

# (201) HEALTH

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF (201) MAGAZINE

DEBUT ISSUE • 2010 EDITION

GETTING THAT GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP  
**HELPING HANDS IN HAITI**  
CHARTING YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

## YOGA & YOU

A PERFECT PAIR

THE HAZARDS  
OF HIGH HEELS

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MULTIPLES

AQUA THERAPY  
FOR ARTHRITIS

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FOR KIDS

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OF SALADS

2010 EDITION

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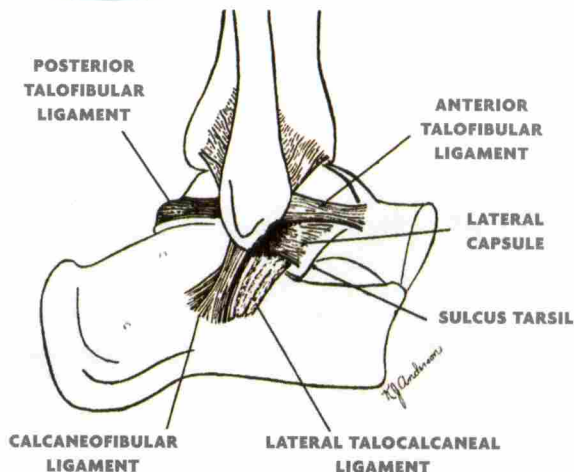
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15-20%

OF THE NEARLY 2,000 PATIENTS WITH NEW PROBLEMS THAT ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON DR. KENNETH LEVITSKY SEES EACH YEAR, BETWEEN 15 AND 20 PERCENT COME WITH INJURIES RESULTING FROM SPORTS OR OVER-USE RELATED CONDITIONS. OF THAT PERCENTAGE, SLIGHTLY MORE MEN COME WITH THESE INJURIES THAN WOMEN.

# Putting Your Best Foot FORWARD

*Preventing sports injuries to the foot and ankle*



## ANKLE SPRAIN

(Above) This graphic of ligaments of the lateral (outside of the) ankle illustrates the structures that are torn as a result of an ankle sprain. The structures labeled "anterior talofibular ligament" and "calcaneofibular ligament" are the most commonly torn in this injury.



## FIFTH ELEMENT

This X-ray illustrates a fracture of the fifth metatarsal bone – a Jones fracture – of the foot in a high school athlete. This is a very common sports injury and typically requires a cast for six weeks, although occasionally this fracture may require surgical intervention

**“Athletes should emphasize proprioceptive training as much as possible – squats, lunges, hops on uneven surfaces, the wobble board, and single leg stance training.”**



**KENNETH LEVITSKY, M.D.,** FELLOW, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ORTHOPEDIC SURGEONS, GARDEN STATE ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES, FAIR LAWN

**K**enneth Levitsky, M.D., orthopedic surgeon at Garden State Orthopedic Associates in Fair Lawn, maintains that there are four primary ways to avoid sports injuries. Dr. Levitsky, who specializes in injuries to the foot and ankle, says that taping and bracing, the use of orthotics, stretching, and rehab and proprioceptive training are the best ways to prevent injury when engaging in weekend warrior or other sports activities.

**1 TAPING AND BRACING** “The most common risk factor for ankle sprain in sports is a history of previous sprain,” Dr. Levitsky says. “Taping of the ankle has been shown to prevent ankle sprains despite the fact that it loosens within 10 minutes and provides little or no support within 30 minutes.”

Levitsky notes that, even when the tape loosens, it can be a constant reminder of the previous injury and makes the athlete more conscious of the ankle or foot. Levitsky also points out that the use of high-top shoes alone is ineffective. “The sneakers may give the appearance of offering additional support, but cannot be counted on to do the job. Taping and bracing are highly effective for athletes with previous injuries.”

**2 USING ORTHOTIC DEVICES** A second strategy for preventing injury to the foot and ankle is the use of orthotic devices. “There is positive evidence that orthotic devices diminish stress fractures and perhaps plantar fasciitis,” Levitsky says.

**3 STRETCHING BEFORE AND AFTER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** Orthopedic doctors agree that even though there is no conclusive evidence that stretching prevents sports and other injuries, stretching before physical activity can reduce the risk of injury.

“Due to the paucity, heterogeneity and poor quality of the available studies, no definitive conclusions can be drawn as to the value of stretching for reducing the risk of exercise-related injuries,” Levitsky says. “There is also no conclusive evidence that stretching diminishes the incidence of Achilles ruptures. Nonetheless, I maintain that stretching is an important element of any physical activity – prior to and following the activity.”

**4 REHABILITATION AND PROPRIOCEPTIVE TRAINING** Levitsky is enthusiastic about the research that has been conducted qualifying rehabilitation and proprioceptive training as strong regimens to prevent sports injuries.

Proprioception is the sensory feedback that the body provides regarding the joint’s position in space and its movements. Joint tendons and ligaments have proprioceptors which are presumably impaired with a sprain/injury.

“Exercises on a wobble board enhance both postural control and ankle muscle strength,” Levitsky says. “This is a regular part of a rehabilitation regimen when the ankle has been injured. It helps restore strength and balance and really gives the body a better sense of itself in space.”

Levitsky says that conclusive medical studies have been conducted that document the effectiveness of proprioceptive training in the reduction and prevention of sports injuries.

“In one study of European handball players who used a wobble board as part of their training, there was an 80 percent decrease in the number of injuries caused by over-use and/or trauma,” Levitsky says. “Another study found soccer players with proprioceptive training had one-seventh the risk of ACL injuries. Athletes with a history of previous ankle sprains had a reduction in the rate of ankle injury during soccer practice and competition.” ♦