



## TO YOUR HEALTH.....

### Preventing Sports Injury

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Back-to-school is in full swing and often that means athletics for the kids and perhaps a return to a regular fitness schedule for mom and dad. Participating in sports is something I heartily encourage and enjoy with my own family, though jumping into physical activities without proper preparation can lead to injury.

Because I specialize in shoulders (as well as elbows and hands), I treat a variety of sports injuries that are the result of stress to the shoulder from throwing sports such as football, baseball and softball, as well as tennis, golf, swimming and volleyball, to name a few. Any of these sports can impart tremendous stress to the shoulder, and most of this strain is directed at the rotator cuff.

With any sport or physical activity, the first step toward injury prevention — especially if you haven't practiced the sport in a while — is preparation prior to participation. To start, ensure your overall conditioning is adequate. This is of primary importance and cannot be overlooked, as poor conditioning often leads to mechanical issues.

Once you have spent some time on core conditioning, it's important to assess shoulder strength and flexibility if you're participating in any of the above named activities. Engaging in a shoulder and rotator cuff strengthening program prior to picking up a ball, racquet or golf club is the best

insurance policy for playing healthy.

Next step: Begin training. No professional athlete would ever consider simply walking back onto the field or the court as a first step. I recommend an interval training program that expands the repetition, duration and effort detailed in these sports.

In spite of adequate training and conditioning, some players may still develop shoulder pain. The most common culprit is rotator cuff tendinitis. If rest, ice and anti-inflammatory medication fails to improve the symptoms, a visit to the physician may be warranted.

Fortunately, the vast majority of patients with rotator cuff tendinitis respond to a combination of medication, rehabilitation and potentially a steroid injection. For those still experiencing difficulty, shoulder arthroscopy can affect a high rate of satisfaction.

Visit [DrGordonGroh.com](http://DrGordonGroh.com) for a simple rotator cuff strengthening program and interval training programs for a variety of sports.

Good luck and stay well!

*Dr. Gordon I. Groh is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon specializing in shoulder, elbow, and hand surgery. A resident of Fairview, he is recognized nationally for his expertise. He practices at Blue Ridge Bone & Joint in Asheville. For more information, call 258-8800 or visit [DrGordonGroh.com](http://DrGordonGroh.com).*