

PREVENTING INJURIES

Essential Injury Prevention Tips for Every Athlete

Injury is your setback — train smart, recover well, and keep your body strong!

WHEN DO INJURIES OCCUR?

- Trauma injuries can happen in whitewater, Canoe Polo, or Kayak Cross due to collisions, capsizes, or impact with rocks or paddles.
- Most injuries, however, occur during training from repetitive loading of muscles, tendons, and bones — especially in teenagers and young adults while their bodies are still maturing.
- A well-structured training program should gradually increase volume and intensity while allowing for rest and recovery. More training does not always mean better performance.

WARM-UP BEFORE TRAINING

- Warming up prepares your heart, lungs, muscles, and nervous system for work and reduces the risk of strains or tears.
- It takes 8–10 minutes of gradually increasing activity to fully warm up — don't rush it.

Warm-up type depends on the session:

- Low intensity sessions (e.g., recovery paddles): may not need a separate warm-up.
- Heavy sessions (e.g., weights): focus on the specific muscle groups you'll use.

Good warm-up elements include:

- Light cardio (land-based exercises or easy paddling).
- Gentle flexibility work for neck, back, shoulders, and legs.
- Resistance bands to activate key muscles.

 Ask your coach or physio for tailored warm-up routines.

LACTIC ACID & COOL DOWN

- Intense training produces lactic acid, causing pain and fatigue.
- A cool down period helps flush lactic acid, aiding recovery and reducing soreness.
- Keep exercising at a low intensity after your session to keep blood flowing.
- Tired muscles can't support quality training and are more prone to injury.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

- A well-designed strength and conditioning program helps prevent injury, especially to the shoulders and back — the most common injury sites in paddlers.

Focus on:

- *Shoulder stability* — use resistance bands regularly.
- *Core strength* — strong abdominal and back muscles provide a stable base to transfer power efficiently.

Learn and maintain

good technique to reduce injury risk:

- Practice with mirrors, video feedback, or coach supervision.
- Watch examples of good technique online.

OFF THE WATER

- Injuries often happen during other sports or activities, especially if you're not experienced.
- Be cautious with activities like football or downhill biking, especially before races or training camps.
- Many paddlers have been injured from non-paddling activities during critical periods.

REST & RECOVERY

- Rest is a crucial part of training — not laziness.
- Training breaks down muscle fibers; rest allows them to rebuild stronger.
- Take at least one full day between weight training sessions.
- Use periodization: build training intensity over 3–4 weeks, then reduce to allow recovery.
- Listen to your body: if you're exhausted, tell your coach. Training when overtired increases injury risk.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Most injuries are preventable through smart training, good preparation, and rest.

Warm up, cool down, and listen to your body.

Build strength and technique progressively.

Be smart off the water — avoid unnecessary risks before important events.