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Common Sports Injuries In Gaelic Football.

The most common muscle injuries in Gaelic Football tend to be Hamstring, Quadriceps (Thigh) Gastrocnemius (calve) strains/tears. Muscle tears/strains occur when some or all of the muscle fibres fail to cope with the demands placed upon them. They are generally broken down into three Grades.

Grade I : A tear to a small number of muscle fibres that causes localised pain but no change in strength.

Grade II: A larger number of fibres are torn and pain is reproduced with muscle contraction and muscle stretch.

Grade III : A complete tear of the muscle.

Possible reasons for injury

- Inadequate or no warm up
- Poor Flexibility
- Fatigue
- Muscle imbalance
- Previous injury/ inadequate rehabilitation
- Spinal dysfunction

What should I do?

The most important time in the treatment of muscle tears/strains is in the first 24-72 hours following injury. All injuries result in bleeding to the underlying tissues. This bleeding can continue for the first 72 hours. As a result blood accumulates around the injured area causing swelling, increased pain and may also inhibit healing of damaged tissues and lead to associated muscle spasm and disuse. It is often this swelling that prevents an earlier return to running so minimising it will speed your return to training and playing.

The acronym **RICE** Rest Ice Compression Elevation describes how best to speed your recovery.

Rest- This means where ever possible you should stop playing immediately. Continued running or kicking on a torn hamstring will result in an increase in the size of the tear and increased bleeding and swelling. Over the first 72 hours try to stay off the injury leg as much as possible.



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Ice - The application of ice directly after the injury causes the contraction of blood vessels and the restriction of the bleed. Take note of how Premiership players often have ice on their hamstring even before they leave the field or how sprinters often have ice on their injury as they leave the track. The sooner you ice the better. This also means a big **NO** to deep heat rubs/vigorous massage/alcohol or hot showers directly after injury all of which increase blood flow and swelling. Try to ice for 20 minutes at a time initially every 2 hours.

Compression – Reduces blood flow and swelling

Elevation – Where possible. This encourages a reduction in blood flow to the injured muscle.

Minimal stretching and strengthening short of pain can generally be introduced after 3 days. Subsequent [physiotherapy](#) treatment aims at promoting efficient scar formation through massage, stretching and strengthening while identifying and addressing contributory factors to the injury.

How long till I play again?

All injuries are different and the same can be said for hamstring tears but a general rule for a Grade II tear is 3-5 weeks from time of injury to the next time you should be able to play. This depends on the right treatment being applied early. If you are having problems with muscle strains or tears and would like to talk about it send us an e-mail at info@jumpphysio.com

