

### Other safety tips

- Drink water before, during and after play.
- Play within your limits.
- Wear 30+ sunscreen, appropriate clothing and a hat when playing outside.
- Do NOT play in extreme weather conditions.
- Qualified first aid personnel, first aid kits, ice packs and a stretcher should be available at all times.
- Telephone access, to contact emergency services, is essential.

### If an injury occurs

- Stop playing if you experience an injury or illness.
- Injured players should seek prompt attention from qualified first aid personnel or a sports medicine professional.
- Players should be fully rehabilitated before returning to play.
- Players who have suffered a moderate to severe ankle sprain or finger injury should wear a brace until symptoms resolve (for 6-12 months).



### For further information contact

**Smartplay – Sports Medicine Australia**  
To contact Smartplay in your state visit  
[www.smartplay.com.au](http://www.smartplay.com.au) or [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au)  
**Australian Volleyball Federation**  
Phone: 02 6247 6633  
Email: [info@avf.org.au](mailto:info@avf.org.au)  
Website: [www.avf.org.au](http://www.avf.org.au)

### References

For a full list of references, contact Smartplay.

### Acknowledgments

Smartplay is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.  
This fact sheet has been reprinted with the permission of the Department of Planning and Community Development and VicHealth.  
Prepared by Monash University Accident Research Centre, May 2001. Updated and reprinted 2008.  
Photos courtesy of the Australian Volleyball Federation.

*This information contained in this fact sheet is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice from your doctor or health professional. While all reasonable attempts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this fact sheet, Smartplay and associated parties, cannot accept responsibility for loss, injury, claim or damage resulting from the use or application of information within this fact sheet.*



# Preventing Volleyball Injuries



Facts and Safety Tips  
for Volleyball

## Facts on volleyball injuries

Volleyball is a highly competitive and skilled sport played by all ages and levels throughout Australia.

Statistics from the Australian Sports Commission's 2006 survey showed an estimated 196,500 Australians aged 15 years and older played volleyball in the 12 months prior to being surveyed.

Volleyball places many demands on the technical and physical skills of players. During the course of play, players serve, pass, set, attack, block and dig the ball. Although the game brings many health benefits, injuries can and do occur.

### How many injuries?

- In 2006, 40,400 people in Victoria participated in volleyball, either training or games. During this time, 32 people were admitted to Victorian hospitals while 133 people visited emergency departments for volleyball-related injuries. In 2006 in Victoria, volleyball was ranked as the 34th most injury prone sport for hospital admissions and the 21st for emergency department presentations.
- This period also recorded the highest hospitalisation and emergency department rate among those aged between 10 and 14 years.
- Increased hours of play and training increases the risk of injury.\* *\*No accurate statistics on participation hours were available for volleyball.*
- In general, males are more likely to be injured. However females are more often injured in the younger and oldest age groups of school and club-level players.

### The causes and types of injuries

- Common causes of injuries are blocking and attacking (hit/spike). Blocking injuries are mostly to the finger and ankle; spiking injuries to the shoulder, knee and ankle.
- Net play is more hazardous than back row play, due to the injuries associated with landing in a Zone where other player's feet are.
- Sprains and strains (mostly ankle sprains) account for approximately two-thirds or more of volleyball injuries across all age groups and levels of play.
- Injuries to the knee/lower leg, ankle and hand/finger/wrist are most common.

## Safety tips for volleyball

### Good preparation is important

- Avoid playing with a pre-existing illness or injury. If in doubt, talk to your doctor.
- Always warm up, stretch and cool down.
- Undertake training prior to competition to ensure readiness to play.
- Coaches should vary training routines and be aware of the injury risks associated with overtraining. Research shows that the risk of overuse injuries increases as the number of training sessions per week increases. For example, 40% of high level players who train more than four times a week develop jumper's knee (patellar tendonitis).
- Coaches should consider including ankle disc training for all players and plyometric (jump) training, especially for adolescent female players, to reduce the risk of ankle and knee ligament injuries. These programs should only be implemented by coaches with appropriate training and should be carefully monitored and evaluated.

### Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- Know the rules and play fairly.
- Seek instruction from a qualified coach to develop correct skills and techniques.
- Coaches should teach players techniques that reduce foot conflict under the net, the major cause of ankle injury, e.g. players should take a quick and long last step when reaching a 'tight' set to avoid travelling forward under the net.
- Players must understand the risks of landing on the centreline with their feet – see the rules of the game.
- All players should be trained to land from a jump on the balls of their feet with their knees and hips bent when landing (Accordian action) – as part of and separate from the usual blocking, spiking practices.
- Coaches must undertake regular reaccreditation and education to ensure their knowledge is kept up-to-date.
- Officials can and should enforce game rules.

### Use appropriate equipment and make the environment safe

- Use equipment appropriate to age and stage of development.
- Wooden or synthetic elastic surfaces are recommended. Concrete or other hard surfaces are not suitable.
- Check and maintain the playing surface to remove hazards – especially water and sweat.
- The playing area should include sufficient area around the margin of the court, padded posts and referee stand, good lighting and no post guidewires.

### Wear the right protective equipment

- Seek professional advice on footwear.
- Wear knee pads at all times.
- All front line players, especially specialist blockers, and those with unstable ankles should consider preventive ankle bracing or taping.

### Modify rules and equipment for children

- Juniors should be matched for competition on physical maturity and skill level.
- Encourage children to take part in Volley Stars and Mini Volleyball to develop good skills and techniques.
- All novice players should participate in a skills development program before progressing to the full game.

