

Young Athlete Program: Esports Injuries

The Young Athlete Program at UPMC Sports Medicine brings together a team of sports medicine experts who provide individualized attention for injury prevention and management for young athletes.

The goal of the Young Athlete Program is not only to treat athletes when injuries occur, but to focus on prevention and performance training to help them reach their full potential.

Our experts use science-based techniques to help speed recovery, and quickly and safely prepare the athlete to return to competition. Physical therapists, physicians, athletic trainers, sports performance coaches, and other experts focus on prevention, nutrition, conditioning, and sport-specific training, tailored to an athlete's age and level of competition.

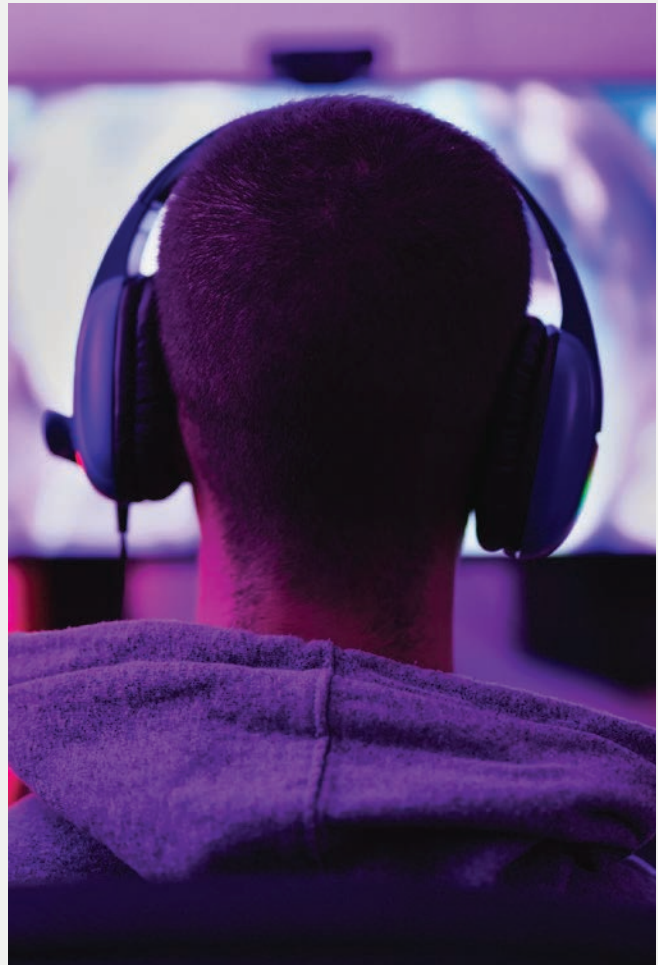
Common Esports Injuries

Gamers work with focused attention in front of a screen for hours each day. You're either gripping a mouse or controller or tapping on a keyboard at lightning speed. That's why it's vital to think about your esports health.

The most common injury among gamers is De Quervain's tenosynovitis or radial styloid tenosynovitis (gamer's thumb). This is a painful condition where the tendons on the thumb side of your wrist become inflamed. It happens because of repetitive motion.

Other injuries gamers deal with include:

- **Eye strain and fatigue, which can cause headaches.**
- **Cramps in your hands.**
- **Stiffness in your shoulders.**
- **Pain in your wrists from nerve conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome.**
- **Tendonitis (inflamed tendons) in your forearms.**
- **Back and neck pain.**



Causes of Esports Injuries

Playing esports at a competitive level means spending large chunks of time in front of the screen. While sitting during practice and competition may seem like a passive action, gamers' arms, hands, and fingers are extremely active. This is why many gaming injuries are caused by:

- **Overusing small muscle groups.**
- **Lack of core strength.**
- **Improper posture.**

Treating Esports Injuries

While some athletes may need surgery, UPMC Sports Medicine has many nonsurgical options that help gamers heal and get back to competing. Our sports medicine team may suggest one or more of the following:

- **Modifying your activity, which may include rest and ice.**
- **Taking anti-inflammatory medicine.**
- **Getting shots to reduce pain.**
- **Going to physical therapy, which can include injury rehabilitation and stretching exercises.**
- **Working with a sports performance expert on posture and breathing exercises.**
- **Wearing a brace.**
- **Meeting with a sports nutritionist.**

We also offer surgical treatments, including minimally invasive procedures (this means a quicker recovery). At UPMC Sports Medicine, we help athletes in all sports — whether traditional or esports — get better and back to competitor form.

Preventing Esports Injuries

Just as traditional athletes take measures to prevent getting injured, you should do the same. Here are some steps you can take to reduce your chances of getting hurt and missing a big tournament:

- **Tailor your conditioning program to movements you use in your sport. You can even work out at home with some simple strength exercises. Like all athletes, the better physical shape you're in, the more endurance you're likely to have.**
- **Pay attention to ergonomics and posture. You reduce your risk for eye strain, muscle strain, and hand or arm injuries by sitting properly and at the right distance.**
- **Find ways to take breaks while gaming at home.**

Screening Young Athletes

Our team of sports rehabilitation experts provides injury prevention screenings to young athletes. These screenings can help uncover existing injuries and areas of weakness, and can help prolong participation in sports.

These 45-minute screenings include:

- Flexibility
- Strength
- Functional movement assessment

The results of the screening will help determine if a young athlete needs to consult with a physician, participate in physical therapy, or consider sport-specific performance training. UPMC Sports Medicine has the expertise and comprehensive services to support young athletes.

Contact the Young Athlete Program

Regardless of age or sport, the Young Athlete Program has the expertise, technology, and services to make a difference for your athlete. For more information or to make an appointment, call **1-855-93-SPORT (77678)** or visit **UPMCSportsMedicine.com**.

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