

Injury Prevention

The ability to prevent injury within our Academy players is crucial as minor injuries increase the risk of more severe injuries. In addition a history of an injury is the best predictor of developing a future injury. This is why we consider injury prevention as an integral part of our programme.

- 🏆 On average 12% of a squad is unavailable through injury at any point in the season (Eirale and Ekstrand, 2013)
- 🏆 Actions with a large load often placed on a single leg (Ekstrand et al., 2011).
- 🏆 The sport of football is a quad dominant sport due to the constant performance of a kicking action. This can result in a muscle imbalance between quadriceps and hamstrings which can lead to an increased injury risk.
- 🏆 According to Hagglund, Walden and Ekstrand (2009) in football 60% of time lost to injuries can be contributed to injuries which have modifiable risk factors.
- 🏆 Injury prevention programmes can significantly reduce the risk of common injuries such as hamstring strains and severe injuries such as cruciate ligament damage (Crosier et al., 2008; Myer, Ford and Hewett, 2004; Barengo et al., 2014)

Table 3 Fifteen most common injuries and their burden

Diagnosis	Injuries (% of all injuries)	Injury rate*	Mean lay-off days±SD	Median lay-off days (IQR)	Injury burdent
Hamstring muscle injury	1025 (12.8)	1.0	19±18	14 (15)	18.2
Adductor injury	742 (9.2)	0.7	15±19	9 (12)	10.3
Ankle sprain, lateral	552 (6.9)	0.5	15±19	8 (14)	7.7
Quadriceps muscle injury	404 (5.0)	0.4	21±22	14 (17.5)	8.1
Calf muscle injury	362 (4.5)	0.3	19±16	15 (17)	6.5

With our younger Academy players at the U12, U13 and U14 age groups injury prevention will take the form of pitch based activities in order to strengthen areas where injuries are likely to occur and hopefully help to avoid the development of any potential injury.



For our older Academy Players (U15's – U18's) specific gym based injury prevention programmes will be prescribed depending on the area of weakness identified. This is displayed below:

Hamstring Strengthening Programme

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Nordic Hamstring Curls	2-3	4
Single Leg RDL (resisted)	2-3	6 each leg
Slider/Swiss Ball Hamstring Curl	2-3	8-10
Single Leg Hamstring Bridge	2-3	8 each leg
Single Leg Speed Hop	2-3	5 each leg

Core Weakness Programme

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Swiss Ball Press Up	3	8-10
Swiss Ball Walk (Straight)	3	5-8 each leg
Plank with Alternate Arm Movements	3	5-8 each arm
Dead Bugs	3	8-10 each side
Bum Balancer	3	2 x 20 sec

Glute Programme (Hip Stability)

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Miniband Walking Circuit	3	8 each exercise
Theraband Lying Abduction	3	8 each leg
Glute Bridge (Single Leg Lift)	3	8 each leg
Lateral Single Leg Squat	3	6 each leg
Step Up	3	10 each leg

Adductor Strengthening Programme

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Single Leg Squat	2-3	5 each leg
Theraband Hip Adduction	2-3	6 each leg
Single Leg Raises	2-3	8 each leg
Kossacks	2-3	10-12
Side Plank with Leg Movements (Top Leg Support)	2-3	8-10 with injured leg

Quadriceps Strengthening Programme

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Single Leg Squat	2-3	5 each leg
Rear Raised Lunge	2-3	6 each leg
Lateral Speed Skater Hop and Hold	2-3	10 each leg
Single Leg Speed Hop	2-3	5 x 2 on injured leg
Single Leg 90 Degree Isometric Hold	2-3	30 sec on injured leg

Calf Strengthening Programme

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Eccentric Calf Lower	2-3	6-8 on injured leg
Calf Raise	2-3	8-10
Low Box Jump and Freeze	2-3	8-10
Bouncing Calf Raise	2-3	6-8 each leg
Single Leg Speed Hop	2-3	5 x 2 on injured leg

