

# Training Through Pain

by Scott Tribby 04\_03\_06

Anyone who has ever played a sport at any level has dealt with pain and/or injury. At the elite level, these instances become the stuff of legend. Whether it's Armstrong leaving everyone in his dust up

Alp d'Huez or Yzerman playing an entire playoffs with a severely injured knee waiting to be reconstructed, we're fascinated by those who can ignore the pain and still perform. Professional athletes are under immense pressure to perform, and often work through injuries that would (and should) sideline us mere mortals. While a little pain is part of everyday life and shouldn't keep us from doing what we love, how do we know when it's just more than that? Being able to distinguish between pain and injury is something that is extremely important for your quality of life.

First off, if you suspect that you've sustained an injury, consult a health care professional as soon as possible. The first 1-3 days are critical in identifying and treating the area. and can make a large difference in healing time. That being said, how do you know you've been injured? Major injuries, like broken bones or large lacerations, are quite obvious. There are many other types of injuries that occur that can be mistaken for annoying pain and not treated properly. Without going through the whole battery of orthopedic tests, here are a few things you can do to determine whether or not you've injured yourself:

Take the closest joint(s) through active range of motion (where you move the joint) and pay attention to the pain level, where it occurs, and with what movement. Now, have someone else take the joint through passive range of motion (where they move the joint while you remain totally relaxed) and take note. If there is pain in active, but not in passive range of motion then it's most likely that you have a soft tissue injury (muscle and/or tendon). If the pain still occurs during passive range of motion, then the problem could be more serious, involving ligaments and other connective tissues that will take much longer to heal. Consult a physician immediately.

The R.I.C.E. principle (rest, ice, compression, elevation) is a tried and true method of treating an injury immediately after it occurs. If you think you've strained or hurt something, apply this method as soon as possible. This will help contain the inflammation and speed healing. Do not apply ice directly on the wound with no covering, as you can actually burn your skin if left on too long. A general rule is ice for 15-20min intervals throughout the day.

If you can help it, do not take painkillers or anti-inflammatory's in the first few days. Ice is just as effective for the inflammation, and killing the pain increases the chance that you will perform actions that are detrimental to the area because you've inhibited the body's feedback mechanism. Wait until you've consulted a physician before you start taking medication.

None of us wants to get hurt, but leading an active and fun lifestyle has certain risks. By no means should you let this worry keep you from getting out and enjoying life, but be aware of when you should pull back and take a break. An ignored or

mistreated injury can end up sidelining you for much longer than needed, and you'll be kicking yourself for not listening to your body.