

To learn more about sports injuries, contact the board-certified sports medicine specialists at **South Carolina Orthopaedic Institute at 803-531-0126** or [www.scorthopaedic.com](http://www.scorthopaedic.com).

**If you have a severe sports injury, or other emergency, call 911.**



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## South Carolina Orthopaedic Institute

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# sideline guidelines

How to recognize and react  
to common sports injuries



South Carolina  
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## sprains and strains

### Recognize

Strains are stretched or torn muscles or tendons.

Symptoms include:

- Pain
- Muscle spasms
- Swelling
- Trouble moving the muscle

Sprains are stretched or torn ligaments. Symptoms include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Being unable to move the joint

### React

Treat both strains and sprains with the RICE method:

- Rest – Stop activity and give the injury time to heal.
- Ice – Place ice in a cloth or towel and apply to the injury. Do not apply ice directly to skin.
- Compression – Wrap the area with an elastic bandage to help control swelling. Be sure to remove the bandage for a few hours every night.
- Elevation – Raise the injured limb above the head.

## dislocation

### Recognize

Dislocations are injuries that force bones out of position.

Symptoms include:

- A visibly out-of-place joint
- Extreme pain
- Inability to move the joint
- Swelling

### React

- Call a doctor immediately.
- Don't move the joint – moving it can damage the joint and surrounding muscles, ligaments, nerves and blood vessels.
- Ice the injured joint to reduce swelling.

## fractures

### Recognize

A fracture is a break, usually in a bone. Symptoms include:

- An abnormal appearing limb or joint
- Swelling, bruising or bleeding
- Intense pain
- Numbness and/or tingling
- Limited mobility, inability to move a limb or inability to walk

### React

Call a doctor immediately.

- Stop any bleeding by applying pressure with a clean bandage or cloth.
- Ice the injury to reduce swelling.
- Don't move the injured area – moving it can damage the surrounding muscles, ligaments, nerves and blood vessels.

## ACL injuries

### Recognize

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is part of a system of ligaments that stabilize the knee. If they partially or completely tear, symptoms include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- An unstable feeling in the knee
- Popping sound
- Loss of range of motion
- Tenderness along the joint
- Discomfort while walking

### React

In the case of a major injury (one accompanied by a popping sound or extreme pain), do not move the joint and call for medical attention. For other, minor injuries, treat using the RICE method.

## other times to seek a doctor

Seek medical attention for:

- Any injury that causes swelling, numbness, intense pain or tenderness, stiffness or loss of flexibility, swelling, limping or loss of range of motion
- Any pain that progressively increases with activity and causes swelling, limping or loss of range of motion