

A close-up photograph of a person's legs, wearing dark shorts, with their hands clutching their right knee, suggesting a joint injury or pain. The background is a blurred field of tall grass under bright sunlight.

Bones, Muscles and Joints: Sports Injuries

Together, we're getting you back to fitness



There are over 206 bones in the human body, each with a unique purpose.¹

Taking on your injury.

You want to enjoy all that life has to offer.

And it's when you're active, and your body is working at its best, that you can get the most out of life.

So when you have an injury that restricts your ability to move, it's important to find out how to treat the problem.

We can help.

Getting you fit and active; your way.

We understand that when you're suffering from an injury, you want to find a solution, quickly and easily. We talk to you about the best way forward, for you. If you have a question, access to expert advice is readily available. We want you to have as much information as you need to be able to make the right decision for you. It's together that we'll get you back to fitness.

You couldn't be in better hands

We've been treating sports injuries for over 50 years.

In that time, we have successfully treated top athletes and sports enthusiasts for a wide range of sports injuries. In 2014 we performed over 50,000 bone, muscle and joint procedures.

We take infection prevention very seriously and train our people to maintain a clean environment, so you can expect to find our hospitals spotlessly clean and tidy. And as a not-for-profit organisation, we reinvest money straight back into our hospitals, to improve services and facilities for you.

We're passionate about health, and how we treat people – everyone is different, and because you're an individual, we tailor our treatment just to you.



Questions? Let's talk.

As experts in treating a vast range of sports injuries, we can help and advise you.

While this brochure gives you an overview, we are devoted to your health and welcome the opportunity to discuss specifically any problems that concern you.

From strains and sprains, to knee and shoulder injuries – whatever your health worries, you can contact us on **0330 134 6624** or visit **nuffieldhealth.com**

What are sports injuries?

When you play sport, or do any sort of exercise, injuries can happen. And you don't have to be a sports professional to be affected – you could get an injury going for a jog or during a workout at the gym.

Injuries can range from minor to severe and complex, and they can be caused by overuse or sudden trauma. The most common injuries include cuts and abrasions, severe sprains and torn ligaments.

Your bones, joints and muscles

The complicated working of your bones, joints, muscles, ligaments and tendons, as well as your nerves, is often referred to as your musculoskeletal system.

Your musculoskeletal system allows movement and flexibility of your body – the free movement of your joints is essential to staying active. Exercise can help your joints stay flexible and keep your muscles strong. However, if exercising, you should stop activities that cause pain.



Your musculoskeletal system.

Bones

Consisting of calcium, phosphate and other minerals, they make up your skeleton.

Cartilage

The smooth covering on the ends of your bones.

Ligaments

Fibrous bands of tissue connecting your bones together.

Tendons

Tough cords of inelastic fibrous tissue, connecting your muscles to your bones.

Muscles

Fibrous tissue that contracts to produce a particular movement.

Nerves

Bundles of fibres that carry messages to and from the brain to allow movement and sensation.

What should I do if I suffer an injury?

There are some basic measures you can take if you suffer an injury, in order to prevent further damage:

- **Rest**
- Apply Ice to the injury
- **Compression**, using a bandage
- **Elevate** the affected area

These measures are sometimes referred to as '**RICE**'.

If your pain and swelling don't improve over the next 48 hours, you should see your doctor. It's possible your doctor will refer you to a specialist physiotherapist, a sports injury doctor or a Consultant.

Alternatively, why not come in and talk to us at the physiotherapy department of your local Nuffield Health hospital? We can carry out a thorough assessment and help you to decide whether or not you should see a Consultant. Our physiotherapists can also help you to prevent recurrent sports injuries and develop rehabilitation programmes.



A sprain or a strain?

A sprain is a stretched or torn ligament (the tissue that holds bones together at a joint).

A strain is a stretched or torn muscle or tendon (the tough tissue at the end of a muscle that connects it to a bone).

Sprains and strains can vary in severity, and can be caused by falling, twisting, pulling or getting hit.

Symptoms of sprains and strains include pain, swelling, bruising, muscle spasms and difficulty moving your joint or muscle.

Treatment usually involves at least 48 hours' '**RICE**' and medication. If you don't see any improvement, it's best to get expert advice.

People come to us for a range of procedures. From Achilles tendons to ankles and knees – whatever your injury, you can contact us on **0330 134 6624** or visit [nuffieldhealth.com](https://www.nuffieldhealth.com)

Knee injuries.

Your knees are the largest and most complex joints in your body. Because they support the weight of your body they are vulnerable to injury.

There are three bones that make up your knee joint: the thigh bone (femur), the shin bone (tibia) and the kneecap (patella). These bones meet at the joint, where they're covered by cartilage. In between the femur and the tibia are rubbery pads – known as the menisci – that act like shock absorbers. A thick fluid between this cartilage lubricates the joint, allowing it to move smoothly. The knee joint is held together by ligaments and muscles.

Knee pain is common to a variety of knee injuries. Proper diagnosis can reveal just what the injury is. For example, a common sports injury is a torn anterior cruciate ligament.

Treatment for knee injuries is effective, and you can see a Consultant, physiotherapist or sports injury doctor for a diagnosis and evaluation. We will ask you how the injury happened, examine your knee and the Consultant or doctor may refer you for an X-ray or scan.

If there is damage to the meniscus, the Consultant may discuss carrying out a procedure to look inside the knee (arthroscopy) to trim or remove any damaged tissue. This is a day procedure under general anaesthetic.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to see a Consultant, please call us on **0330 134 6624**.

There are more than
10 million sports injuries
a year in the UK.¹



Anterior cruciate ligament.

The anterior cruciate ligament (or ACL) is one of the four most important ligaments connecting the bones of the knee joint, keeping it stable.

The most common injury to the ACL that needs surgery is a tear to the ligament after landing awkwardly, often from playing sport, such as football, skiing, squash or tennis. Tears to this ligament can be partial or complete.

Symptoms of a torn ACL can include swelling, severe pain, an unstable knee and a popping or cracking sound at the time of injury.

Diagnosis can be made by a combination of taking the history of the injury, a physical examination, checking the level of pain, an X-ray and an MRI scan.

Treatment is almost always needed for complete tears as they will never heal by themselves. Minor tears will heal with physiotherapy – but if no treatment is given, the injury can become more severe and the knee further injured. There are a number of procedures to treat a complete ACL tear. The most common method is called a reconstruction – this uses a tendon from elsewhere in the body to replace the ACL. An ACL reconstruction involves staying in hospital for usually two days, followed by intense physiotherapy.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to see a Consultant, please call us on **0330 134 6624**.

Achilles tendon injuries.

The Achilles tendon is the largest and strongest tendon in your body. It passes behind your ankle to connect your calf muscle to your heel.

The tendon is named after the mythical Greek hero, Achilles, who was dipped in the river Styx by his mother to make him invincible. Because she held him by his heel, this part unfortunately remained vulnerable.²

Symptoms of an injured Achilles tendon can be immediate or they may come on gradually. Jumping or landing heavily can stretch or tear this tendon. So the pain is often sudden and intense, and your leg and foot will swell up and bruise.

Treatment Physiotherapy treatment can settle many Achilles tendon problems, though if the tendon is completely torn, surgery may be needed. An ultrasound or MRI is best to diagnose an Achilles tendon injury.

If you've torn the tendon, you'll need to see an orthopaedic Consultant and you will have to be treated at a hospital. Any surgery for this type of injury requires a general anaesthetic. After surgery, a physiotherapist will give you some exercises to do. It usually takes about three to four months to get back to normal.

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Shoulder pain.

The shoulder is the most flexible joint in the body. Its wide range of movement means that injuries can happen easily. There are three bones that make up the shoulder: the collar bone (clavicle), the shoulder blade (scapula) and the upper arm bone (humerus).

There are four tendons that hold the shoulder joint in place, called rotator cuff tendons. You can get problems when these are damaged or swollen or there are changes to the surrounding bones.

Symptoms of shoulder problems include pain, usually happening when you reach overhead or behind your back. Inflamed muscles and tendons cause pain and lack of movement in the shoulder. Other symptoms may include weakness in the shoulder and a deep ache, often worse at night.

This can make simple activities like dressing, bathing, and even sleeping difficult. But treatment can help.

Treatment varies with different injuries, and you can see us for diagnosis of your shoulder pain. If you do have surgery, it will most likely be under a general anaesthetic and usually done by keyhole surgery (an arthroscopy). This procedure is through a small incision and is less invasive than other procedures. You stay in hospital overnight, and recovery involves pain relief medication and physiotherapy exercises to increase strength and movement.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to see a Consultant, please call us on **0330 134 6624**.

Ankle injuries.

Like your knees, your ankles support the weight of your body, so injuries are common – up to two million people a year are treated for sprains, strains and fractures in the UK. The most common injury is a sprain after small ligaments stretch and tear.

Symptoms of ankle injuries include pain, swelling, bruising, and difficulty standing or moving your foot.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to see a Consultant, please call us on **0330 134 6624**.

Every day, 1 person in 10,000 has an ankle injury.³



Carpal tunnel syndrome.

This is a condition where a nerve in the wrist is trapped, causing pain and numbness in the hand and arm. The nerve passes through the carpal tunnel, a canal in the wrist that carries all the tendons of the hand. If these tendons are swollen, the nerve is squeezed and becomes trapped.

Carpal tunnel syndrome can happen at any age, and mostly to women. One or both hands can be affected and symptoms can be worse at night, disturbing sleep.

Symptoms can include pain, as well as pins and needles in your hand. You may have aching that can extend up the arm, weakness in the hand and difficulty gripping. Also you may feel tingling and numbness in the thumb, index and middle fingers.

Causes of this syndrome can vary. There may be excess fat or fluid in the canal that causes it to narrow – fluid retention during pregnancy can

do this. Or it may have narrowed after a break or arthritis in the wrist. Some work-related tasks, such as those using vibrating tools, can make the condition worse.

A nerve conduction test can help diagnose the syndrome by telling us how compressed the nerve is.

Treatment to relieve carpal tunnel syndrome can mean wearing a splint on the wrist at night. Short-term relief can be gained from physiotherapy and a steroid injection. However, if symptoms persist, surgery is the best option. The procedure reduces pressure on the nerve, offering relief from pain and discomfort. This can be performed under local anaesthetic, leaving only a small scar on the hand.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to see a Consultant, please call us on **0330 134 6624**.


Tennis elbow.

Although called tennis elbow, you may get this injury and not even have played tennis. It can happen after the repeated strain of gripping or twisting your hand or wrist.

Symptoms include pain and tenderness, usually on the outer side of your elbow, caused by the tendons coming from your forearm muscle becoming inflamed. You may experience pain on gripping small objects (for example, when writing) and when lifting, bending or twisting the arm. While painful, there are no long-term effects.

Treatment does improve symptoms, and can include physiotherapy, rest from the activity causing the problem, support and medication. Steroid injections may be given and can help ease the pain. Surgery is uncommon, but is an option if the condition persists.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to see a Consultant, please call us on **0330 134 6624**.



Tennis elbow can happen after the repeated strain of gripping or twisting your hand or wrist.



Come and see us.

We'd be delighted to meet you and look forward to showing you around.

We're very proud of our spotlessly clean hospitals and the people who run them.

So call us to arrange a visit on **0330 134 6624**, or for more information have a look at **nuffieldhealth.com**

Services.

Other medical services that can help you and your family

- Hip and knee replacements
- Fertility treatments
- Cosmetic surgery
- Eye surgery
- Reconstructive surgery
- Ear, nose and throat surgery
- Treatment for heart conditions
- Treatment for bowel problems
- Prostate surgery
- Weight loss surgery



Sources.

- NICE Guidance
- NHS Direct
- Patient UK
- BMJ Clinical Evidence
- BMJ Best Treatments
- Department of Health
- NHS Choices
- Arthritis Research Campaign
- Arthritis Care
- National Library of Health

Footnotes:

1. BBC
2. BBC Sports Academy
3. NHS Choices

The Nuffield Health Promise

Our prices are all-inclusive.*

We will equal any comparable price.**

There are no time limits on your aftercare. ***

Don't wait. Contact us now.

Nuffield Health Hospitals.

 **0330 134 6624**

 [nuffieldhealth.com](https://www.nuffieldhealth.com)

Regulated by



All Nuffield Health Hospitals in England are regulated by CQC

* Initial consultation(s), diagnostic scans/tests and investigations required to establish a diagnosis are not part of your procedure price.

** Not including Private Patient Units at NHS hospitals. Local area defined as within 15 miles of your chosen Nuffield Health hospital. We will match against written quotes only.

*** Where necessary, we promise to assist you to receive any follow up advice, treatment or care that is clinically required. Where a prosthesis is required for your procedure, this is guaranteed for the manufacturer's expected prosthesis lifetime. Clinically required indicates where further intervention and/or monitoring of your condition is deemed necessary as a direct result of your procedure.

The Nuffield Health Promise applies for patients paying for themselves and excludes fertility services.