



Preventing Cycling Injuries in the Fall Season

Cycling is a wonderful activity if we can stay healthy on the bike. During the Fall season, I typically see an increase in bike-related overuse injuries as cyclists attempt to stretch their season. Most late-season injuries, those suffered by females in particular, are preventable and can be lumped into three categories: wrist/hand numbness and pain, knee pain, and saddle discomfort.

A few quick fixes to the bike can help reduce hand and upper extremity discomfort. Hand numbness can often be reduced by double wrapping the top of the handlebars with bar tape and/or wearing gel gloves. Cyclists that spend a lot of time riding with their hands on the brake hoods can experience wrist pain due to poor tendon alignment. Aligning the brake hoods to be in line with tendons on the thumb side of the hand can help reduce wrist pain.

Saddle pain and discomfort is a harder issue to tackle. The first and easiest adjustment is to check to make sure there is not excessive saddle tilt that causes the pelvis to rock too far forward or too far back. Place the bike on a known level surface and place a level along high points on the saddle. Start with the saddle in a level position and fine tune the tilt from there. If this does not help, check with your local bike shop or fitting professional for further advice.

Simple stretching and strengthening exercises can help prevent knee discomfort and allow for an extended cycling season. The Quadriceps (front of the thigh), psoas (hip), and Iliotibial band (outer thigh) are key areas to stretch to help prevent knee and hip pain while cycling. This is key for female cyclists, as they tend to have a greater discrepancy in hip and hamstring strength compared to their male counterparts. The hip and hamstring muscles help control the knee. Strengthening these muscle groups can help prevent knee injuries while cycling.



**Step Up
(Start Position)**

Step up keeping knee centered over foot. Do not let opposite hip sag down.



**Step Up
(Finishing Position)**

Complete 3 sets of 10 repetitions; Perform "Step Up" exercise 2 x a week



Standing Hip Abduction

Move leg outward against resistance. Complete 3 sets of 10 repetitions; Perform 2 times a week.



Standing Quadriceps Stretch

Hold quadriceps stretch for 30 seconds. Repeat 5 times on each leg. Perform stretch daily.



IT Band Foam Roll Stretch

Using foam roller, hold for 30 seconds. Repeat 5 times on each leg. Perform stretch daily

If you have good flexibility and strength and are still having discomfort on your bike, visit your physical therapist. Physical therapists are biomechanical experts and are a great resource to help keep you healthy and active.

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