



Riverview Clinic

Osteopathic Information Service

Sports injuries treated by osteopaths

Whether you're an enthusiastic amateur or an elite professional, an osteopath can help with the prevention and treatment of common sporting injuries.

Pains and strains:

- low back pain (with or without sciatica).
- muscle and ligament injuries.
- knee pain (including lack of mobility and degenerative conditions).
- shoulder, elbow and wrist injuries.
- foot and ankle complaints.

Functional complaints:

- reduced joint flexibility (e.g. suffered by golfers who can't rotate as well as they used to).
- mechanical limitations (e.g. suffered by gymnasts having difficulty in doing full "splits").

Injuries caused by overuse:

- tennis and golfer's elbow.
- jumper's knee.
- tenosynovitis and tendonitis.

Recurrent injuries.

Osteopathy in action

A man in his late fifties, running at senior club level, had a calf injury in his right leg. After assessment by a variety of therapists he consulted an osteopath who discovered that the problem had been caused by a change of job two years previously. The man's new job required a lot of standing up, and examination revealed his tendency to stand with his right leg slightly bent. As a result the calf muscle had started to shorten on the right hand side. Osteopathic treatment helped him to stand with a straight posture, reducing the tension in the right calf. A stretching routine was then prescribed and

recovery from the injury was quickly achieved.

A forty year old woman, playing badminton and tennis at county level, had been suffering from severe tennis elbow for six months. She was concerned that the worsening pain would force her to give up her sport. Her osteopath discovered that her spine allowed little rotation, and that her shoulder muscles were unusually tight. He treated her neck (from where the nerve supply to the elbow arises), and worked on her shoulder and upper back mobility. This approach reduced the demands on her elbow. Free of pain, and benefiting from greater mobility, she recovered from the injury and was able to play more powerful tennis and badminton shots than ever before.

A 16 year old footballer, representing his county several times at U18 level, complained of recurrent hamstring injuries and right-sided low back pain over the past two years. This was despite of rest, various treatments and specialists' opinions where because of unequal leg lengths a heel raise had been recommended, but more widespread symptoms had been created as a result. An osteopath's opinion was sought and was able to demonstrate that very unusually because of sport, a 'protective scoliosis' had already started to become semipermanent. Thus the heel raise had forced additional stress which the spine was unable to compensate for. Treatment to enable the spine to re-align itself was carried out and a steadily increasing height of heel raise was gradually introduced. Exercises to maintain the developing flexibility helped to maintain the change. Resolution of the back problem also led (as anticipated) to a curtailment of recurrent hamstring injuries.

A healthy sporting life

If you're taking up a new sporting activity, you should seek the advice of a coach, trainer or instructor, and ask for an appropriate training programme for your age, experience and fitness.

With injuries, especially those to legs or arms, always remember the word **PRICED**:

Prevent injuries by preparing thoroughly. You should always warm up and stretch before exercise, and warm down and stretch afterwards.

Rest after injury, and give your body time to recover.

Ice should be placed on the injured area as quickly as possible.

Compress the injured area to prevent swelling. Strapping or taping should always be carried out by a qualified person.

Elevate the injured part of the body in order to encourage blood and oxygen to flow to the joints and tissues. This helps the body to heal itself.

Diagnosis should be obtained from a medical expert if you are concerned about the severity of an injury.

