

The winter sporting season is upon us again and higher training and playing loads are likely to increase the risk of injuries, especially in growing bodies. There are many ways to lower your risk of injury and it often begins at the feet.

1) Common injuries that may regularly occur as training loads increase include plantar fasciitis (heel pain), Achilles tendonitis and soft tissue strains, and in youths, growing pains in the heel and knee can become a familiar issue. Commonly children will report they are tired or wake in the night after a game, this can be more than just growing. Each of these conditions can be easily managed with a thorough assessment and a treatment plan which may include simple changes to footwear, exercise programs, strapping, padding or a more complex treatment such as custom prescription orthotics.

2) Making sure you have correctly fitting and game specific footwear can drastically reduce the risk of toe trauma such as ingrown nails and subungual haematomas (under nail blood blisters). Footwear that is too tight or loose or maybe unsuitable to the movements of the game can result in increased friction, blistering and painful callus build up. Think of footwear like tyres on your car, if you do not have the right tyre on your car it can increase your risk of something going wrong, footwear is very much the same.

3) Prevention is always better than cure, so be sure to undertake a thorough stretching regime that includes both a warm-up and a warm-down stretch to reduce your risk of injury. Ice and rest on an acute injury will aid rehabilitation and greatly decrease the return time to activity.

Be sure to listen to your body, if you're experiencing pain in the feet, ankles or legs don't ignore it, make sure you contact our team, there is likely a reasonable solution to your problem.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your athletic footwear, any new or old aches and pains, the team at **The Walking Clinic** are only too happy to help.

Go to www.walkingclinic.com.au to make a booking, mention that you are a Ainslie football player or family member and receive a 15% discount on your initial consult.

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