

WHAT IS YOUR BODY TELLING YOU?

How to spot a sports injury by its symptoms.

Sports injuries can range from a small sprain to a broken bone. Here's a cheat sheet you can use to help figure out what could be ailing you. Remember – always go see your doctor if you're hurt or injured.

SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS.	WHAT COULD IT BE?	WHAT'S THAT?
Tenderness or pain, bruising, inflammation, swelling, inability to move a limb or a loose, unstable joint.	Sprain	A sprain is a stretch or tear of a ligament, the band of connective tissues that joins the end of one bone with another.
Pain, swelling, tenderness, bruising, loose kneecap or inability to move or put weight on knee.	Knee injury	A knee injury could include damage to one of four major knee ligaments or the knee cartilage.
Pain, muscle spasm or loss of strength	Strain	A strain is a twist, pull or tear of a muscle or a tendon. A tendon is a cord of tissue that connects muscle to the bone.
Severe pain, visible signs of deformed or out-of-place joint, bruising, inability to move a joint, indentation or bulge near or in the socket. ²	Dislocation	A dislocation is when the two bones that come together to form a joint become separated. ¹
Extreme pain, pain that worsens when you put weight on the limb, tenderness, swelling or bruising.	Stress bone fracture	A fracture is a break in the bone. It can be a stress fracture which happens over time from repeated impact (like running) or an acute bone fracture that is a one-time injury. Acute fractures may be a simple break or a compound one where the bone pierces the skin. ¹
Leg pain when you exercise that is along the tibia or shin bone, the large bone in the front of the lower leg.	Shin splints	Shin splints are often seen in runners and can be caused by over use of the lower leg, improper warm-ups or shoes that don't give enough support.

Sources:

1. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. "Handout on Health: Sports Injuries." February 2016. https://www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/sports_injuries/ (accessed January 17, 2017)

2. WebMD. "Understanding Dislocation – Symptoms." <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/understanding-dislocation-symptoms> (reviewed March 3, 2015)

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