

# Don't shrug off shoulder safety when playing summer sports

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(HealthDay)—Millions of Americans enjoy summer sports, but nobody enjoys heading to the emergency room when their favorite form of exercise leads to serious shoulder pain.

However, doctors who specialize in joint health and [sports medicine](#) have some suggestions on how you can take steps to avoid this kind of [injury](#).

"Sports such as swimming, golfing and volleyball require repetitive, overhead motion. The rotator cuff muscles are often the target of injuries and can get irritated or fatigued with overuse," said orthopedic surgeon Dr. Vani Sabesan. She is a spokeswoman for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS).

It's important to practice safe techniques with each sport to safeguard against injuries and to take rest periods from time to time, Sabesan said in an academy news release.

The AAOS and the American Orthopaedic Society

of Sports Medicine offer the following tips to prevent shoulder injuries in golf, swimming and volleyball:

- **Golf:** Before a round, do simple stretching exercises and focus on your shoulders, back and legs. Hit a bucket of balls on a driving range before you get on the course, to help warm up.
- **Swimming:** A general exercise program that strengthens the muscles around the shoulders and upper back is the best way to prevent swimming shoulder injuries. Before diving in, warm up with jumping jacks, stationary cycling or running/walking in place for five to 10 minutes. Then slowly and gently stretch your shoulders and arms, and hold each stretch for 30 seconds.
- **Volleyball:** Regular exercise that strengthens shoulder muscles and tendons helps stabilize shoulder joints and prevent injuries while playing volleyball. If you have pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or strength, stop playing and get evaluated by a specialist in sports medicine.

Over 15 million visits to U.S. doctors' offices in 2012 were related to [shoulder](#) issues, such as pain, soreness, discomfort, spasms, stiffness and limited movement, the AAOS said.

And according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, among people treated in U.S. emergency rooms and doctors' offices in 2015: over 131,000 were seen for injuries related to golf; more than 265,000 were seen for injuries related to [swimming](#); and an estimated 183,000 were there for volleyball-related injuries.

**More information:** The American Academy of Family Physicians has more about [shoulder problems](#).

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