



Injury Law Center®

Note: This information is provided to give you a basic understanding of the injury. It is not intended as medical advice. You should consult a qualified medical provider.

SPRAINS AND STRAINS

Description

When an excess of force is applied to any joint, the ligaments that hold the bones together may be damaged or torn. This is known as a sprain. Any joint can be sprained, but most frequently it is the ankle, knee and fingers that suffer sprains.

The bones of a joint are held together with tough fibrous bands known as ligaments. These ligaments are attached to each bone along with a sac surrounding the joint called the joint capsule. In the event of trauma to the joint, one of the bones making up the joint is forced out of its natural alignment from excessive stretching and tearing of the joint ligaments and capsule. Muscles and tendons surrounding the joint are usually stretched and injured to some degree.

Strains are tears in the muscle, often times called pulled muscles. These can occur from trauma or from overexertion or improper lifting techniques. Repeated strains in the same joint may make the joint less stable and more prone to future sprains.

Symptoms

There are three grades of sprains. Grade I sprains involve no tearing of the ligament, although there may be tenderness and swelling.

Grade II sprains involve a partial tear of the ligament. The sprains are characterized by swelling, bruising, difficulty bearing weight on the joint, reduced function of the joint and pain.

Grade III sprains involve a complete tearing of the ligament where there is severe pain, widespread swelling and bruising, and loss of joint function.

Strains can range from mild muscle stiffness to great soreness. Sometimes a person who suffers a strain in one portion of the body will compensate with another part of the body, which may result in injury of the other part through overuse.

Medical Help

Grade I sprains and mild strains are usually treated at home. The acronym RICE is used for basic first aid, which consists of Rest, Ice, Compression (wrapping and an ace bandage) and Elevation

of the sprain above the level of the heart.

People with Grade II and Grade III sprains in the ankle and knee usually need to use crutches until the sprains have healed enough to bear weight. Often times physical therapy or home exercises are needed to restore the strength and flexibility of the joint. Grade III sprains are usually placed in a cast for several weeks. Sometimes surgery may be necessary.

Practical Advice- As with a fracture or any other injury, if you are given an order for physical therapy or home exercises, please be sure to do them faithfully throughout the entire course of the therapy. Failure to do so may result in a permanent loss of function in the joint.

Dislocations and Subluxations

Description

The terms dislocation and subluxations refer to the displacement of bones that form a joint. Dislocations and subluxations most often result from trauma that causes adjoining bone to no longer align with each other. A partial or incomplete dislocation is known as a subluxation.

If trauma to the joint causing the dislocation or subluxation is violent, small chips of bone, called avulsion fractures, can be torn away with the supporting structures.

Medical Help

Following a dislocation or subluxation, the joint should be immobilized that is prevented from moving, and the person should be transported to a hospital. The treatment of realigning bones following a dislocation is called reduction. This may include simple maneuvers that manipulate the joint to reposition the bones or could involve surgery to restore the joint to its normal position. Reoccurring dislocations may require surgical reconstruction or replacement of the joint.

Chiropractic care can sometimes be effective for joint subluxations and dislocations, especially in the spine. Once the joint has been dislocated or subluxed, the ligaments and muscles holding the joint in correct alignment are stretched to such an extent that the joint becomes vulnerable to repeat dislocations. The chance of recurrent dislocation and subluxation will decrease if proper rehabilitation program, i.e. physical therapy, chiropractic care, etc. is followed to strengthen the surrounding muscles of the joint.

Key Terms

Ligaments-Tough, fibrous tissue that holds the bones together in the joints.

Articular capsule-The tissue that surrounds a joint which is composed of synovial membrane that secretes a lubricant into the joint.

HELP

If you have suffered a sprain/strain injury, or any other type of injury, you should seek appropriate medical help and if your injury was caused by another's negligence or fault, you should seek appropriate legal help bring a claim for compensation.

Feel free to call or e-mail The Injury Law Center® for answers to your questions and help with your legal claim.

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