

Common Minor Exercise Injuries

In your quest for fitness, you'll probably come across at least one or two of these uncomfortable situations. Now you'll know how to cross those bridges before you get there!

Blister

Blisters are the accumulation of fluid in one spot under the skin, caused when the skin rubs against a hard surface over and over again. Don't pop or drain a blister unless it interferes too much with your daily activities. If it does pop, clean the area with antiseptic and cover with a bandage.

Muscle soreness

You're often going to feel sore and tender after a workout—that's totally normal! Stretch the muscle gently; exercise at a low intensity; apply heat to the muscle. If the pain lasts longer than 2 days and stops you from doing normal things, it might need to be checked out.

Muscle cramp

Cramps are defined as painful, spasmodic muscle contractions; basically it's when you feel like you can't move that muscle. Gently stretch for 15-30 seconds at a time and massage the cramped area. If it's hot, drink a sports drink instead of water.

Side stitch

This one happens most often when you're running. Stretch the arm on the side that hurts as high as possible; if that doesn't help, try bending forward while tightening your abs.



Sprains and Strains

A *sprain* is in a joint when the ligaments get pulled. A *strain* is when a muscle gets overstretched. For both, follow the RICE procedure:

Rest – stop exercising and avoid activities using that muscle.

Ice – apply ice over the area for a max of 20 min. Reapply ice if still swollen

Compress – between icings, firmly wrap an elastic bandage around the injury

Elevate – raise the injury above your heart to decrease the blood supply/reduce swelling

Once the area has *completely* stopped swelling, you can apply heat with a compress or heat pad to speed up healing. Gently stretch and move the affected area, and very gradually reintroduced yourself to exercise. Stop if you start to swell again.

Source: Fahey, Thomas D., and Paul M. Insel. *Fit and Well: Core Concepts and Labs in Physical Fitness and Wellness*. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Pub.1994. Print.

Image: <http://1stchoicesportsrehab.com/side-stitch/>