

Movement and Sport for Optimal Health



Holistic Natural Health Experts

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Introduction

Today, all health actors, whether they are doctors, nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists, researchers, therapists or others, agree on the fact that a lack of physical activity is harmful to health.

An overweight person, sitting all day in front of the television or his screen, knows unconsciously that what he does is detrimental to his health, to his body.

For years, the list of chronic diseases related to lack of physical activity has been growing, with overweight and obesity at the top of the list.

The figures of the latter are edifying:

- Overweight and obesity are the fifth leading risk factor for death worldwide and claim at least 2.8 million lives each year (WHO global estimates).
- Overweight affects 1.4 billion people aged 20 and over worldwide (WHO global estimates).
- In 2016, 41 million children under age 5 were overweight or obese.
- In 2016, more than 340 million children and adolescents ages 5 to 19 were overweight or obese.
<https://www.who.int/fir/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>
- According to the OECD, by 2030 the number of overweight people is expected to reach 3.3 billion.



As a result, the promotion of physical activity has become the number one public health priority in most developed countries. Research on physical activity and its effects on health has exploded and proposals for physical activity promotion have become more diverse.

Several health systems go even further, by financially encouraging the practice of a sport through a partial or total reimbursement of the costs related to its practice, for example the reimbursement of fitness subscriptions by health insurance.

Yet, despite these apparent efforts, are we on the right track? Are we turning the tide towards a better future where every human being is physically fit?

Unfortunately, the answer is no, or at least not for tomorrow. Our societies are still sick and public health policies, more than ever corrupted by private interests, have other objectives.

In our opinion, individual and independent control of our health (including our physical activity) is essential if we want to maintain good health.

With this in mind, this book addresses the fundamental basics of understanding movement and sport for optimal health.

Physical activity

While everyone agrees that regular physical activity is necessary, no one agrees on the rest:

- Which sport or movement discipline to choose?
- How long to practice them and how often?
- In what way?
- For what purpose?
- For whom and at what age?
- etc.

Just on the question of the choice of the sport or the discipline of the movement, it is very complicated to find your way.

Should I choose racquet sports? Like tennis, squash, badminton, paddle or table tennis?

Or should you choose water sports? Like swimming, surfing, snorkeling, stand up paddle or windsurfing?

Or should you choose team sports? Like soccer, baseball, volleyball, handball, field hockey, or basketball?

Or turn to martial arts? Like karate, judo, capoeira, ju-jitsu, kung fu or MMA?

Or do you have to choose among all these other disciplines? Workout, Gym, Climbing, Fitness, Running, Aerobics, Cycling, Bodybuilding, Cardio-training, Freeletics, Dances, Calisthenics, CrossFit, HIIT, Nordic Walking, Kettlebell, Carrio training system, Yoga, Qi-gong, Pilate, Athletics, Mountaineering and so many others...

The list is very long. In fact, according to the "World Sports Encyclopedia", there are more than 3000 different sports in the world. Even if we take out all the mental sports and e-sports, we are left with a large number of sports.

Of course, it is obvious that the offer must be diversified and that the same physical activity cannot be imposed on everyone. As always, the attempt to standardize our societies is a bad idea, and this also applies to physical activity.

However, let's put ourselves in the shoes of an average person, a stranger to the world of sports: how can they make informed choices under these conditions? They can't.

Thus, in our therapeutic practice, we regularly see patients who are doing "everything wrong" without knowing it and with all the good will in the world.

To make things clearer, let's start by differentiating between two types of physical activity: movement and sport.

Radically different, the two are complementary for optimal health.

Movement and Sport for Optimal Health

Movement

Movement is life!

All living things are in constant motion. Even if in some cases this movement is barely perceptible, like the growth of plants, it is ALWAYS present.



Inside as well as outside, the movement is present and perceptible to the one who knows how to observe with attention.

As a reminder, we die after a few minutes without breathing. In order to breathe, our rib cage must expand and our diaphragm must descend (contract) so that the lungs can fill with air.

Throughout our lives, every second, our heart beats. Without this incredibly powerful and constant movement, our life would stop.

Both at the microscopic and macroscopic level, everything is in motion. The day we stop moving, we die.

The proof is in the pudding when people are hospitalized and can no longer move part or all of their body. Very quickly, the immobilized part of the body loses its flexibility and mobility, and bedsores may form. This is why these people need daily care to counteract the effects of the immobilization.

This phenomenon is also known for fractures. Nowadays, when a cast is applied, the patient is encouraged to move as soon as possible (if the fracture allows it) precisely to avoid the loss of muscle mass.

What is movement?

We consider movement to be any physical activity that meets the following three criteria:

- Does not require a warm-up
- Does not cause fatigue, muscle soreness or tension
- Does not activate the cascade of physiological reactions induced by the practice of a sport, such as inflammation and oxidative stress.

It is crucial to understand here that the classification of a physical activity as a movement is therefore intrinsically relative to the person and his or her evolution.

Indeed, for one person, a physical activity can be considered as movement while for another it will be sport.

In addition, the same person who progresses in his or her physical abilities will be able to practice a physical activity considered as sporty at the beginning and as movement later on.

This is why this notion is relative and must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis for each individual and re-evaluated over time.

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Movement physical activities

As we have just said, what defines a physical activity as movement is relative to each person.

Nevertheless, here is a list of physical activities that we can classify as movement for the vast majority of people:

- leisure cycling
- walking - hiking
- soft mobility (scooters, rollerblades, segways, etc.)
- gentle practices (family yoga, aqua aerobics, etc.)

Why is movement important?

Movement is essential to the metabolic functioning of our body. In other words: no movement, no energy.

Fortunately for us, nature doing things right, we are programmed to move. Our bodies are constantly in motion, even though most of the time we are not aware of it.

In reality, it is difficult for us to block any movement, even for a short time. To realize this, we suggest that you perform the following experiment:

Sit in a chair, stare at a point in front of you and start the timer. For 10 minutes and without stopping, try not to move at all.

Do not look away from the fixed point, do not blink, do not swallow, do not speak, do not contract a single muscle in your body.

After only a few minutes, you will notice how unusual this state of stillness is and how much concentration is required to maintain it.

Of course, it is not impossible to do this, except perhaps for blinking, because blinking is essential for the proper hydration of the cornea of the eye and without it the eyes quickly start to sting.

With this example, you can understand why sitting for long hours in front of a desk, on a plane or in transport can be uncomfortable, because even if we have the possibility to wriggle in place, we are already limited in our movements.

Unfortunately, we live today in societies that progressively force us to reduce our living space, to reduce our social interactions, to limit our movements.



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The forced confinements that millions of people have endured are clear evidence of this.

All this is unnatural and we pay the price every day.

That is why we think it is important to do as much movement as possible on a daily basis, within the limits of our individual possibilities.

Benefits of movement

You can't make an excess of movement, it's impossible.

Movement can be practiced without moderation, unlike sports, and this is one of its greatest advantages.

Moreover, it can be practiced in parallel with another activity. It is possible, for example, to take an educational hike on animal and plant species, to visit a city by bike, etc.

A regular practice brings many benefits for:

- blood circulation
- digestion processes
- tissue oxygenation
- the reduction of muscular tension
- stimulation of the immune system
- improvement of cognitive functions
- the "anti-stress" and calming action of the nervous system
- etc.

Be careful, remember here that although movement is essential and does not have a negative aspect, it does not provide the essential benefits of sports for optimal health.



Sport

If movement is life, we can see in sport the expression of the potential of life that we have in each of us.

What is sport?

Sport is an ancestral practice whose traces can be found in the four corners of the world.

Intimately linked to play and pleasure, it is also linked to effort and pain.

Depending on the time and place, sport has very different meanings. It can for example represent:

- the training of the soldier in the context of his military classes
- the work of the high-level athlete
- the favorite pastime of wealthy nobles
- the unifying game for many different peoples and social classes
- the outlet for many middle-class workers
- a part of the school education (Physical Education and Sport)
- the must for weight loss programs
- the best way for thrill-seekers to come close to death
- a unique relationship with the animal (example: horseback riding)
- a regional or even national emblem
- a game of seduction and physical attraction
- etc.



In this book, we will voluntarily choose a definition closer to what sport represents for our health.

As opposed to movement, we consider a sport to be any physical activity that meets the following three criteria:

- Requires a warm-up before practice
- Causes: fatigue and/or muscle tension and/or soreness
- Activates the cascade of physiological reactions induced by the practice of a sport, for example inflammation and oxidative stress.

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Physical activity

As with movement, the definition of a physical activity is relative for each person.

Everyone can practice movement and sport, except that in the case of sport, the choice of sport activity can be more or less limited.

Indeed, a person suffering from acrophobia will not choose sports such as climbing, acrobatics, bungee jumping, skydiving, etc.

In other cases, the limitation will be related to physical condition, a past injury or simply the inability to access the sport itself for practical or financial reasons.

Why sports?

Although we consider sport to be essential for optimal health, we must recognize that it is not as essential as movement.

In fact, it is quite possible to live in good health by not practicing any sport but only movement.

As we said above:

Movement is life, sport is the expression of life's potential.

Let's clarify an important point here: to live in good health with the sole practice of movement, it is necessary to practice daily and intensively.

What we mean by this is that a little walk every now and then won't do the trick.

This is why we insist that sport is to be added to movement and not the other way around.

Too many people think that practicing sports is a panacea and that there is no

need to exercise when you are regularly active.

Unfortunately for them, the physiological reality shows the opposite and this is one of the major reasons for injuries in amateur athletes.

Benefits and risks of sport

Unlike movement, sport, practiced without moderation, very often becomes a source of injuries. It is therefore important to understand how to practice sport without harming oneself, because when practiced intelligently and in moderation, sport is an exceptional complement to movement.

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Benefits

The benefits of sport are countless. Let's mention some of them:

- Development of new skills
- Physical transformation (increase in muscle mass, decrease in fat mass, change in figure)
- Stimulation of bone growth
- Changes in hormone production
- Acceleration of the metabolism
- Increase in red blood cells
- Improved cognitive performance
- Stimulation of fine and gross motor skills
- Tissue rejuvenation (via growth hormone)
- etc.

Of course, all these benefits must be weighed against the risks inherent in the practice of sport.

Risks

We prefer to speak here of risks rather than harms of sport, because if practiced intelligently and in moderation these risks can be considerably reduced and prevented.

Once again, we exclude professional sports that have their own rules. The risks of sport are mainly related to 5 factors:

- effort and recovery
- the diversity of practices
- biomechanical understanding
- the daily context
- health status

In the following chapter, we explain how to best control these 5 factors and thus get the most out of sport for optimal health.

The risks of sport

In order to understand the risks inherent to the practice of sport, it is important to realize the impact of sport on our body.



In our professional experience, most of the time, people who hurt themselves by playing sports simply do anything in any way.

We find this regrettable, because these people are often volunteers and make a lot of effort, only to not reap the expected benefits.

The subject is obviously very complex and we will not be able to deal with it exhaustively here because entire chapters would not be sufficient.

Without going into specific jargon and complex concepts, we believe it is possible for everyone to understand the subject sufficiently, the objective being to benefit from the benefits of sport while minimizing its risks.

To do this, let's take a look at the 5 risk factors of sports without further ado:

- effort and recovery
- biomechanical understanding
- the daily context
- health status
- the diversity of practices

Effort and recovery

Of these five factors, this is undoubtedly the most important. Easy to understand but neglected by most athletes.

When we play sports, our body is subjected to an intense effort. This effort will put all of our tissues to work (bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments, etc.).

Of these tissues, the muscles are the ones that will provide the most effort by contracting intensely and repeatedly.

These are the ones that, a few hours to a few days after the physical effort, will cause this painful sensation to appear: the famous "muscle aches".

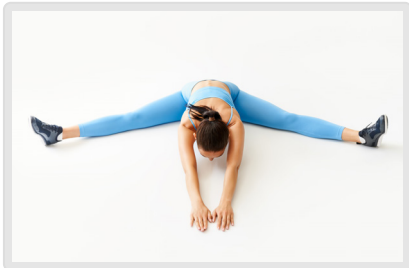
In general, sport will cause micro-lesions in our body as well as a whole cascade of physiological reactions such as inflammation.

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Don't worry, this is normal and part of the game! It is thanks to these effects that we can enjoy the benefits of sport.

On the other hand, it is important during the recovery phases (outside of physical effort) to allow the body to repair itself and recover effectively from these micro-injuries by resting and stretching properly.

Muscle stretching



Although muscle soreness fades on its own over time, our muscles will suffer from residual muscle tension that will not go away on its own.

This is where muscle stretching comes in.

Even today, most sports people do not stretch or stretch very little and this is a terrible mistake.

Stretching is MANDATORY for everyone, no matter what sport you play!

Moreover, contrary to a still very widespread idea:

We do not stretch before or after the effort but always OUTSIDE!

These pre or post effort stretching logics are based on theories dating back to the 60's, now recognized as false.

The reason is very simple.

If we stretch before the effort, we lose all the muscular influx, which means, in simple terms, that we will lose muscle tone and therefore performance.

If we stretch after the effort, we increase the micro-tears of the muscles induced by the sport. To illustrate this, you can imagine a rope that is cut in several places (physical effort); if you pull on this cut rope (stretching), you aggravate the injury.

It is therefore necessary to always stretch outside of physical effort, which means at least 6 hours before or after, the time it takes for the micro-tears to repair themselves.

In addition, it is important to add that there are still far too many people who think that stretching is synonymous with lying on a yoga mat and spending more than an hour stretching in all directions ... But this is not the case at all.

In reality, it takes 30 seconds to 2 minutes of stretching for each muscle group, which means that you can stretch properly in just 30 minutes.

As for the frequency of stretching, the rule is very simple: for every sport session, one stretching session.

For example, someone who plays sports twice a week should stretch twice a week as well.

Finally, it is important to note that you should never stretch while cold. It is therefore important to do a brief warm-up before stretching.

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As for knowing how to stretch, which stretching exercises to do and which muscle groups to stretch, it is a rather complex subject, because it depends on the sport(s) practiced but also on the physical particularities of the person.

This is why stretching exercises must be adapted as well as natural medicine treatment.

Sleep

During sleep, our body regenerates itself. The days following an intense physical effort, sleep is even more crucial because the body, in addition to the daily regeneration, must repair the micro-injuries produced by the sport.

It is therefore essential not to lack quality and quantity of sleep, especially if you practice sports.

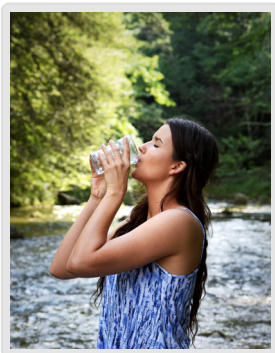
It should also be noted that it is not good for the body to go to bed right after intense physical effort.

For those who play sports in the evening, make sure to keep at least one hour between the end of the sport and falling asleep, otherwise you risk affecting the quality of your sleep.

On the other hand, we advise you to exercise before going to sleep. This will improve the digestion of the evening meal and the quality of your sleep.



Hydration



Drinking enough water while doing sports is obvious, yet how many athletes still forget to do it? Far too many.

We therefore remind you here very clearly: you must drink water before, during and after exercise.

Staying well hydrated is crucial for a better recovery of the body.

The more intense the physical effort, the more important it is to warm up properly. As the name implies, warming up is literally heating up your body.

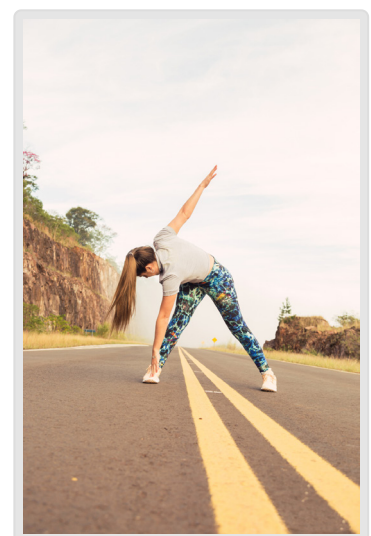
The goal is to stimulate blood circulation throughout our body and especially in our limbs and muscles, giving us that warm and comfortable feeling.

As for stretching, too many sports people do not warm up before exercise.

Yet it only takes a few minutes and not only improves performance but also greatly reduces the risk of injury.

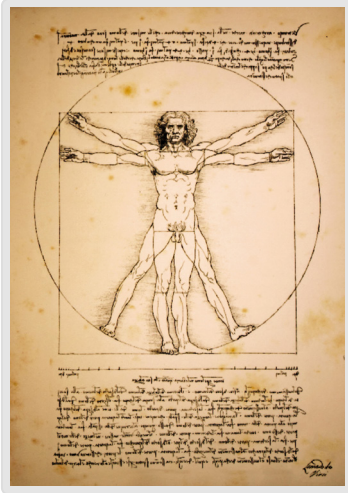
Be careful here, we repeat again: stretching can NOT be used as a warm-up, quite the contrary.

Warm-up



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Biomechanical understanding



Biomechanics explores and analyzes the mechanical principles and properties as well as the ingenious and mysterious functioning of living organisms.

Biomechanical understanding is to sport what learning is to work. It is a prerequisite for proper practice.

As with any learning process, it is important to learn the practice of one's sport correctly and above all without hurting oneself.

Quality instruction by a teacher is essential for most laymen, although some have sufficient instinctive understanding.

It should be noted here that people who practice different sports have, as a rule, an easier time understanding their biomechanics.

Although this factor is less important than effort and recovery, it is often underestimated, especially in the practice of racket sports (tennis, squash, badminton, etc.) which require a good hitting technique that is not necessarily intuitive to acquire.

To cite just one well-known example, "Tennis Elbow" is directly related to a very poor tennis hitting technique that causes inflammation of the elbow and forearm.

The biomechanical understanding of sport is not only useful to avoid injuries, but also to take more pleasure in one's sport practice. Indeed, when the practice is better understood, the physical and mental capacities are better expressed.

The daily context

This factor is not directly related to the sport practice but to the practitioner himself.

Indeed, even if we respect effort and recovery, if we understand biomechanics, physical effort will have different repercussions on our organism depending on whether we sit all day in an office or all day outside and in motion.

This is the big problem of the so-called "Sunday jocks". They are often busy with office work and do not have the time to exercise. Moreover, because of their lifestyle, they are often in chronic lack of movement.

Then the weekend arrives, the only time when they can vent their mental and physical frustration. The Sunday sportsmen are not looking for movement, but for an intense sports activity to let off steam.

This allows them to burn off all the energy they've accumulated during the week and serves as an outlet so they can get through the week ahead.

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The problem is that for the body, the shock is then very intense.

Imagine for a moment the situation. In terms of physical activity, the daily life of these people often boils down to:

- stand up
- get dressed
- driving or taking transportation to work
- sitting on a chair
- go shopping
- sitting in front of the television
- go to bed

Statistically speaking, if these people go, for example, to do 2 hours of sport every Sunday, this represents less than 2% of their waking time.

In other words, more than 98% of the time, these people require almost no effort from their bodies.

Obviously, at the time of the intense physical effort, the body is not used to it and is not sufficiently trained. As a result, many of these athletes are regularly injured.

Moreover, because of their frustration and lack of time, these athletes will very often botch the warm-up and especially the stretching, two aggravating factors.

This is why we insist once again that sport is not a substitute for movement and that sport must be practiced in addition to movement and not the other way around.

Health status

For the practice of movement, the health status of the person is not a determining factor because everyone, sick or not, benefits from the practice of movement.

On the other hand, for sports, certain illnesses can be more or less important contraindications depending on the chosen sport.

For example, for people suffering from obesity, we advise against running, which will put too much strain on their heart and joints.

In general, there are no absolute rules of indications or contraindications, as each health condition must be evaluated individually.

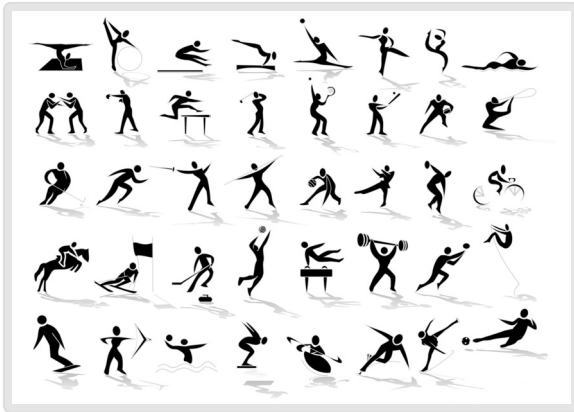
Let's also remember that a majority of people who take up sports do so for health reasons, for example: to lose weight, change their figure, regain muscle strength, etc.

In this case, the use of a holistic health expert can be very helpful because he or she will be able to:

- advise you on the most suitable sports practices for you
- establish with you a therapeutic follow-up that will accompany you throughout your sport practice

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The diversity of practices



As mentioned above, people who practice several different sports generally have an easier time understanding the biomechanics of the sport.

This in itself is a strong argument for diversity in sport, but it is not the only one.

Each sport practice is specific and none is complete.

The risk inherent in the practice of a single sport is the development of more or less important body imbalances such as asymmetry with racquet sports.

Please note that we are not implying that the body should be symmetrical, this is not the case. But the degree of asymmetry or overdevelopment of certain muscle groups to the detriment of others can be pushed too far by the practice of a single sport.

This is why a diversified sport practice is healthier for the body and therefore, decreases the risks of injuries, because the body will be stronger as a whole.

Of course, among the 3000 different sports in the world, some complement each other better than others.

However, the choice of sports practices should not be made solely on the basis of what is most optimal for one's health, because one must also take into account the practical situation of the person, i.e., his or her location, financial means, availability, etc.

We strongly advise you not to practice a sport you do not like, even if it is beneficial to your health.

On the other hand, if you want to improve the completeness of your sports practice, we advise you to combine very different sports.

So, rather than playing multiple racquet sports, we recommend that you play one racquet sport and one water sport, for example.

The challenges of sport

Choosing a sport is a complex task.

Although we have given you, in the previous chapters, the general principles to better manage your sport practice, you still have to decide concretely what to practice.

This choice is personal to each person and contrary to what many health therapists-coaches do, we will not give you a ready-made recipe for optimal physical activity.

The reason is not that we are trying to hide "the magic formula", but simply that it does not exist.

Claiming that a recipe exists is nothing more than a marketing argument to sell a product, a method, a concept or a program.

In our opinion, this is neither ethical nor responsible on the part of a so-called natural health therapist or coach.

However, we can give you a general idea of what you can experience and expect from the different sports practices.

We obviously cannot talk about all the sports practices that exist, so we will focus on some very representative examples.

Soccer



Soccer (and all its variations like futsal) is a very complete ball sport.

It develops important skills such as: cardiac fitness, breath and lung capacity, fine motor skills, strategy and teamwork, anticipation skills, peripheral vision, balance, complex movements, etc.

The list is long, especially if you include the different roles (goalkeeper, striker, defender, etc.)

Soccer is the most practiced sport in the world, so it is very accessible. For a beginner, it is a fun sport that allows you to make rapid progress.

Being a team sport, like all ball sports, it requires many players. Joining a team to be able to play regularly can be essential, but also represent a constraint of schedules and travel.

However, soccer, like all other contact sports, can be injurious and dangerous, so we must be careful how we play and how other players play.

In summary, practiced respectfully, soccer is an excellent sport to develop these physical abilities as well as to have fun.

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Tennis

Tennis is the most practiced racket sport in the world. It is also the most technically complex.

Unless it is practiced intensively and at a good level, this sport does not require much effort and therefore does not develop notable physical abilities, at least not at the beginning.

The risk of injury is relatively low, except in the case of poor equipment or technique.

If you want to practice this sport for your health, we strongly advise you to take lessons from the beginning to reach a sufficient technical level to guarantee your safety.

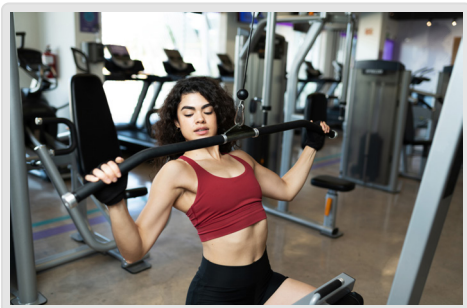
Like all racquet sports, it is a highly asymmetrical sport, meaning that it will create a significant body imbalance between the right and the left.

Nevertheless, tennis is a very interesting sport that, if played at a sufficient level, develops strategy, fine motor skills, complex movements, balance and coordination.

If you want to have fun quickly and without too much effort to learn, we advise you to choose another racket sport, like squash for example.



Weight room, fitness room, sports room



The gym is a vague concept that includes a very diverse mix of sports practices.

Representative of the big cities and of an urban clientele looking for a place to take care of their physical form, the annual subscription to the gym is still very widespread today.

Unlike ball or racket sports, the various sports practiced in a gym are, for the most part, not games.

Therefore, the movements performed have no purpose in themselves. The only goal is the effort and therefore the muscular work.

Here are some examples:

- Bodybuilding
- Fitness
- Aerobics
- etc.

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Among them, the most representative example is weight training.

Please note that we are not talking about body weight training (such as callisthenics or body weight workouts) which are almost never practiced in the gym.

We are talking about classic weight training with weights and machines.

From a health point of view, this sport is one of the worst for the following reasons:

- No or little development of important skills, unlike soccer, for example
- High risk of injury (especially with weight machines)
- Practice made of simple, useless and repetitive movements
- Rapidly leads to a loss of mobility (muscle tension)
- Work in muscular isolation (unnatural)



Regarding the last point, muscle isolation, it is important to understand this concept.

To do this, let's see how the body works during exercise.

Our body is composed of a large number of muscles (more than 600), and during a movement (lifting, pulling, pushing, squeezing, etc.) a maximum number of muscles is used.

In other words, the body naturally calls upon the largest number of muscles to perform a movement, because as the saying goes, "the more hands there are to work with, the easier the task".

However, bodybuilding machines do the opposite by isolating the muscles to be trained in order to develop them more quickly.

Although this method is one of the fastest ways to change your figure, it is one of the most inappropriate for your body.

Running, jogging

Running is undoubtedly the simplest, easiest and most economical sport.

Depending on its practice, it is a gentle or very intensive sport activity.

Running trains the breath and respiratory capacity first and foremost. It stimulates our metabolism and is part of the fundamental movements of the human body (crawling, walking, running, climbing, etc.).



The major disadvantage is the significant strain it puts on our joints. Indeed, when we run, our body weight is multiplied by three.

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In concrete terms, this means that when we run, each time we touch the ground we have to absorb an impact of 3 times our body weight. These repetitive shocks can be damaging to our body.

Four criteria will significantly influence this disadvantage:

- body weight
- the running surface
- the shoes
- running technique

Body weight

Although running is strongly recommended in many weight loss programs, we do not recommend this sport to people who are significantly overweight.

Indeed, any excess weight of more than a few kilos will cause too much stress on the joints.

On the other hand, running is not one of the most effective ways to lose weight. In this case, it is preferable to turn to more appropriate sports such as workouts and swimming that do not put excessive strain on the joints.

Running surface



The worst possible running surface is concrete. Unfortunately, most runners today have no choice but to run on this surface.

Concrete is a real disaster for our joints and will considerably worsen the deleterious effect of running on our tissues.

That's why we recommend avoiding running on concrete as much as possible.

For those who have the opportunity, it is ideal to run on natural surfaces such as dirt, grass, leaves, gravel, stone or sand.

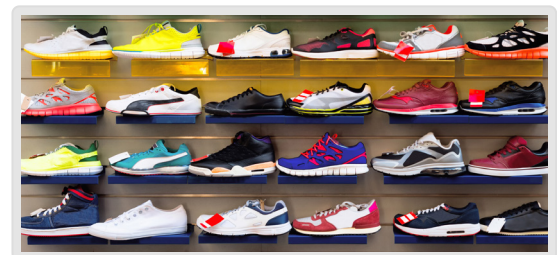
Shoes

Running shoes have evolved considerably over the past few decades, largely due to the fact that concrete has invaded our environment.

Unfortunately, nowadays running through the forest or across wild fields is no longer the rule but the exception.

Because of this, running shoes have become, since the 80's, real monsters with very technical cushioning soles, spiky shapes and arch supports.

The problem is that we adapt the shoe and the race to the surface of race which is unsuitable (concrete) instead of doing the opposite.



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Indeed, without these very shock-absorbing insoles, injuries would be far too serious and frequent.

But this false solution leads to other problems, including a loss of foot and ankle muscles and a forced change in running technique.

Fortunately, over the past decade, minimalist shoes have resurfaced as a result of well-known books such as "Born to Run" by Christopher McDougall and "The Running Revolution: How to Run Faster, Farther, and Injury-Free--for Life" by Dr. Nicholas Romanov, which promote minimalist running.

These minimalist shoes (also called barefoot shoes or minimalist footwear) are simple shoes, with no cushioning or arch support, that are as close as possible to barefoot running.

They should be used only when practicing minimalist running technique and preferably on a natural running surface.

Running technique

Running technique is a major factor in joint stress.

Running is in our DNA, it's like crawling or walking, we learn it naturally.

By creating an increasingly artificial environment, the race, although instinctive, is no longer adapted. Therefore, we have changed our way of doing things and our accessories. For running, this means running with shoes that are tilted forward, with a highly cushioned sole, arch support, etc.

Because of this, our running technique automatically changed to longer strides and a heel attack.

However, this running technique is not natural and increases the risk of injury. The muscular work of the foot, ankle and leg is reduced as a result of the loss of proprioceptive effort.

Thus, the strategy of adapting to an unsuitable running surface is an obvious failure because the solutions bring other problems.

On the other hand, there is another running technique, the minimalist run, which puts common sense back at the center of the run and practices a return to natural running.

In summary

For those who want to practice running, we advise you to run only on natural surfaces, or at least for the most part, and to practice a minimalist running technique with minimalist shoes.

This will greatly minimize joint stress and give you all the benefits of running.

Whether you are an experienced runner or a beginner, we recommend that you learn more about minimalist running through the following resources:

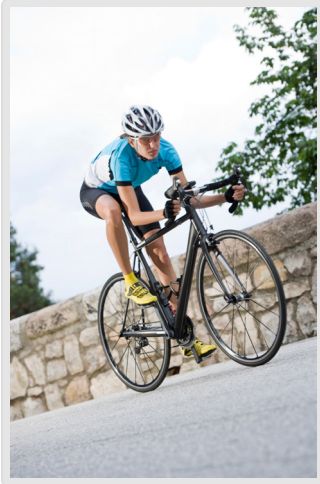
<https://runningrevolutionbook.com>

<https://www.amazon.com/North-Finding-While-Running-Appalachian/dp/0316433799>

<https://www.amazon.fr/Born-Run-Hidden-Superathletes-Greatest/dp/0307279189>

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Cycling



"It's like riding a bike, you don't forget it!"

Everyone knows the saying and it is true. Indeed, once you have understood the dynamic balance for the first time, you will never forget it.

Before being a sport, cycling represents the learning of a very important skill: balance in motion (dynamics).

This perpetual balance is a very important skill to acquire and is used in many other sports, such as sliding sports.

For many people, cycling is somewhere between movement and sport. When it is practiced as movement it is called "bike riding" and when it is practiced as a sport it is called "cycling".

As a means of transportation, some people consider that they are doing sport by cycling to work. However, in this context, it is mostly about movement and not about sport.

Moreover, with the democratization of electric bikes, cycling has become an almost effortless activity, having nothing to do with sport.

For those who practice cycling, on the other hand, this sport is rich in cardiac, muscular and respiratory work, even if it is incomplete on many points.

Obviously, you have to like sitting on an often-uncomfortable saddle and making a very localized muscular effort, because the vast majority of the effort is in the legs.

There is also the possibility of pedaling on a fixed bike in a gym, an activity we strongly advise against. Indeed, by pedaling on a fixed bike, you lose the very essence of cycling: dynamic balance. Moreover, you will find yourself locked in a room pedaling on the spot, losing also the pleasure of being in the open air and discovering beautiful landscapes.

Finally, let's not forget that even if we have mainly talked about road cycling, there are also mountain biking and BMX and all their variations.

These variants are more dangerous sports that require a very good level of cycling as well as a certain taste for risk taking.

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Water sports

Water is the most extraordinary element in our environment.

Water is a small molecule composed of only 3 atoms, yet it is essential to life on earth. It covers about 70% of the surface of our planet and makes up about 70% of our bodies.

No matter what the water sport is, the basis is obviously to learn to swim and to practice swimming.

However, even today, it is regrettable to note that a significant part of the population does not know how to swim or does not know how to swim well.

We believe that this ability is fundamental and should be taught in every school in the world.

Compared to other sports, water sports have a huge advantage because people who practice these sports benefit from the properties of water continuously.

Indeed, in water:

- we burn our body fat faster (thermoregulation)
- we feel less fatigue and pain (anti-inflammatory effect and disruption of our sensory organs)
- we are lighter (water-bearing capacity)
- we provide more effort (water resistance is greater than air resistance)

This is why water is used in all physical rehabilitation and anti-obesity programs.

This is also the reason why a lot of sports are practiced in water, such as aquabiking, aquaboxing, aquajogging, etc.

In addition, it is important to note that swimming is one of the only sports that is not asymmetric.

Unfortunately, water sports have a big disadvantage related to the quality of the water.

For sports practiced in open water (river, lake, sea) it is the level of pollution of the water and for sports in the pool it is the chlorinated water, a real poison for our body.

Thus, many people give up water sports.

Today, alternative filtration systems (filtering plants, UV lamps, salt, etc.) more efficient than chlorine for an equivalent budget exist, yet the vast majority of our public pools are unfortunately still chlorinated.



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Yoga



Originating in India, yoga is first and foremost a humble and unpretentious practice aimed at rebalancing the body and mind.

Traditionally, yoga is practiced by a yogi or a yogini, and has a physical (positions and sequence of movements, breathing exercises), mental (meditation, relaxation), philosophical (principles of life) and spiritual (union with the divine) dimension.

It has also been practiced for centuries by millions of people (in India and Asia) as a daily exercise to maintain the body.

As for all ancestral practices, the history of yoga is composed of different traditional styles such as Hatha yoga or Ashtanga yoga.

Imported into the West, yoga has been mostly misused as a marketing tool to sell other services. Thus, some have made huge profits by not respecting any of the philosophical principles of yoga such as detachment, sincerity or honesty.

Today, anyone can call themselves a "yoga teacher" after a few days of training.

Thus, the vast majority of yoga courses available in the West are limited to a very average physical activity of the order of movement.

In other words, an occupation, a hobby stamped "Yoga".

Unless you go to very specific yoga centers in India, or are lucky enough to find the few real yoga teachers scattered all over the world, you will have to settle for a rather mediocre level of yoga.

In this marketing frenzy, yoga in the West has given birth to dozens of different variations, here are just a few examples:

- hot yoga
- yin yoga
- acro yoga
- garuda yoga
- vini yoga
- kundalini yoga
- power yoga
- etc.

These practices often have little to do with traditional yoga and exploit the term "yoga" only to sell.

Please note that we are not saying here that these practices are by default of bad quality, on the contrary, some of them are quite valid as movement activity or sport discipline.

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We just want to make you aware of the fact that for the most part, they are yoga in name only.

When practiced correctly, yoga allows you to develop excellent mobility and a very good posture.

Workouts



Workouts do not really define a sport but rather a training format. Generally speaking, workouts are intensive training sessions whose purpose is to test and push a person's physical limits.

Very popular in the United States, they have become widely democratized in Europe over the last 20 years.

In an increasingly fast-paced and connected society, where human beings have less and less time for themselves, workouts are for many the ideal solution to save time while taking care of their physical fitness.

There are hundreds of different workouts for all levels. They can last from a few minutes to several hours.

Among them, we recommend workouts consisting of body weight training (without additional weights). You will have less risk of injury and a better physical development from a health point of view.

Beware, there are countless videos on the internet showing different workouts.

Some are good, some are very bad, and it's not because the video is posted on the internet that the person knows what he is doing.

To learn bodyweight training and how to perform workouts adapted to your physical condition and your goals, we advise you to work with a professional who will be able to precisely evaluate your current physical condition and propose a personalized program.

Real and fake physical fatigue



When we talk about physical activity, we often hear the following phrase:

"I can't do any physical activity anyway, because I'm already tired and this is only going to make my fatigue worse."

But it turns out that very often, the opposite is true. Physical activity will actually give you more energy. Why is that?

To understand this, we must distinguish between "real" physical fatigue and "false" physical fatigue.

Today, the majority of the population in developed countries suffers from false physical fatigue and not from real physical fatigue.

Unfortunately, few people know the difference between the two, which is very damaging to individual health as well as the collective health of human beings.

Real physical fatigue

True physical fatigue corresponds to a real depletion of the body's reserves. This means that the body has exhausted its energy reserves and that the daily intake is no longer sufficient to function properly.

This state is often caused by overwork or chronic illness, but it can also occur following a traumatic event such as an accident.

A person suffering from this fatigue will not be able to properly exercise sports and even everyday activities will be difficult.

For them, physical activity will be harmful to their health.

This is why, for a person suffering from real physical fatigue, we recommend a lot of rest and appropriate natural treatments.

False physical fatigue

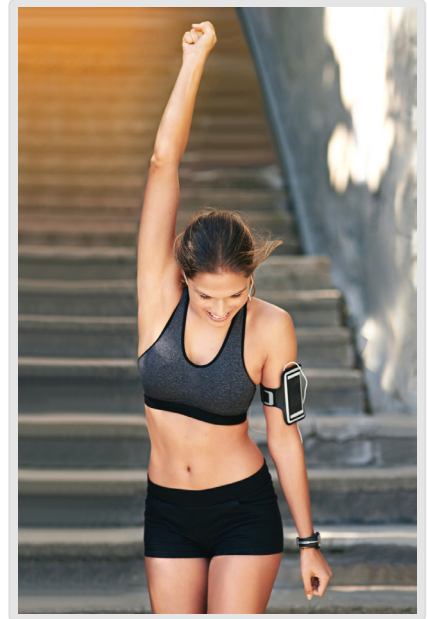
False physical fatigue corresponds to a state of stagnation and blockage of energy. This implies that the body is not lacking energy but that this energy does not circulate correctly in the body.

This condition, which is very common, is directly related to the lack or absence of physical activity. In addition to this, metabolic disorders and a number of illnesses can promote it.

To illustrate this phenomenon, you can think of a vehicle stuck in traffic: although it may be going fast and not running out of fuel, traffic jams will make it move very slowly.

In the case of false physical fatigue, the fatigue will gradually fade with physical activity, giving way to a pleasant feeling of warmth and physical well-being.

At some point during the physical effort, it will seem as if the initial fatigue has disappeared, as if it has "vanished".



Sports injuries

So far, we have explained the need for movement and how to minimize the risks associated with the practice of sports while maximizing all its benefits.

However, even with all the precautions in the world, sports injuries can happen to anyone at any time.

Although a sports injury is neither pleasant nor desirable, if it is properly understood and managed, its negative impact on the athlete can be significantly reduced.

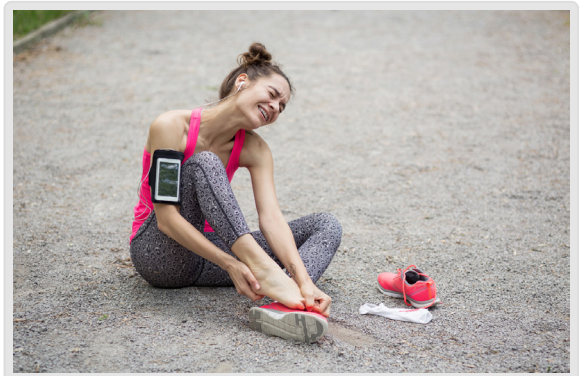
It is therefore essential for any person practicing sports to know how to react in case of injury, otherwise the incident can turn into a real "descent into hell". It starts with a simple injury and ends with multiple hospital stays and heavy chemical medication.

We are not exaggerating when we tell you that from a simple sports injury that can be treated in a few weeks, some people have found their entire lives ruined by a series of bad decisions.

In addition to the advice and explanations below, we strongly advise you to

consult an expert in natural medicines before having any injury.

In fact, natural medicines are the most effective tool to prevent injuries by strengthening the body in an individual and personalized way.



Injuries that are not serious

For all small, non-serious injuries (blisters, skin irritations, cuts, etc.), the area should be disinfected immediately, the appropriate product applied and an effective bandage applied.

In our opinion, too many people neglect the importance of treating these small wounds correctly.

However, a small wound that is not properly treated can quickly become infected and require more extensive treatment.

Pain

Physical pain is an integral part of all practices.

It is surely the greatest friend and enemy of the athlete. It is what pushes the athlete to exceed his limits and at the same time, it is what can stop him or her at any moment.

You've probably heard the expression "No pain, no gain", well, that's exactly how it works.

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However, while pain is part of the game, not all physical pain should be considered “normal”.

That's why here we will explain the different types of pain you can encounter while practicing sports and how to distinguish them.

Please note that we are talking here about abnormal pain and not the normal aches and pains that occur in the hours that follow.

These pains can be more or less strong, localized or diffuse, radiating, temporary or persistent.

They can occur spontaneously following a bad or forced movement or simply during prolonged effort.

Pain due to muscular tension

These pains, moderately strong and bearable, are the most frequent amongst

Sports professionals. They appear, as a general rule, on the muscles most solicited by the sport practiced. Most of the time, they follow the muscular path.

These are alerts: they indicate, almost always, a chronic lack of muscle stretching.

In the long run, muscle tension increases the risk of muscle tears, so it is important to solve the problem as soon as the pain appears and not to let it settle.

To do this, it is important to increase the amount of stretching done, focusing on the muscles involved, and to ensure that the warm-up before the muscular effort is sufficient.

If these pains still persist, it is important to check:

- the good biomechanical practice of sport
- the athlete's health status

Pain due to muscle cramps



These pains, sudden and extremely strong, are easily recognizable. Anyone who has ever had a cramp in their life knows what it is and remembers it.

In addition to being extremely strong and unbearable, these pains have the unique characteristic of providing a sensation of tightness, as if the muscle was compressed, about to explode.

Physiologically, cramp is a total and involuntary muscle contraction that does not release.

When it happens, it is very important to stop the sport activity immediately, to stretch the concerned muscle group gently while waiting for the cramp to pass. Stretching will quickly relieve the pain.

For the athlete, it is a sign that he or she has pushed the physical effort beyond the limits.

Although muscle cramps are very painful and often impressive, they are benign.

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There are also people who suffer from regular muscle cramps unrelated to intense sports practice.

In these cases, muscle cramps may be a symptom of a metabolic disorder, deficiencies or chronic diseases.

Serious injuries

Serious injuries are those that cause significant damage to the body and require immediate cessation of sport. This can last from a few days to several months or, in serious cases, be permanent.

As a general rule, serious injuries will leave more or less significant after-effects.

For the body, these injuries represent a shock and a significant expenditure of energy to heal.

Dislocation (joint dislocation)

The vast majority of dislocations involve the shoulder, as it is the most mobile joint in the body, and therefore the one that can be dislocated most easily.

Dislocation often occurs following a major shock (fall, blow, accident) that takes the joint out of its socket.

In some cases, it can also occur in the case of:

- physiological disposition such as ligament hyperlaxity
- extreme muscle contraction (rare)
- disease affecting the different tissues of the body (rare)

The dislocation is very painful at the time and sports must be stopped immediately. The person suffering from it will usually collapse on the ground, scream in pain and will not tolerate touching the dislocated joint.

However, this is exactly what needs to be done in order to get the joint back in place as soon as possible!

Indeed, the first gestures are crucial and will greatly determine the recovery.

If the joint is reset within minutes of dislocation, recovery can be rapid and without lasting consequences.

On the other hand, if the joint is delayed in being put back in place, the healing process will be long, painful and the after-effects more or less important.

Of course, in order to act urgently, one must know how to put back a dislocated joint.

To take the most common example of shoulder dislocation, there was a time when it was common practice to teach athletes in sports that were particularly prone to dislocation (combat sports, field hockey, rugby, etc.) how to reset a dislocated shoulder.

In reality, it is not complicated and is part of the very useful first aid gestures to know.

Unfortunately, today, this precious knowledge is being lost.

Of course, putting a joint back in place is never painless, but doing it on the spot, immediately after the dislocation, is the best thing ever. Why?

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Without going into technical explanations, we can say that this is due to the fact that the tissues (muscles, ligaments, tendons) are warm and therefore much more malleable.

As the joint is dislocated, it is no longer in its normal position and this will lead to significant stress on the tissues surrounding the joint which must be resolved as soon as possible.

Waiting for the tissues to cool down makes it more difficult and painful to put the joint back in place. Depending on the case, it may even take several attempts to successfully manipulate the joint, increasing the pain and tissue damage each time.

Once the joint has recovered, the healing time depends mainly on the injuries caused by the dislocation. Depending on the case, it can range from simple muscle micro-lesions to complete muscle and tendon tears.

In any case, medical attention is necessary in case of dislocation.

Sprain



A sprain is a trauma to the ligaments of a joint. It is a sudden and violent twisting of a joint that causes a forced stretching of the ligaments supporting the joint.

The most classic example is the ankle sprain.

Depending on the severity of the sprain, it may be accompanied by a ligament tear, a bone fracture or even a joint dislocation.

At the time of the sprain, the pain will not necessarily be strong. In some cases, it may even be a simple sensation of discomfort following the twist.

But be careful, contrary to what one might think, the pain of a sprain is not necessarily correlated to its severity.

In other words, a mild sprain can be very painful and a severe sprain can be virtually painless.

This is why in all cases the sprain must be the sign of the immediate cessation of physical effort, because if it is a serious sprain, the physical effort can considerably aggravate the lesions.

Although the pain may vary depending on the sprain, the common sign is the swelling that will form quickly after the sprain on the affected joint.

This swelling may be water (edema) or blood (internal bleeding), or both. The first reflexes to have:

- Immediate cessation of physical effort
- Raising the limb
- Application of ice on the joint (as soon as possible and for a few minutes only!)
- After 24-48 hours, clinical examinations (X-ray, MRI)

As we will explain in detail in the next chapter, the application of cold to a sprain should be done immediately after the sprain (ideally within minutes) and should not be prolonged over several hours or days.

Cold is only useful during the first few hours after the sprain to control local inflammation and swelling. After this time, the cold will no longer be useful and will, on the contrary, have a deleterious effect on the injury.

Muscle tears (strains)

The dread of all professional athletes, these muscular pains are, like cramps, sudden and extremely strong.

They cause a sensation of rupture with or without snapping as well as fear at the idea of touching the muscle or taking support.

Here again, the sensation is true to life because, as its name indicates, a muscle tear is a rupture of a more or less important number of muscle fibers (for the rare cases where there is a total rupture of the muscle, it will be necessary to consider a surgical intervention).

Unfortunately, this tear means an immediate stop of the sport activity and immobilization. Under no circumstances should the torn muscle be stretched, as this would be very painful and would aggravate the muscle tear.

Muscle tears, depending on their severity, require several weeks to several months of care and rest to heal.

In this case, conventional medicine is totally helpless to help the patient, and can only offer painkillers and anti-inflammatories and advise him to rest.

On the other hand, natural medicines can considerably accelerate the regeneration and healing of muscles, thanks to phytotherapy and food supplements.

Tendon tears

The tendon tear is generally similar to the muscle tear.

As for the muscle, the tendon tear represents a rupture of a more or less important number of tendon fibers.

If the tear is partial, a few weeks of downtime may be sufficient.

In the case of a total rupture of the tendon, several months of downtime are required and it may be necessary to perform surgery to sew up the tendon, without which it may not be possible to recover the initial muscle function.

As a reminder, the tendons connect the muscle to the bone and therefore it is thanks to them that the muscle can contract correctly.

A very well-known example of a tendon tear is the rupture of the Achilles tendon. The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body, connecting the calf muscles to the heel.

Very impressive, this tear occurs especially in the footballer and produces, at the time of the rupture, a noise like a gunshot.

As with muscle tears, natural medicines can greatly accelerate tendon regeneration and healing.

Ligament tears

Ligament tears usually involve two joints in the body: the knee and the shoulder.

As a reminder, ligaments connect bones to each other. In the event of a ligament tear, the joint is no longer sufficiently supported.

For the knee, the best-known example is the rupture of the cruciate ligaments, often due to skiing.

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As with the tendon tear, the severity of the ligament injury will determine the necessary treatment.

In the case of ruptured cruciate ligaments of the knee, it is often necessary to perform a surgical operation.

Although ligament tears are often less painful than the other two, they are not without possible after-effects.

Among these sequelae, it is common to find hyperlaxity of the affected ligaments. This can be detrimental to joint stability because in this case, the ligament, although healed, is too relaxed.

To understand, imagine the ligament as an elastic band. In post-traumatic hyperlaxity, this elastic band is too relaxed and no longer fulfills its holding function.

In this case, the treatment consists, little by little, in tightening this elastic thanks to different proprioception exercises.

As with muscle and tendon tears, natural medicines can greatly accelerate ligament regeneration and healing.

Fracture



A fracture is a partial (also called a crack or fissure in this case) or total break of a bone.

Depending on the severity, the fracture may be open (which pierces the skin and can be seen from the outside) or multiple (the bone is broken in several places).

A fracture obviously requires a total cessation of physical effort and a rest period of at least 6 weeks so that the bone can regenerate.

Except for the case of sprains which can potentially hide a fracture, as a general rule, a fracture is fairly obvious to recognize.

Most of the time, the fracture triggers a sharp pain and is accompanied by a distinctive cracking sound of the bone breaking.

Moreover, depending on the bone affected, the anatomical shape leaves no doubt about the fracture, for example a leg or finger fracture.

However, the diagnosis and management of a fracture requires at least an x-ray to rule out any doubt and to visualize the fracture.

A fracture always occurs after a major trauma and may be accompanied by other injuries (tear, dislocation, etc.)

The exception is the so-called stress fracture. In this case, it is most often a crack in the bone caused by repeated microtrauma and not a single violent trauma.

Depending on the nature and severity of the fracture, surgery may be necessary, especially in the case of a total fracture, to keep the bone pieces in the right position to ensure proper healing.

As with other serious injuries, natural medicines can greatly accelerate bone regeneration and healing.

The myth of the healing cold

For too long, cold has been the first reflex for the treatment of sports pain.

The cold "painkiller", "curative", "good for all hurts" is a myth.

Cold is not an all-purpose tool that we can use as we please. On the contrary, cold, if used improperly, can delay healing and in the long run weaken our tissues.



Cold for pain... or not

Technically, cold is not a painkiller. However, the majority of the population is convinced of this. Why is this?

Everything starts from a terrible confusion, from an unfortunate shortcut of understanding.

In reality, cold is an anesthetic. This means that it will momentarily suppress the sensations, notably that of pain.

In surgery, it is used as an external anesthetic (cryoanesthesia) for certain medical procedures such as lumbar puncture.

Everyone knows this instinctively. In very cold weather, for example, when our extremities get cold, it is commonly said that "we can't feel our hands or feet".

But blocking our ability to feel pain does not mean that the pain has disappeared!

By shortcut, we have therefore associated cold with a pain-relieving effect when in reality it only has an anesthetic effect.

Cold anesthesia... but not only

Cold not only has an anesthetic effect, it also has an anti-inflammatory effect.

It is frequently used by professional athletes who, after a very intense and violent physical effort (combat sports, field hockey, American soccer, etc.), immerse themselves in very cold water.

This is to break the massive inflammation induced by this kind of injury practice.

At this point, we might be tempted to ask: if cold has both an anesthetic and an anti-inflammatory effect, why not use it automatically?

The problem is that to summarize the cold to its anesthetic and anti-inflammatory effect is to ignore the other effects of the cold on our body.

Other effects of cold

To understand the effects of cold on our body as a whole, it is good to move away from the vision of classical medicine (chemical medicine) and look at the vision of natural medicines.

Among them, Chinese medicine is certainly one of the most advanced in the understanding of natural elements such as cold, heat, wind, humidity and dryness.

This medicine is based above all on the observation and study of the human being in his environment. By understanding the effects of natural elements outside our body, we can, by transposition, understand the effects of natural elements inside our body.

Thus, for the cold, we must understand that it will slow down the circulation of blood, body fluids and energy in our body. In other words, it will "freeze" the area to which it is applied.

As in nature, the cold will turn water into ice, it will freeze what is in motion.

In physics, this mechanism is well known: cold slows down the movement of particles while heat accelerates it.

Why is cold a problem?

Because of its physiological effects, the cold, used repeatedly and in large quantities, will delay or even prevent the proper healing of tissues.

In fact, no matter what the nature of the pain is, the body will always use the same method to repair itself: bringing new blood to the site of the injury.

This blood, filled with healing substances, will then accelerate healing and tissue renewal.

Cold can therefore be used in an emergency for a few minutes on the affected area (as for a sprain, for example, to reduce inflammation and control swelling), but it will not be beneficial over time because it will slow down the body's ability to regenerate the affected area.

Too many athletes are unaware of this and continue to use cold regularly to treat all types of pain.

In the long run and without knowing it, these athletes weaken their tissues which will be more prone to injury.

The warmth, ally of all sportspeople

Widely underestimated, warmth is one of the best allies of the athlete.

Much more useful than cold, it has a real painkilling effect by acting on the causes of the pain.

It will help the body to repair itself by:

- stimulating blood supply
- promoting the circulation of energy
- relaxing the muscle fibers
- bringing in an external energy source



Moreover, it is particularly effective in treating the most frequent pains of sports professionals: pains due to muscular tensions.

For this, we recommend taking a hot bath with salt (which also has a relaxing effect) and then doing a stretching session.

Fortunately, today the interest of heat is increasingly recognized and it is not uncommon to find in pharmacies or health food stores heating packs to apply to the painful area.

Unlike a hot bath, these heating packs have the advantage of being able to be worn on the affected area all day.

There are also heating lamps (infrared) often used in health centers to accelerate the healing of tissues.

Be careful, heat is contraindicated in the case of infectious diseases, because it will promote the proliferation of pathogenic germs.

So, for example, you should not apply heat to muscle pains related to a flu.

Conclusion

Physical activity is essential for our health. Ideally, we should be able to organize our daily lives so that we can practice different movement disciplines and sports regularly.

Unfortunately, most of us live in a context of stress, work, responsibilities and constraints that leave too little time for self-care.

However, it is also about making choices and giving an important priority to our body, this precious and irreplaceable tool that accompanies us throughout our life.

The purpose of this book is not to give you a model to follow but rather to give you the basic understanding to practice a sport activity in the interest of optimal health.

If you are having trouble getting started in a sport, remember that you should start by including movement in your daily life, because movement is life and sport is the expression of life's potential.

Now it's your turn to move!



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