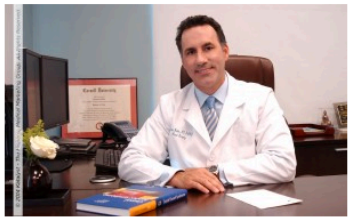
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Major League Baseball: Athletic Injuries On Hand And Upper Limb

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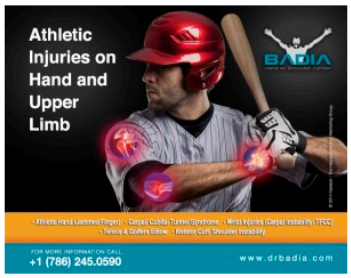
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MIAMI - According to the latest study conducted by the Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), more than 1.9 million individuals had a sports-related injury that was treated in the recent years. More than 231,000 baseball injuries were treated, 83 percent of the injuries were among men. Among those injuries, broken and/or dislocated fingers and wrist bone fracture. With so many bones, ligaments, tendons, and joints keeping hands and wrists working, there is ample opportunity for severe injury. In fact, injuries to the hand and wrists are some of the most frequently acquiring inquiries facing athletes today. The most common sports-related hand and wrist injuries can be classified into two main categories, traumatic (acute) and Overuse (chronic).

Traumatic (acute) refers to any specific, sharp pain that is of rapid onset or pain that results from a specific traumatic incident such as an athletic injury. Traumatic injuries are more commonly seen in athletes who participate in certain sports that require a higher level of contact (i.e., football, hockey, or wrestling). The most common traumatic fracture injury in the athletic population is found in the fingers and include joint dislocations, sprains, muscle strains, broken bones, tendon inflammation, and ligament tears.

"Major fractures of the hand or wrist occur only during high-speed contact or in older athletes who may have osteoporosis. Complex fractures below the elbow can occur and there is a great variation in the fracture patterns. It is important that an upper extremity specialist evaluate these injuries, as recovery of full wrist and hand range of motion is often difficult. Fractures of the upper arm (humerus) may also result from this injury and can even extend into the shoulder joint." – States Dr. Alejandro Badia, Leading Hand and Upper Extremity Surgeon at Badia Hand to Shoulder Center.



Overuse (chronic) injuries are more likely to occur in athletes who engage in sports that require them to repeat a particular movement (i.e., baseball, soccer, tennis, or golf). Overuse injuries are likely to be stress induced and include tendon inflammation and dislocation, nerve injury, and overuse stress fractures. Chronic injuries have a higher tendency to develop long-term effects. However, long-term disability is less likely to occur from overuse injuries than from traumatic injuries. An athlete's performance may significantly diminish, if the chronic injuries are left untreated. Surgery may be required if the overuse chronic injuries persists and continues to develop over time.

Athletic hand and wrist injuries can cause great pain and strain both physically and emotionally. Should you experience a hand or wrist injury while participating in any physical sport where an attending team physician is not present, seek immediate medical attention. It is important to be aware of what the immediate symptoms include, yet symptoms are never limited to the following:

- Sever pain and swelling
- Numbness
- Coldness or grayness in the finger, hand, or wrist
- Abnormal twisting or bending of the finger or hand
- A clicking, grating, or shifting noise while moving your finger, hand, or wrist
- Bleeding that doesn't stop and persists for more then 10 minutes

Contact your doctor or a specialty physician if mild wrist pain, bruising, or swelling after the injury lingers or does not improve over time.

"Arthoscopy for hand and wrist pathology is a minimally invasive surgical technique used to explore a joint from within. Tiny incisions are used to insert a fiberoptic instrument which serves as a camera to the inside of a joint and allows to not only diagnose a problem but often times concludes what definitive treatment should would be best for the patient. This is opposed to the more standard technique of open joint surgery, which can result in increased scarring and prolonged recovery time." – States Dr. Alejandro Badia.

Final treatment depends on the location, type, duration, and severity of the injury. Some injuries may require surgery, such as ligament tears. The key point to a fast recovery is to seek evaluation by a dedicated upper extremity specialist. The general orthopedic surgeon often addresses simple fractures, but the highly competitive athlete truly needs an optimal result in order to maximize their return to full function. Given timely and precise treatment, there is no reason why a professional or any sportsman should not be able to return to their regular lifestyle after sustaining an injury to their hand or wrist.