

Finding the Right Sport Injury Clinic

By Nancy Botting

IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN SPORT, chances are you will wind up with some sort of ache or pain or possibly an acute or chronic injury that needs an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment to allow you to continue being active. Choosing the right sport injury clinic can often be one of the most challenging parts of dealing with any injury. Many clinics may advertise as sport injury treatment facilities, yet do not have the clinical staff with the appropriate expertise. The following information may help you decide if your sport medicine specialist is right for you.

In Canada we have a multidisciplinary group of sport medicine practitioners. Ideally, choose a clinic that has a team of practitioners to help you with your injury.

Sport medicine physicians have specialized training in the management of the entire athlete. They are an excellent liaison between family doctor, therapist, surgeon, coach, parent and athlete. He or she can assist in accurate diagnosis and appropriate management of sport injury or illness. They are concussion management specialists and provide counseling to athletes on exercise prescription, nutrition, supplement use and are up to date on doping control policies. They can perform pre-participation medical screening for athletes returning to play following an injury. For more information visit www.casm-acms.org.

Sport physiotherapists are specialists in the treatment of acute and chronic or overuse sport-related musculoskeletal injury. Sport physiotherapy is a special designation awarded by Sport Physiotherapy Canada requiring ongoing credentialing enabling physiotherapists to work with athletes at the Olympic and Paralympic levels. Sport physiotherapists have the clinical expertise to work with athletes of all levels of participation and are able to efficiently diagnose and treat injury in acute situations on the field of play and in the clinic for follow up care.

These therapists are generally experienced manual therapists with a variety of aggressive treatment approaches to get you back to your sport as soon as possible. For more information visit www.sportphysio.ca.

Certified athletic therapists specialize in prevention, immediate care and reconditioning of musculoskeletal injury. An athletic therapist is trained to provide emergency on field care and basic emergency life support. They specialize in returning athletes to play as soon and as safely as possible with a variety of in-clinic rehabilitation approaches such as the use of therapeutic modalities, soft tissue mobilization, exercise prescription and supportive taping/strapping techniques. An athletic therapist most often works in a college or university environment with varsity athletes. In some provinces in Canada, athletic therapists work within the sport medicine team in private rehabilitation clinics with athletes of all levels of sport participation. For more information visit www.athletictherapy.org.

Sport massage therapists work with athletes on-site at an event or in a rehabilitation clinic to complement the work of the other sport medicine team members. Pre-event massage stimulates circulation, calms nervous tension and prepares the athlete for optimal performance while reducing the chances of injury. Post event massage will assist with recovery from hard training and competition. Training/Rehab Massage will focus on the prevention of developing chronic injury or in the healing process of current injury. For more information visit www.csmta.ca.

The focus of **sport chiropractors** is to provide care in the conservative management, rehabilitation and performance optimization of an athlete's neuro-musculo-skeletal system.



Spinal injury prevention has been identified as a role that sports chiropractors can also play. Sport chiropractic is a 2 year post graduate residency specialty designation within the Royal College of Chiropractic Sport Sciences. Sport chiropractors generally work with athletes from their private offices or within a multidisciplinary health care team. For more information visit www.rccssc.ca.

Bracing and orthotics specialists are often part of the sport medicine team providing athletes with a wide variety of devices to improve joint alignment and lessen biomechanical forces. The prescription of foot supports such as custom orthotics, night splints for plantar fasciitis and custom knee bracing for osteoarthritis or knee ligament injury enable many athletes to remain active despite an otherwise debilitating condition. For more information visit www.pedorthic.ca.

Ideally you should look for a clinic that has a multidisciplinary team to service all of your needs. Your care may need to be shared between a few specialists. Above all, choose a practitioner that wants what you want, and that is passionate about getting you back out there. Look for advice from your sport medicine team on ways to prevent future injury and ways to minimize injury risk. Our Canadian sport medicine practitioners are amongst the top trained specialists in the world and once you have found a good one, hold on to them, as you may inevitably need their advice in the future.



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