

GLOSSARY OF MEDICAL TERMS

ATC—Athletic Trainer Certified; athletic trainers with this designation have passed the certification exam administered by the NATA.

A-C Joint—Acromioclavicular joint; joint of the shoulder where acromion process (of the scapula) and the distal end of the clavicle meet; most shoulder separations occur at this point.

Abduct—Movement of any extremity away from the midline of the body.

Abductor—Any muscle which moves a body part away from the midline of the body.

Abrasion—Any injury which rubs off the surface of the skin.

Abscess—An infection which produces pus; can be the result of a blister, callus, penetrating wound or laceration.

Achilles Tendon—The tendon at the back of the heel connecting the calf muscles to the heel bone.

Adduct—Movement of an extremity toward the midline of the body.

Adductor—Any muscle which moves a body part toward the midline of the body.

Adhesion—Abnormal adherence of collagen fibers to surrounding structures during immobilization following trauma or as a complication of surgery which restricts normal elasticity of the structures involved.

Aerobic—Exercise in which energy needed is supplied by oxygen inspired; required for sustained periods of physical activity.

Anabolic Steroids—Testosterone, or a steroid hormone resembling testosterone, that stimulates growth in the body as a whole.

Anaerobic—Exercise without the use of oxygen as an energy source; short bursts of vigorous exercise at sprint-like intensities.

Anterior—In front of; the front surface.

Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL)—Ligament of knee attaching to anterior tibial plateau and posterior medial aspect of femoral condyle. It provides stability in keeping the lower leg from coming forward.

Anterior Compartment Syndrome—Condition in which swelling within the anterior compartment of the lower leg (comprising of muscles, nerves and arteries to the foot) jeopardizes the viability of the muscles and nerves within the compartment.

Anti-Inflammatory—Any agent which prevents inflammation (such as aspirin or ibuprofen).

Arthrogram—X-ray technique for joints using air and/or dye injected in affected area (to show torn cartilage or rotator cuff tears).

Arthroscope—An instrument used for visualization of the interior of a joint cavity; sometimes referred to as “scope.”

Arthroscopy—Examination of the internal structures of a joint by means of surgical viewing apparatus (arthroscope) inserted into the joint.

Aspiration—The withdrawal of fluids from a body cavity by means of a suction or siphonage apparatus (syringe).

Asymptomatic—Without symptoms.

Athletic Pubalgia (Sports Hernia)—A chronic inguinal or pubic-area pain in athletes with associated weakness and/or defect at the pubic insertion of the rectus abdominus and internal oblique aponeurosis.

Atrophy—To shrivel or shrink from disuse, as in muscular atrophy.

Avascular Necrosis—Death of a tissue due to lack of circulation (can occur in the elbow from throwing).

Avulsion—A tearing away forcibly of a part or structure.

Baker’s Cyst—Indicates that there is trauma inside the knee joint that leads to excessive joint-fluid production; inflammation of the gastrocnemius bursa. Usually produces localized swelling behind the knee.

Bennett’s Fracture—Fracture dislocation of the base of the first metacarpal (or the thumb).

Biceps—Muscle on the front of the upper arm responsible for flexing the elbow.

Bone Scan—“Radionuclide Imaging,” which is useful to demonstrate stress fractures not evident on routine x-rays.

Brachial Plexus—Network of nerves originating from the lower cervical and upper thoracic vertebrae that neurologically innervates the shoulder and arm.

Bruise—A discoloration of the skin due to an extravasation of the blood into the underlying tissues.

Burner—Common term for brachial plexus trauma in the neck. Usually results in burning or tingling sensation into the shoulder or arm when the neck is forced beyond the normal range of motion.

CPR—Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation; artificial establishment of circulation of the blood and movement of air into the lungs in a pulseless, non-breathing person.

Calcaneus—The heel bone.

Calf—The muscle group, made up of the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles, responsible for plantar flexing the foot, or pointing the foot downward.

Capsule—An enclosing structure which surrounds the joint and contains ligaments which stabilize that joint.

Carbohydrate-Electrolyte Drink—A properly formulated beverage made up of carbohydrates and electrolytes (sodium, potassium) necessary for replacing fluids lost in sweat and providing energy to improve performance, such as Gatorade.

Cartilage—Smooth, slippery substance preventing two ends of bones from rubbing together and grating.

CT Scan (Computerized Tomography)—Use of computed radiographic equipment to get a cross sectional image of an anatomical area. Is best to visualize bony structures. It is also referred to as a CAT scan.

Cellulitis—Inflammation of cellular or connective tissue.

Charley Horse—A bruise to the quadriceps resulting from a direct blow to the front of the thigh, characterized by intramuscular bleeding. No other injury should be called a charley horse.

Chondral Fracture—Fracture to the chondral (cartilaginous) surfaces of bone.

Chondromalacia—A roughening of the cartilage surface. Best known for the roughening of the underside of the kneecap.

Clavicle—The collar bone.

Collagen—A substance existing in commonly injured tissues of the body, including skin, cartilage, ligaments and bone.

Concentric Muscle Contraction—An overall shortening of the muscle as it generates tension and contracts.

Concussion—A trauma-related injury to the head usually resulting in excessive forces being rapidly applied to the head and/or cervical spine. This injury is usually due to a blow to the head from the ground or opposing player. This injury is graded as mild, moderate or severe depending on severity of changes of consciousness, memory and/or equilibrium.

Congenital—Existing before birth; to be born with.

Contusion—An injury to the muscles and tissues caused by a blow from a blunt object.

Cortisone—An anti-inflammatory medication.

Costochondral—The cartilage that separates the bones within the rib cage.

Cranium—The bony framework of the head composed of eight cranial bones, the 14 bones of the face and the teeth.

Cyst—Abnormal sac containing liquid or semisolid matter

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Degenerative Joint Disease—Changes in the joint surfaces as a result of repetitive trauma.

Dehydration—Condition resulting from excessive loss of body fluid, where fluid output exceeds fluid intake. Symptoms usually arise when fluid loss is in excess of 2 percent of the person's body weight.

Deltoids—Muscles at top of arm, just below shoulder.

Disc—A flat, round-like, plate structure usually referring to cartilage between vertebrae.

Dislocation—Complete displacement of joint surfaces.

Distal—Away from the trunk and torso of the body.

Eccentric Muscle Contraction—An overall lengthening of the muscle as it develops tension and contracts to control motion performed by an outside force; negative work is done.

Ecchymosis—Bleeding into the surface tissue below the skin, resulting in a "black and blue" effect.

Edema—Accumulation of fluid in organs and tissues of the body (swelling).

Efferent—Away from, pushing out from center.

Effusion—Accumulation of fluid, or the fluid itself, in various spaces in the body. Commonly found in the knee following injury.

Electrolyte—Ionized particles in blood, tissue fluids and cells, including sodium, potassium and chlorine.

EMG—Electromyogram test to check nerve function.

Epicondylitis—Inflammation in the elbow due to overuse of either the flexor or extensor muscles attaching to the medial or lateral epicondyle of the humerus.

Etiology—Study of the causes of injury and disease.

Eversion—Turning outward.

Extension—Motion of straightening a joint.

Extensor—A muscle which upon contraction results in straightening a joint.

External Rotation—Lateral movement of a joint or extremity to the outside.

Fascia—A connective tissue sheath consisting of fibrous tissue and fat which unites the skin to the underlying tissues.

Femur—Thigh bone.

Fibula—The smaller of the two bones in the lower leg, located to the outside.

Flexibility—The ability of muscle to relax and yield to stretch force.

Flexibility Exercise—A general term used to describe exercise performed to passively or actively elongate soft tissues.

Flexion—Bending a joint, as in flexing the arm or leg.

Flexor—A muscle which upon contraction flexes or bends.

Fracture—Breach in continuity of a bone. Types of fractures include simple, compound, comminuted, greenstick, incomplete, impacted, longitudinal, oblique, stress or transverse.

Gamekeeper's Thumb—Tear of the ulnar collateral ligament of the metacarpophalangeal joint of the thumb.

Glenohumeral—The shoulder socket, containing the glenoid, the humeral head and the labrum.

Glenoid—A cavity of the scapula into which the head of the humerus fits to form the shoulder joint (the shoulder socket).

Groin—The upper and inner thigh where the adductor muscles originate that are responsible for moving the leg in an inward or adduction direction.

Hamstring—Muscle running from the buttocks to behind the knee. Often injured as a result of improper conditioning or lack of muscle flexibility. Muscle responsible for flexing the knee joint.

Heat Cramps—Painful muscle spasms of arms or legs, likely caused by depletion of fluids and electrolytes.

Heat Exhaustion—An effect of excessive exposure to heat, marked by abnormally high body temperature, dehydration, dizziness, headache and sometimes nausea.

Heat Stroke—Condition of rapidly rising internal body temperature that overwhelms the nervous system's mechanisms for release of heat.

Hematoma—A tumor-like mass produced by an accumulation of coagulated blood in a cavity.

High "Interosseous" Ankle Sprain—An injury to the Interosseous membrane, which is the fibrous tissue that stabilizes the two bones of the shin (tibia and fibula). This injury is usually due to excessive ankle rotation along with accompanied trauma to the ligamentous structures of the ankle joint.

Hip Pointer—Contusion to the iliac crest.

Humerus—Bone of the upper arm.

Hyperextension—Extreme extension, or straightening, of a limb or body part.

Iliotibial Band—A thick, wide fascial layer from the iliac crest to the knee joint.

Impingement Syndrome—Pinching together of the supraspinatus muscle and other soft tissue in the shoulder, which is common in throwing.

Inferior—Lower, beneath, toward the bottom.

Interosseous Membrane—Uniting membrane between the tibia and fibula that forms a collagenous fibrous tissue. It has two functions: to serve as an origin for many of the muscles of the lower leg, and to transmit stress from the tibia to the fibula.

Isokinetic Exercise—A form of active resistive exercise in which the speed of movement of the limb is controlled by a pre-set rate-limiting device, such as Cybex, Biodex, etc.

Isometric (static) Contraction—A muscle contraction in which tension is developed but no mechanical work is done. There is no appreciable joint movement and the overall length of the muscle remains the same.

Isokinetic—A constant speed but variable resistance exercise.

Isotonic (dynamic) Contraction—A concentric or eccentric muscular contraction that results in movement of a joint or body part (lifting a free weight).

Itis—Suffix connoting inflammation (e.g. tendinitis, bursitis).

Joint Mobilization—Passive traction and/or gliding movements applied to joint surfaces that maintain or restore the joint play normally allowed by the capsule, so that the normal roll-slide joint mechanic can occur.

Lateral—To the outside of the body.

Lateral Collateral Ligament (LCL)—Ligament of knee attaching lateral femoral condyle to the fibula head. It provides lateral stability to the knee.

Lesion—Wound, injury or tumor.

Ligament—Band of fibrous tissue that connects bone to bone or bone to cartilage and supports and strengthens joints.

Lumbosacral—Region of low back comprised of lumbar and sacral spine.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)—Provides highly detailed pictures of the body's interior, using magnetic fields. It is especially useful in athletic injuries to visualize soft tissues such as ligaments and tendons.

Malleolus—Rounded projection on either side of the ankle joint.

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Manipulation—A passive movement using physiological or accessory motion, which may be applied with a thrust or when the patient is under anesthesia.

Maximal Aerobic Power (MAX V02)—The maximal volume of oxygen consumed per unit of time. An index of endurance potential.

Medial—Pertaining to or near the middle.

Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL)—Ligament of knee attaching to medial femoral condyle and to medial tibia. It provides medial stability to the knee.

Meniscus—Crescent-shaped cartilage of the knee located between the femur and the tibia bones.

Meniscectomy—An intra-articular procedure at the knee by which meniscus (fibrocartilage) is removed surgically.

Metacarpals—Five long bones of hand, just below fingers.

Metatarsals—Five long bones of foot, just below toes.

Mobilization—Passive stretching movements performed by a therapist at a speed slow enough that a patient can stop the movement.

Morbidity—An illness or an abnormal condition or quality.

Myositis—Inflammation of a muscle.

Myositis Ossificans—Inflammation in muscle resulting in the formation of bone-like substance.

NATA—National Athletic Trainers' Association. The certifying and governing body of the athletic training profession, as approved by the National Commission for Health Certifying Agencies.

Necrotic—Relating to death of a portion of tissue.

Neuritis—Inflammation of a nerve.

Orthotic—Any device applied to or around the body in the care of physical impairment or disability, commonly used to control foot mechanics.

Osteochondritis Dissecans—A piece of bone and/or cartilage loosened from its attachment after trauma and a cause of a lesion.

Osteomyelitis—An inflammatory disease of bone caused usually by infection with streptococcus or staphylococcus.

PFATS—Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society; governing body of athletic trainers employed by National Football League teams.

Parasthesia—Sensation of numbness or tingling, indicating nerve irritation.

Patella—The kneecap.

Patella Tendinitis—Inflammation of the patella tendon.

Pathology—Study of the nature and cause of disease.

Pectorals—Chest muscles beneath breast, leading up to shoulder.

Peroneal—Muscles of the lateral lower leg responsible for everting the foot.

Phlebitis—Inflammation of a vein.

Plantar—Pertaining to the sole of the foot.

Plantar Fascia—The tight band of muscle and connective tissue beneath the arch of the foot.

Plica—A fold of tissue in the joint capsule and a common result of knee injury.

PNF (Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation)—An approach to therapeutic exercise based on the principles of functional human anatomy and neurophysiology.

Posterior—At the back part, or rear of the body.

Posterior Cruciate Ligament (PCL)—Ligament of the knee attaching to posterior tibial plateau and anterior lateral aspect of femoral condyle. It provides stability in keeping the lower leg from going backward.

Progressive Resistance Exercise (PRE)—An approach to exercise whereby the load or resistance to the muscle is applied by some mechanical means and is quantitatively and progressively increased over time.

Pronation—Moving of the forearm into a palm down position.

Proximal—Near the source, nearest any point being described.

Quadriceps (Quads)—The four powerful muscles in the front of the thigh, responsible for extending the knee joint.

Radiography—Taking of x-rays.

Radius—Forearm bone on thumb side.

Reconstruction—Surgical rebuilding of an injured joint.

Referred Pain—Pain felt in undamaged area of body away from actual injury.

Rehydration—Restoration of body fluids.

Resect—To cut off, or cut out, a portion of a structure or organ.

Retraction—The moving of tissue to expose a part or structure of the body.

Rotator Cuff—Comprised of four muscles in the shoulder area: supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor and subscapularis. Often irritated by overuse.

S-C Joint—Sternoclavicular joint; articulation between the sternum and the clavicle.

Sacroiliac—Relating to the juncture of the hip bone and lower part of the spine.

Scapula—The shoulder blade.

Sciatic Nerve—Largest nerve in body located in back of leg which controls most of its function.

Sciatica—Irritation of the sciatic nerve, resulting in pain or tingling running down the inside of the leg.

Sesamoid Bones—Lies within and adds strength to tendons as they cover bony surface. The most commonly known is the kneecap.

Shin Splint—A catch-all syndrome describing pain either in the front of the lower leg or on the inner aspect of the leg.

Shoulder Separation—Refers to a sprain of the A-C joint where the tip of the clavicle may be elevated from its normal position of attachment on the acromion process.

Spasm—Sudden, violent, involuntary contraction of a muscle.

Spleen—Large, solid organ responsible for the normal production and destruction of blood cells.

Spondylitis—Inflammation of one or more vertebrae.

Spondylolisthesis—Forward displacement of a spinal vertebra.

Spondylosis—Abnormal vertebral fixation or immobility.

Sports Drink—See Carbohydrate-Electrolyte Drink.

Sprain—A joint injury. A violent twisting, stretching, pulling or tearing of a ligament.

1st Degree—A stretching but no tear of a ligament. Athlete may be able to continue to play or usually return to play in a few days.

2nd Degree—A partial tear of a ligament. Bracing may be required. Athlete will usually miss one to four weeks.

3rd Degree—A complete tear of a ligament. Depending upon ligament involved, bracing or even surgery may be required. Athlete is usually out from three weeks up to 12 months depending upon course of treatment.

Stenosis—Narrowing or shrinking of a passageway, as in spinal stenosis, where the bony openings or space for the spinal cord or nerve roots may be constricted.

Stinger—Common term for brachial plexus trauma in the neck.

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Strain—A muscle injury. The stretching, pulling or twisting of a muscle or tendon.

1st Degree—A stretching but no tear of a muscle or tendon. Athlete may be able to continue to play or usually return to play in a few days.

2nd Degree—A partial tear of a muscle or tendon. Athlete will usually miss one to four weeks.

3rd Degree—A complete tear of a muscle or tendon. Depending upon muscle or tendon involved, surgery may be required. Athlete is usually out from six weeks up to six months.

Stress X-Ray—A continual x-ray taken when a portion of the body is stressed to its maximum to see if the ligaments are intact.

Stress Fracture—A hair-line type of break in bone caused by overuse.

Stretching—Any therapeutic maneuver designed to lengthen (elongate) pathologically shortened soft-tissue structures and thereby increase range of motion.

Subluxation—Partial dislocation of a joint. Term usually implies that joint can return to normal position without formal reduction.

Superior—In anatomy, the upper of the two parts; toward the top or above.

Supination—Moving the forearm into a palm-up position.

Synovial Fluid—Lubricating fluid for joints and tendons, produced in synovium, or inner lining of joint.

Synovitis—Inflammation of the synovium.

Talus—The ankle bone that articulates with the tibia and fibula.

Target Heart Rate—A pre-determined heart rate to be achieved during exercise to ensure development of training adaptations.

Tarsus—Arch of foot.

Tendinitis—Inflammation of the tendon and/or tendon sheath, often caused by chronic overuse and/or sudden injury.

Tendon—Fibrous tissue that connects muscles to other structures.

Tennis Elbow—General term for lateral elbow pain.

Tibia—Larger of the two bones in lower leg; weight-bearing bone.

Tomograph—A special type of x-ray apparatus that demonstrates the organ or tissue is a particular depth.

Trachea—The windpipe.

Trapezius—A flat triangular muscle covering the posterior surface of the neck and shoulder.

Triceps—Muscle of the posterior upper arm, opposite the biceps, that extends the elbow.

Turf Toe—Sprain of the metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint of the great toe.

Tweak—A colloquial term for an injury felt to be mild or of little significance.

Turf Burn—Abrasion resulting from contact with artificial turf in which one or more layers of skin are removed.

Ulna—One of two bones in forearm; extends from point of elbow and found on outer (little finger) side.

Ulnar Nerve—Nerve of the medial elbow, commonly known as the “funny bone,” which is irritated from excessive or repeated trauma.

Valgus—Angulation outward and away from the midline of the body.

Varus—Angulation inward and toward the midline of the body.

Wrist—The junction between the two forearm bones (radius and ulna) and the eight wrist bones (trapezium, trapezoid, capitate, hamate, pisiform, triquetrum, lunate and scaphoid).