

# Sports And Your Feet

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Almost all forms of sports and dance involve degrees of running, jumping, twisting, balancing, and quick starts and stops, all of which increase risk in lower extremity health. The humble foot may not have the artistic glamour of the hand, but the foot is subject, arguably, to more serious injury because the weight of the body is upon it. Pressures that exceed ability can result in lasting injuries.

Most valuable is the knowledge each athlete gains about his, or her, own physical strengths and weaknesses. Using this knowledge, the athlete can try to avoid situations and positions that jeopardize wellbeing, or they can modify behavior. Taking care may seem unrealistic in the world of aggressive sports where college grants and endorsements are at stake. However, heeding the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure may prevent regret for young athletes.

For example, an examination by a podiatric physician in cases of a suspected simple ankle sprain may reveal, instead or additionally, an avulsion fracture of a nearby bone. Further movement may hinder easy or complete healing. Continued activity may result in long-term flare-ups of inflammation, swelling, and pain for years after the initial injury, reducing function and endurance. Each athlete must decide priorities for themselves. The attending physician or trainer can only advise.