



Sports Injury Prevention

Cycling

Contact Us

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-  Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Menu 



Cycling is a low-impact sport, but injuries can happen. Many of these injuries can be prevented with safety equipment, bike adjustments, and always being aware of other bikes, pedestrians, and cars.

What are common cycling injuries?

- [Head injury](#)
 - Road rash
 - [Collarbone fracture](#)
- Knee pain
 - Lower back pain
 - Numbness in the hands, elbows, or shoulders

How do cyclists get injured?

- **Falling:** Injuries from falling can range from scrapes and bruises to [fractures](#) and [concussions](#). Wearing a well-fitting helmet greatly reduces the risk of serious head injuries. *Make sure to always wear a helmet!*
- **An ill-fitting or poorly adjusted bike:** Riding a bike that's too large, too small, or not adjusted specifically for you can force you to hunch over, over-extend your shoulders, or strain your back or knees.

- **Lack of fitness:** Embarking on long or demanding rides without gradually building your strength and endurance can cause [overuse injuries](#). Additionally, fatigue from pushing too hard too soon can impair your judgment and increase the risk of accidents.

How to prevent cycling injuries

- Wear the right size helmet and adjust it to sit securely on your head.
 - The helmet should be tight enough so that when you put it on and rotate it, your eyebrows move.
 - The point of each “V” strap should be centered below the bottom of the ear.
 - The chin strap should be snug but not too tight: you should be able to slip two fingers under the strap.
- Replace your helmet after a fall, other serious impact, or if it has visible signs of damage, such as a dent or crack.
- BMX and Freeride athletes should consider additional protective gear such as knee, shin, elbow, and torso pads, as well as full-face helmets.
- Maintain your bike. Regularly check the brakes and brake pads, lubricate the chain, inspect the tires for any signs of failure and inflate them to the recommended pressure (look for the PSI on the side of the tire). For a complete tune-up, take your bike to a shop with experienced, knowledgeable professionals.
- Pay attention to traffic patterns and obey the rules of the road. This includes stopping at “Stop” signals and at crosswalks when pedestrians are crossing. Not only is this required by law, riding with awareness can prevent serious accidents.

Bike adjustment tips

Proper bike adjustments tailored to your body and skill can prevent neck, knee, groin, hand, and back injuries. While some tweaks can be done at home, serious riders should consider a professional bike fitting.

- Adjust the saddle so it’s not too far forward, too far back, too high, or too low.
- Riding with large gears, pulling up or dropping your heels while pedaling, or riding with your knees angled in or out can also knee pain.
- Neck pain may be a sign that the stem is too long, the bars are too low, and the saddle isn’t tilted too far forward.
- Numbness in the fingers, palms, elbows, or shoulders may be a sign you need more handlebar padding or that your bike is too large or too small for you.


How we care for cycling injuries

As the largest and most experienced **pediatric and young adult sports medicine** practice in the country, the [Sports Medicine Division](#) at Boston Children's Hospital combines personalized care with innovative treatment for each athlete we treat.


Our [Sports Medicine team](#) consists of sports medicine physicians, orthopedic surgeons, physical therapists, podiatrists, athletic trainers, sports psychologists, dietitians, and many others who collaborate on every aspect of our patients’ care and their recovery.


[The Micheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention](#), part of the Sports Medicine Division, is dedicated to the prevention of sports injuries. Through research and clinical training, we offer practical strategies that help young athletes reduce their risk of injury while enhancing their sports performance. Our rehabilitation and strength training programs help injured athletes return to their sport stronger and healthier.

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