



# 5-2 Safety Short

*Less than 5 minutes to read—less than 2 pages long*

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## Sports Safety

As the Air Force Fitness Program continues to gain momentum, more and more Airmen are sustaining sports related mishaps that result in lost duty days due to quarters or hospitalization. Many of these mishaps could have been prevented with proper preparation. The following are a few suggestions to keep in mind prior to partaking in sporting activities:

- Stretch – Tight muscles can easily be strained. Proper stretching helps elongate the muscle and can possibly help prevent strains. In addition, stretching can help increase flexibility.
- Wear Personal Protective Gear – Many injuries occur when players do not wear the appropriate protective gear. Appropriate gear also includes proper fit. Protective gear includes helmets, mouthpieces, eyewear, etc.
- Hydration/Heat injuries – Always drink plenty of fluid but don't over hydrate. Wear clothes and hats that protect against sunlight and sunburn. Light colored garments are recommended. Consider wearing sunscreen if prolonged exposure to sunlight is expected.
- Rest and Breaks – Prior to playing any sports you should be well rested. Not only could this improve your performance, it could make you more alert (thus preventing a possible injury). Taking breaks during play helps prevent overexertion and heat related illnesses.
- Amateur vs. Expert – Know your limitations. Pushing yourself past your limitations can easily result in an injury.
- Attention Management – Being aware of your surroundings can help prevent injuries that result from collisions with people and objects.
- Know When To Quit - Why complicate an injury by pushing yourself? If you feel pain or discomfort the best advice you can take is to quit and seek medical treatment if necessary.



***Bottom line: Sport injuries are preventable. Common sense, proper preparation and risk management could mean the difference between a day of fun versus a night in the hospital.***