



SPORTS FIRST AID

FOOTBALL

Football is a national obsession and the world's most popular team sport.

From fast paced five-a-side to the mud and glory of a Sunday league fixture – millions of us meet up for a kick-about every week.

While perfecting your step-over and set pieces may take years of practice, it's easy to learn the skills to help your teammates in a first aid emergency. This quick guide will help you through first aid scenarios you may encounter on the pitch.

#UpYourGame

redcross.org.uk/sportsfirstaid

Refusing to ignore people in crisis

Head injury

As a contact sport, collisions between footballers are common and can sometimes result in a player receiving a head injury.

A trip or fall could also result in a head injury for a player who hits their head on the goal post, the floor or other objects.

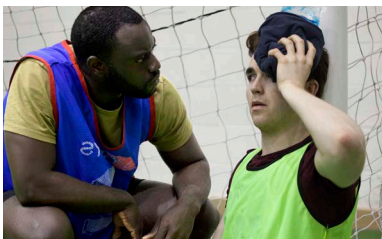
How to recognise: The person has banged their head and may be in pain and have a headache. There may also be a bump on their head.



Key action: Apply something cold to the injury.

Steps to take

- 1** Get the person to rest and apply something cold to the injury.
- 2** Watch for the signs and symptoms of a more serious head injury such as concussion, which may make them feel sick or drowsy.
- 3** If you suspect a more serious head injury, always seek medical advice. Call 999 if necessary.



Q&A

Q: What is concussion?

A: If a person experiences a blow to the head, the brain can be shaken inside the skull. This is called concussion. It tends to result in the person becoming unresponsive for a short period of time (a few seconds to a few minutes). Most people make a full recovery from concussion but occasionally it may become more serious. If you think someone has concussion, call 999.

Q: What are the signs and symptoms of concussion?

A: These include:

- > temporary unresponsiveness
- > dizziness
- > headache
- > confusion
- > feeling sick
- > blurred vision
- > having no memory of what happened.

Q: Should I watch a person who has a head injury to see if they have concussion?

A: Yes. With all head injuries you should watch for the signs and symptoms of concussion, which may appear over time. If you suspect they have concussion, call 999.

Strains and sprains

The injuries experienced most often in football are to the lower limbs and include strains and sprains.

How to recognise: Someone with a strain or sprain will have pain, swelling and/or bruising around a joint or muscle. If the injury is at a joint, the person may have difficulty moving a limb.



Key action: Apply an ice pack to the injury.

Steps to take

- 1** Apply an ice pack to the injury.
- 2** Get the person to rest the injured part of their body in a raised, comfortable position. If there is no improvement seek medical advice.



Q&A

Q: What's the difference between a strain and a sprain?

A: A strain is when a muscle is damaged. A sprain is when a joint is damaged – such as a knee, ankle or wrist. First aid for a strain or sprain is the same.

Q: Why is an ice pack the best thing for treating a strain or sprain?

A: Ice is scientifically proven to reduce swelling, bleeding and fluid build-up in soft tissue injuries, such as strains and sprains, by reducing blood flow to the area. An ice pack that can be moulded to the shape of the body will be more effective at cooling the injury.

Q: How long should I apply an ice pack to the injury for?

A: Apply an ice pack for no longer than ten minutes. Anything over ten minutes can cause further damage to the skin.

Q: If the person can move or stand on their injury, does that mean it is probably a strain or sprain rather than a broken bone?

A: Not necessarily. It is often impossible to differentiate between a broken bone, strain or sprain without an x-ray. If you are in any doubt seek medical advice.

Broken bone

Lower limb injuries are common in football. These include broken bones which can be caused by player-to-player contact when running, tackling and shooting.

How to recognise: Following a fall or collision with another player, the person may have bruising, pain and swelling, or be lying in an unnatural position.



Key action: Keep the injury still and supported.

Steps to take

- 1** Help the person to support the injury using your hands or items of clothing to prevent unnecessary movement.
- 2** Get the person to hospital. Call 999 if necessary.



Q&A

Q: What can I do if they are in lots of pain?

A: You can give them the recommended dose of paracetamol or another painkiller to relieve the pain.

Q: If they can move it or can stand on it, does this mean it probably isn't broken?

A: Not necessarily. The person may still have a broken bone even if they can move the limb. The only accurate way to diagnose a broken bone is to x-ray it.

Unresponsive and not breathing

A cardiac arrest is when the heart stops working, causing a person to collapse, become unresponsive and stop breathing.

There have been some high profile examples of footballers experiencing sudden cardiac arrest during a match. Thankfully this is rare, though when it does happen it is very serious. The quick actions of those at the scene will give that person the best chance of survival.

How to recognise: If you are playing football with the person, you may see them stop suddenly and fall. They will not respond or move when you call their name or gently shake their shoulders.



Key action: Give chest compressions.

Steps to take

- 1** Check if they are breathing by tilting their head backwards and looking and feeling for breaths.
- 2** Call 999 immediately or get someone else to do it.
- 3** Give chest compressions and ask someone to get an automated external defibrillator (AED) as soon as possible.
- 4** Open the AED and follow all its voice prompts.



Q&A

Q: What is an AED?

A: An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a machine that can shock the heart back into normal rhythm. Once opened, the machine gives full instructions on what you should do. You just have to listen to it and do what it says.

Q: Who can use an AED?

A: Anyone can use an AED. Many public places such as sports centres now have one available. The machine will only shock someone if they need it – it would never shock a healthy heart.

Q: Will I restart the person's heart if I use an AED?

A: If the AED delivers a shock to the person, it doesn't always mean that their heart will restart. The machine will detect this and give you further instructions. You may need to resume chest compressions. Continue to follow the AED voice prompts until help arrives.

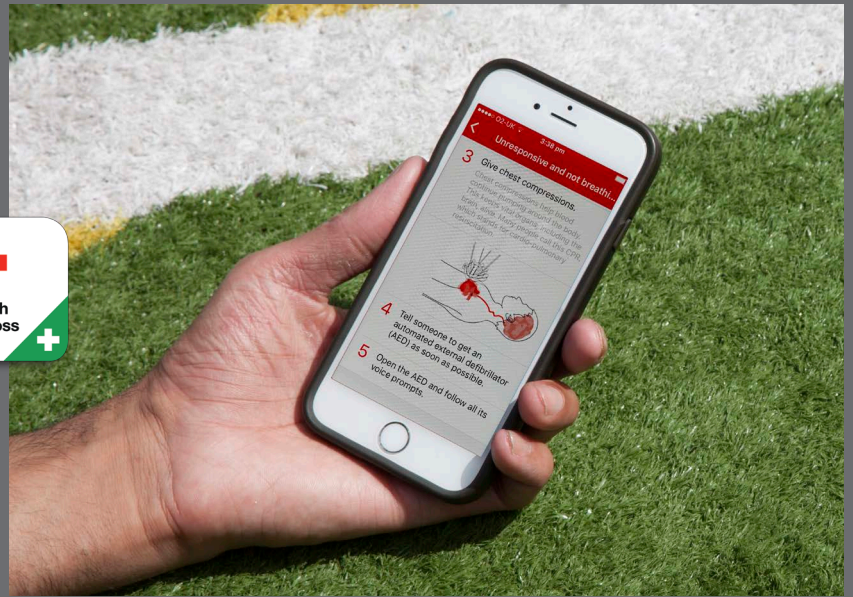
Choose your way to learn first aid

There is a lot more to learn about first aid when it comes to sport-related emergencies. By learning simple first aid skills, you will feel more confident to help someone in an emergency.

Download the app

You can learn first aid anytime, anywhere with the free Red Cross first aid app. This essential app includes simple step-by-step advice, useful videos, animations and quizzes.

It's never been easier to learn first aid and be prepared for what life brings. Get the app now from Apple or Android app stores.



Take a course

Our **First aid for adults** course covers a range of emergency situations suitable for members of the public involved in sports activities.

AED with life support

The AED with life support course will teach you how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) when helping somebody who is unresponsive and not breathing. The course is held at selected venues or can be booked for a group of up to 12.

Emergency first aid for sport (group booking)

If you are involved in teaching or training sports activities and may need to know basic first aid, you can book this one-day course. It will equip you with the skills you need to feel confident helping someone in an emergency. The **emergency first aid for sport** certificate is valid for three years.

To book a course visit redcrosstraining.co.uk or call 0330 311 6225.