

Are you at risk of sustaining a groin injury?

With pre-season training underway, it is important to be mentally and physically ready for the season ahead. Lower limb injuries, including groin injuries, are common for many of our winter sports especially those that involve running, sudden change of direction and kicking – like soccer and AFL.

Peninsula Sports Medicine Group provides us with some insight into the reasons why you might be at an increased risk of sustaining a groin injury:

Previous Injury

If you have had a previous groin injury that lasted more than one week in the previous season, you have three times higher injury risk (Maffey & Emery, 2007; van Beijsterveldt A, Tak I, Langhout R, 2017). This highlights the importance of a thorough and complete rehabilitation program following any injury, even those that you only feel for a week.

Reduced Total Range of Movement of the Hip

Physiotherapists with Peninsula Sports Medicine Group can help measure the total angle your hips can rotate. If the range is restricted, then there is an increased risk of developing a groin injury (Tak et al., 2017). This is often more apparent in older athletes, but if found in any athlete this should be addressed. It has been shown that non-injured amateurs and professional footballers have symmetrical sports specific hip range of motion, whereas, athletes with long-standing adductor-related pain had 28% less range on their injured side – this may hinder proper energy transfer while kicking.

Our physiotherapists are well trained to help increase your

hip range of movement with manual therapy and exercises.

Weak Hip Muscles

Specifically, weakness of the hip adductors has been shown to put athletes at risk of groin injuries (Whittaker, Small, Maffey, & Emery, 2015). That said, all the muscles around the hip play a significant role in preventing injuries to the lower limb. For example, poor neuromuscular control of gluteus medius and other hip muscles has been associated with hip and knee injuries (Cowan, Crossley, & Bennell, 2009; Tak et al., 2017). Our clinicians are well set up to provide suitable exercise programs to help with both the control and strength of an athlete's hip.

Bony Changes

While changes of the hip bones can often be found when there is hip pain, there are some important things to keep in mind. As these lower hip range of movement is more strongly correlated with symptoms than with the presence of bony changes. It has also been shown that bony changes are more prevalent in footballers who started to play more frequently (>4x/wk) at the age of 12 than those who started at a later age. While these bony changes are in those with and without symptoms (like pain), it should also be known that hip changes do not impact the long-term outcomes. In fact, rehabilitation has been shown to have a better return to play time when compared to surgical intervention.

If you need help with a groin injury or feel you are at risk of developing a groin injury then you should seek an appointment. There are many things that can play a role in injury risk and they all should be assessed and addressed to allow athletes to enjoy playing their sport.

For more information or to make an appointment, you can [BOOK ONLINE](#) or call your [local clinic](#).

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Tak, I., Engelaar, L., Gouttebauge, V., Barendrecht, M., Van Den Heuvel, S., Kerkhoffs, G., ... Weir, A. (2017). Is lower hip range of motion a risk factor for groin pain in athletes? A systematic review with clinical applications. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51(22), 1611–1621. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2016-096619>

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Whittaker, J. L., Small, C., Maffey, L., & Emery, C. A. (2015). Risk factors for groin injury in sport: An updated systematic review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 49(12), 803–809. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2014-094287>