

Anyone can injure his or her ankle badly, not just professional athletes. An ankle injury is a common injury that can persist for years unless treated properly. You know it is incredibly painful and disruptive to your way of life. An ankle injury often degrades into some form of tendonitis (or tendinitis), which is a swelling in the tendon fibers that surround the ankle.

If every time you move your ankle, the tendons hurt, they are inflamed! Ignoring or skating through the pain will result in suffering from chronic pain. No skating event is worth the risk of suffering from a permanent disability.

Seek medical evaluation if just putting the slightest weight on your foot is painful. Don't wait until the pain is extreme to go to the doctor.

Once these tendons are injured, continued use means that 100% recovery is almost impossible to achieve without proper medical treatment and physical therapy.

After the pain disappears the ankle is not fully healed and resuming a full range of physical activity immediately sets the stage for further damage.

It is almost impossible to keep from re-straining the tendons because of the difficulty in stopping everything and resting the injury properly. Work or school and home place demands on us that force us to keep going. However, unless we are on crutches or in a wheelchair, our walking and standing prevents the injured ankle from healing. This means the area is continually re-injured by our daily activities on and off the ice.

Avoiding constant re-injury is the best solution. Every re-injury restarts a new healing cycle with increased scar tissue build-up in the muscle and tendon. Scar tissue is hard, inflexible, and tough to get rid of. As scar tissue develops, you lose the range of motion for that foot.

The more scar tissue that is formed, the more likely you will suffer from chronic pain or arthritis years after the original injury. Scar tissue means that your ankle doesn't perform as well as it once did and it makes it prone to repetitive injuries that become more severe with each occurrence.

If you have an injured ankle, it's very important for you to take the steps so it can heal it quickly and completely. Incomplete healing means it may plague you for the rest of your life.