




SINGAPORE
SPORTS COUNCIL

**Sports
Safety**

Safe Football Guide

Think Safe. Play Safe. Stay Safe.

A Sports Safe Singapore

The Singapore Sports Council (SSC) recognises that safety must be a fundamental component of a sporting culture and a prerequisite for every healthy lifestyle. Therefore, SSC has set a corporate goal of zero injuries, in the belief that all accidents are preventable. Emphasising the need for personal accountability, SSC also urges people to be responsible for the safety of others. SSC's first Sports Safety Division was formed in 2006 directly under the purview of the CEO's office. It is tasked to promote safety throughout Singapore's sporting community and to inculcate a safety-first mentality in the minds of every stakeholder. For more information, please visit www.sportssafety.ssc.gov.sg

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Think Safe. Play Safe. Stay Safe.

Another initiative by the Sports Safety Division, Singapore Sports Council

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INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most popular sports in Singapore because it is easy to pick up and is also a very good form of workout. The broadcast of popular leagues such as the European Leagues along with our local S-League has also helped fuel the interest of many people in the sport.

While football may be fun to play and watch, it is a contact sport and can be potentially dangerous if safety precautions are ignored. So whether you are a seasoned professional or an amateur weekend player, it is important that you pay special attention to safety while enjoying a game of football.

The next few sections are some basic safety tips that can help you enjoy your game safely.



COMMON INJURIES

There are a few injury types that make up the bulk of injuries in football and they largely occur on the lower part of the body.

Most of these injuries can be quite minor but if safety is ignored, more serious injuries like fractures can occur. Some of the common football injuries include:

1. Blisters

Formed due to forceful rubbing of the skin, this is usually caused by poorly fitted footwear or thin socks that do not provide sufficient protection. Hence, when repeated forceful rubbing occurs, fluid collects between the epidermis — the upper layer of the skin — and the layers below.

To prevent the formation of blisters, wear thick polyester socks that fit properly or consider applying moleskin to the blister to reduce the pressure exerted on the blister caused by friction.

2. Ankle Sprains

Ankle sprains usually follow a typical pattern. Most happen when the sole of the foot rolls under, damaging the ligaments on the outer part of the ankle, for example, when hitting a bump on the field or another player's foot when running or landing. In football, ankle sprains usually occur during a tackle when an opponent hits the inside of the player's lower leg, forcing the foot to roll under.

Symptoms and signs of ankle sprains:

- Swelling – within minutes or slowly over several hours.
- Pain when trying to move the ankle and when walking.
- Stiffness and inability to place full weight on the foot.



3. Stress Fractures

It is a type of incomplete fracture in a bone usually caused by unusual or repeated stress such as sudden changes in direction while running or the constant striking of the ball.

4. Hamstring Strains (Thigh Muscles)

Hamstring (muscle group at the back of your thigh) injuries occur rather often in football. Most hamstring strains occur when a player sprints or accelerates, usually without impact or contact with another player.

Symptoms vary according to the severity of the hamstring injury as it is possible to tear or rupture the whole muscle or only parts of it. Hamstring injuries occur more often with a previous hamstring injury and / or with weak thigh muscles.

Symptoms and signs of hamstring strains:

- Popping or cracking of the injured region at the time of injury, sudden pain down the back of the leg.
- Pain, swelling and bruising of the posterior thigh.
- Walking is affected, and flexing (bending) the knee is painful.



5. Concussion

A concussion is an injury caused by a blow or bump to the head that disrupts the way the cells in the brain normally function. Such injuries can result in impaired thinking, memory problems, and emotional and behavioural changes in the affected party.

Concussions can occur in any sport or recreational activity but in a fast-paced sport like football, they commonly occur when players vie for the ball in mid-air and try to head it. If this move is not executed safely, they might sustain a head-on collision and risk a concussion.

Symptoms and signs of concussion:

- Headache or 'pressure' in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Moves clumsily



6. Knee Injury

Knee injuries are one of the most common football injuries and usually stem from overexertion, lack of rest, lack of proper warm-ups or pre-conditioning. They can usually be prevented by wearing a knee guard during a game.



When a player does sustain knee injuries, it is advisable for him / her to apply the **RICER** guidelines (**R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression, **E**levation and **R**eferral) for proper injury management.

7. Fractures

It is usually caused by high impact collision from tackles or falls. This results in a break in continuity of the bone structure. Never try to play through any form of pain in your body. Report or consult the pain to a coach, trainer or doctor should the pain persist.

PAR-Q, a self-screening questionnaire, is a good way to assess one's level of readiness for physical activity.

Are You Sports Safe?

Common sense is your best guide when you answer these questions. Please read the questions carefully and answer each one honestly:

check: YES or NO

Regular physical activity is fun and healthy, and increasingly more people are starting to become more active every day. Being more active is very safe for most people. However, some people should check with their doctor before they start becoming much more physically active.

If you are planning to become much more physically active than you are now, start by answering the seven questions in the box below. If you are between the ages of 15 and 69, the PAR-Q will tell you if you should check with your doctor before you start. If you are over 69 years of age, and you are not used to being very active, check with your doctor.

		YES	NO
1	Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only do physical activity recommended by a doctor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	In the past month, have you had chest pain when you were not doing physical activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Do you have a bone or joint problem (for example, back, knee or hip) that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs (for example, water pills) for your blood pressure or heart condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Do you know of any other reason why you should not do physical activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology

SAFE PRACTICES WHEN PLAYING FOOTBALL

Safety Checklist for the Player

- Have I done my PAR-Q?
- Have I checked the weather before the game? Is it too hot or threatening to pour? Is there a need to postpone the game?
- Is the surface of the playing field even?
- Is the goal-post properly secured to the ground?
- Have I done my warm-ups?
- Is there sufficient water available?
- Have I fully equipped myself with protective gear and proper football footwear?

Safety Checklist for the Coach

- Have first-aid supplies at hand.
- Ensure that emergency contact information for each player is at hand.
- Give frequent breaks to ensure players stay hydrated.
- Ensure that the field is clear of debris.
- Always check players' safety equipment prior to a game to ensure that they are properly worn and are in good working condition.
- Store unused equipment away from the field to prevent trips and falls.
- Ask players to report any unsafe playing conditions.



GETTING PREPARED

1. Soccer Boots

Make sure you choose the right size for boots. The boots should fit as close to the end of your foot as possible without touching your toes for optimum performance and comfort. A properly-fitted pair of boots will minimise blistering of the skin.

Choose a pair of shoes with moulded cleats or ribbed soles. Shoes with screw-in cleats may carry a higher risk of injury. Hence, only use them when you need extra traction. Also, make sure your cleats fit properly and are laced up securely each time you play. This would prevent injuries stemming from loose footwear.

2. Shin Guards

Shin guards protect your lower leg from bone fractures during training and matches. They need to be individually fitted to be long and wide enough to cover your entire lower leg. A good shin guard will mould to the shin, end just below the knee, and fit snugly around the ankle bone without restricting blood circulation. Bring your soccer socks and cleats with you when you buy shin guards to ensure a good fit.

3. Goalie Gloves and Uniforms

Goalkeepers should wear padded uniforms to protect their hips, elbows and shoulders (knees during training), and specialized goalie gloves to protect their hands while stopping shots.

Some goalie gloves also come with finger protection to prevent the fingers from being bent awkwardly and reduce the risk of injury.

4. Others

Avoid wearing hard or sharp objects such as watches and jewellery. If you have to wear glasses to play, ensure that they are properly secured to your head or are fitted with shatter-resistant lenses. Alternatively, you may consider wearing contact lenses. Wear a custom-fit mouth guard if possible to prevent any injuries to the jaw or mouth.

5. Your Best Warm-Up

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has developed “11+” — a complete warm-up to prevent injuries to provide players with general protection from injuries.

The “11+” should become your routine warm-up to be performed prior to every training session, but done at least twice per week to be effective. You should be at least 14 years to be able to perform the exercises of “11+” correctly. If you want to know more about “11+”, go to: <http://f-marc.com/11plus/>

THE 11+

PART 1 RUNNING EXERCISES • 8 MINUTES



1 RUNNING STRAIGHT AHEAD - 2 sets

The course is made up of 6 to 10 pairs of parallel cones, approx. 5-6 metres apart. Two players start at the same time from the first pair of cones, and run straight ahead. On the way back, you can increase your speed progressively as you warm up.



4 RUNNING CIRCLING PARTNER - 2 sets

Two forwards are each to be the first back of cones. Shuffle sideways by 90 degrees to meet in the middle. Shuffle an entire circle around one other and then return back to the cones. Repeat for each pair of cones. Remember to keep your feet and keep your centre of gravity on by bending your hips and knees.



2 RUNNING HIP OUT - 2 sets

Walk or jog easily, stopping at each pair of cones to lift your knee and rotate your hip outwards. Alternate between left and right legs at successive cones.



5 RUNNING JUMPING w/ SHOULDER CONTACT - 2 sets

Two forwards are each to be the first back of cones. Shuffle sideways by 90 degrees to meet in the middle then jump sideways towards each other to make shoulder-to-shoulder contact. Lift with your hips and knees bent. Do not let your neck buckle inwards. Make it a full jump and synchronize your timing with your team-mate as you jump and land.



3 RUNNING HIP IN - 2 sets

Walk or jog easily, stopping at each pair of cones to lift your knee and rotate your hip inwards. Alternate between left and right leg at successive cones.



6 RUNNING QUICK FORWARDS & BACKWARDS - 2 sets

Two forwards are each to be the second back of cones then run backwards quickly to the first pair of cones keeping your hips and knees slightly bent. Keep repeating the drill, running two cones forwards and one cone backwards. Remember to take small, quick steps.

PART 2 STRENGTH • PLYOMETRICS • BALANCE • 10 MINUTES

LEVEL 1



7 THE BENCH STATIC - 3 sets

Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. **Exercise:** Lift your supporting arm should be directly under your shoulder. Hold the position for 20-30 sec. Your body should be in a straight line. Try not to sway or arch your back.



8 SIDWAYS BENCH STATIC - 3 sets on each side

Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. **Exercise:** Lift your supporting arm should be directly under your shoulder. Hold the position for 20-30 sec. Take a short break, change sides and repeat.

LEVEL 2



7 THE BENCH ALTERNATE LEGS - 3 sets

Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. **Exercise:** Lift your supporting arm should be directly under your shoulder. Lift each leg in turn, holding for a count of 2 sec. Continue for 40-60 sec. Your body should be in a straight line. Try not to sway or arch your back.



8 SIDWAYS BENCH RAISE & LOWER HIP - 3 sets on each side

Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. **Exercise:** Lift your supporting arm should be directly beneath your shoulder. Raise your hip, holding for a count of 2 sec. Lower your hip. Repeat for 20-30 sec. Take a short break, change sides and repeat.

LEVEL 3



7 THE BENCH ONE LEG LIFT AND HOLD - 3 sets

Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. **Exercise:** Lift your supporting arm should be directly under your shoulder. Hold the position for about 10-15 centimetres off the ground, and hold the position for 20-30 sec. Your body should be straight. Do not let your opposite hip dip down and do not sway or arch your lower back. Take a short break, change legs and repeat.



8 SIDWAYS BENCH WITH LEG LIFT - 3 sets on each side

Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. **Exercise:** Lift your supporting arm should be directly beneath your shoulder. Raise your leg, holding for a count of 2 sec. Lower your leg. Repeat for 20-30 sec. Take a short break, change sides and repeat.



9 HAMSTRINGS BEGINNER - 1 set

Starting position: Kneel on soft surface. Ask your partner to hold your ankles down firmly. **Exercise:** Your body should be completely straight from the shoulder to the ankles. Lift your buttocks up as far as you can, pulling your body into a longer, flatter position. Gently take your legs up from your buttocks, pulling into a peak hip position. Complete a minimum of 15 repetitions under 60 sec.



9 HAMSTRINGS INTERMEDIATE - 1 set

Minimum 7-10 repetitions.



9 HAMSTRINGS ADVANCED - 1 set

Minimum of 12-15 repetitions.



10 SINGLE-LEG STANCE HOLD THE BALL - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand on one leg. Feet hip-width apart. Hold the ball with both hands. Keep your hips and knees in line with your feet. **Exercise:** Balance on the ball of your foot. Try not to let your knees buckle inward. Hold for 30 sec. Change legs and repeat. The exercise is more difficult by passing the ball around your waist and/or under your other knee.



11 SQUATS WITH TOE RAISE - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Place your hands on your hips if you like. **Exercise:** Imagine that you are about to sit down on a chair. Perform squats by bending your hips and knees to 90 degrees. Do not let your knees buckle inward. Hold for 30 sec. Stand up on your feet. Repeat when your legs are completely straight. Stand up on your feet. Then slowly lower down again. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec.



12 JUMPING VERTICAL JUMPS - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Place your hands on your hips if you like. **Exercise:** Imagine that you are about to sit down on a chair. Bend your legs slowly until your knees are flexed to approximately 90 degrees, and hold for 2 sec. Do not let your knees buckle inward. Jump straight up. Land gently on your feet with your hips and knees slightly bent. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec.



10 SINGLE-LEG STANCE THROWING BALL WITH PARTNER - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand 2.3 m apart from your partner, with each of you on one leg. **Exercise:** Stand on your balance, and with your stomach held in, throw the ball to one another. Keep your weight on the ball of your foot. Remember: keep your knees from buckling inward. Repeat the exercise 10 times on each leg. Change legs and repeat.



11 SQUAT WALKING LUNGES - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand with your feet at hip-width apart. Place your hands on your hips if you like. **Exercise:** Lunge forward slowly at an even pace. As you lunge, bend your knees and hips. Do not let your knees buckle inward. Repeat when your knees are completely straight. Walk across the pitch (approx. 10 times on each leg) and then jog back.



12 JUMPING LATERAL JUMPS - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand on one leg with your upper body bent slightly to the side. **Exercise:** Jump across 1 m sideways from this supporting leg on to the free leg. Land gently on the ball of your foot. Bend your hips and knees slightly as you jump. Do not let your knees buckle inward. Maintain your balance with each jump. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec.



10 SINGLE-LEG STANCE TEST YOUR PARTNER - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand on one leg opposite your partner and at an arm's length. **Exercise:** Visit you both try to keep your balance. Each of you in turn tries to push the other off balance in different directions. Try to keep your weight evenly distributed on your feet. Repeat the exercise 10 times on each leg. Continue for 30 sec. Change legs.



11 ONE-LEG SQUATS - 2 sets on each leg

Starting position: Stand on one leg. Bend your knees and hips to sit back on a chair. **Exercise:** Slowly bend your knee as far as you can manage. Concentrate on preventing the knee from buckling inward. Bend your knees slowly then repeat the exercise 10 times on each leg. Repeat the exercise 10 times on the other leg.



12 JUMPING BOX JUMPS - 2 sets

Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Imagine that there is a box in front of you. **Exercise:** Alternate between jumping forwards and backwards, from side to side, and diagonally across the cross. Jump as quickly and explosively as possible. Do not let your knees buckle inward. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec.

PART 3 RUNNING EXERCISES • 2 MINUTES



13 RUNNING ACROSS THE PITCH - 2 sets

Run across the pitch, from one side to the other, at 75-80% maximum pace.



14 RUNNING BOUNDING - 2 sets

Run with high bounding steps with a high knee lift, landing gently on the ball of your foot. Use an exaggerated arm swing for each step (opposite arm and leg). Try not to let your leading leg cross the midline of your body or let your knees buckle inward. Repeat when you reach the other side of the pitch, then jog back to recover.



15 RUNNING PLANT & CUT - 2 sets

100-115 steps, then plant on the outside and cut to change direction. Accelerate and sprint 5-7 steps at high speed (80-90% maximum pace) before you decelerate and do a new plant & cut. Do not let your knee buckle inward. Repeat the exercise until you reach the other side, then jog back.



KNEE POSITION CORRECT



KNEE POSITION INCORRECT





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