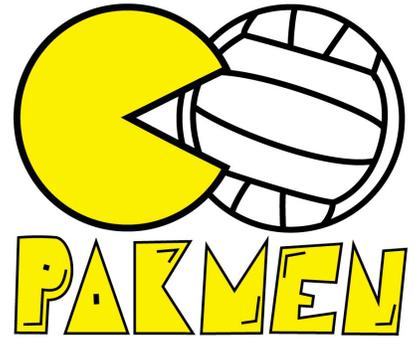


# Dr. Steph's Volleyball Injury Prevention Tip of the Month

March 2014

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## **Ankle Sprain Prevention...Active Ankle Braces (To Wear or Not to Wear?)**



Patients often ask me if it is a good idea to wear a brace while playing sports, either for prevention or after an injury when joints or soft tissues are healing. In the case of volleyball, a common brace that is worn is an "**Active Ankle**" which slips inside the volleyball shoe and wraps around the ankle and the bottom third of the shin. There are many different types of braces, however Active Ankle is well known in the volleyball world. I was first introduced to these braces when I was in grade 10 and started playing club volleyball. Our coaches at the time required my whole team to wear them with the intention of ankle sprain prevention.

### **To Wear or Not to Wear?**

It may not be necessary for every player to wear Active Ankles as everyone has different levels of ankle flexibility in their ligaments and also strength of the muscles that surround the ankle and foot. As many Pakmen volleyball players start young, bodies need to mature and get stronger over several years. There are several studies that have shown Active Ankles to restrict **inversion** (rolling the ankle to the outside of the foot) and **eversion** (rolling to inside of the foot) in turn reducing the possibility of an ankle sprain. Talk to your coach or your doctor/therapist if you think you might need to wear an ankle brace. It is often a personal preference.

### **Ankle Rehabilitation**

Wearing ankle braces might be helpful to lower the risk of injury of an ankle sprain. It is still possible to roll your ankle while wearing these braces so *strengthening* the foot and ankle muscles should also be part of your conditioning for volleyball to prevent and to rehab after injury. **Good ankle exercises** are doing **heel (or calf) raises**. Start by standing on the floor or stairs and lift both heels at the same time (putting the weight of your body over the ball of the foot). Make sure to squeeze your calf muscles at the top for 3 seconds. You can also lift one heel at a time. Make sure that the outsides of the ankles do not flare out to the side and keep your ankle in-line with your foot. Start with 1 set of 10 repetitions and eventually progress to 3 sets of 10. To make it more difficult, do them without holding on to something and then also with your eyes closed. Working these exercises in bare feet also help to train the muscles of the foot.

## **VOLLEYBALL HIGH PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

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Dr. Stephanie Anisko is the chiropractor for the Canadian Olympic Diving Team, is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) with the National Strength and Conditioning Association, is certified in Active Release Technique (ART), Graston Technique, and is a Certified KinesioTaping Practitioner (CKTP). She is trained in Contemporary Medical Acupuncture through McMaster University. She has provided chiropractic treatment to members of Pakmen Volleyball Club since 2008 including the Men's U18 National Championship team. If you have questions about volleyball injuries please email her at [drsteph@drstephanisko.com](mailto:drsteph@drstephanisko.com) or call **(905) 812-0644** to book an appointment with her at AIM Health Group Mississauga.

Visit her website for more information and volleyball injury prevention tips!

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