

## Two-a-Day Injury Prevention Plan

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The month of August marks the start of high school football daily double practices across the country. Thousands of high school football players report for two-a-days, often unprepared for what lay ahead. Football athletes risk a myriad of injuries related to the sport. This article will highlight common (and sometimes avoidable) injuries and provide simple recommendations to reduce one's risk of injury.

### Come Ready

Being unprepared physically for day one of camp is all too common with high school athletes. Not having access to a weight room during June and July, family vacations, summer jobs, or lacking the proper motivation and discipline to train independently are but a few of the reasons one may show up unprepared. By the time you read this article daily doubles will be fast approaching. If you have not started yet, get training. Anything you can do at this point will help. For next year plan ahead, seek out help from a NSCA Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) to get you in condition.

### Shoulder Injuries

Sports medicine professionals often think of baseball players as those who develop a lot of shoulder injuries. As it turns out, football players, on both offense and defense experience a number of both traumatic (obviously) and non-traumatic (overuse) shoulder injuries (2). While there are many factors that may lead to a shoulder injury, including a 250-pound guy tackling you shoulder first into the turf, proper conditioning may help to reduce the risk of developing an overuse injury. Exercises such as the prone row (figure 1), prone shoulder extension (figure 2), sidelying external rotation, and prone horizontal abduction are important rotator cuff and scapula exercises often missing from a high school athlete's strength training program (table 1).

**Table 1. Rotator Cuff Training Program for Football Players**

*Perform 1 – 3 sets of 25 repetitions of each exercise*

Prone Row
Prone Shoulder Extension
Horizontal Abduction
Sidelying External Rotations

### Stay Cool and Stay Hydrated

Exertional heat illnesses range in intensity from heat cramps to the severe critical condition of heat stroke. The onset of heat illness necessitates immediately stopping exercise and seeking first aid treatment. Common signs that one may be experiencing a heat illness include dehydration, muscle cramps, elevated or high core body temperature, nausea, and dizziness. Those experiencing heat exhaustion will be sweating with cool, clammy skin whereas those experiencing heat stroke will have hot and wet or dry skin.

Many athletes begin practice or an exercise session already dehydrated. The National Athletic Trainers' Association recommends that athletes should consume 17 to 20 ounces of water or a sports drink two to three hours prior to exercise and drink another 7 to 10 ounces 10 to 20 minutes before starting exercise to ensure proper hydration (1). It is also recommended that one drink 7 to 10 ounces of water or sports drink every 10 to 20 minutes during exercise. After exercising, rehydrate by drinking 20 to 24 ounces of a sports drink per pound of weight loss (it is necessary to record your pre exercise weight) (1).

Additional steps you may take to prevent heat illness are to avoid training in hot or humid conditions, gradually acclimatize to the heat by slowly increasing your intensity of exercise and duration of exposure to the heat, double check with your physician on any medications you are taking, and wear lightweight, light colored clothing.

### Football Injuries

Some injuries in football are unavoidable. You may be able to prevent some injuries and reduce the impact of others by reporting to training camp appropriately conditioned.

### References

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2. Kaplan LD, Flanigan DC, Norwig J, Jost P, Bradley J. (2005). Prevalence and variance of shoulder injuries in elite collegiate football players. *American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 33(8):1142 – 1146.

### About the Author

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**Figure 1. Prone Row**



**Figure 2. Prone Shoulder Extension**

