

## Hockey Injury Prevention By Dr. Wes Dawkins

Petrolia is famous for a lot of things and hockey is certainly one of them. Petrolia is well known for its hockey enthusiasm and participation, especially at the adult level. One of the misconceptions of playing hockey later in life is that injuries are inevitable and happen more often. Although this may be true, it doesn't have to be. Many hockey injuries are not only predictable, but also preventable.

A pulled groin, or an adductor muscle strain, is hockey injury we see all too often. NHLers like Jason Spezza and Pavol Demitra are regularly out of their teams' lineup with this injury. The skating stride puts the adductor muscles to work, more so than most sports. Studies done with the NHL's New York Islanders found that an adductor strain was 17 times more common in players with weak adductors. The following season an adductor strengthening program was implemented and the groin injuries were cut in half. What this means for the rest of us non-NHLers is that a simple exercise program designed to strengthen our adductor muscles will cut down the number of pulled groins we encounter. Pay special attention if you've pulled your groin in the past. You likely have weak adductors but could prevent straining them again.

Interestingly the same study found that adductor flexibility was not related to injuring it. In other sport studies recently published they have found that stretching before a game actually increases the risk of a muscle strain. This goes against common knowledge; almost everyone thinks of stretching before getting some exercise, but warming up without stretching is now what's recommended. The best time to stretch is right after you've played because your muscles are warmed up and you won't be using them again anytime soon.

An adductor strain is just one of the many hockey injuries out there. Others, like an ankle sprain or low back strain, can also be reduced with the right training. Of course it's not a perfect world where every injury can be predicted and prevented. If you do get injured take care of it as soon as possible. Don't let it linger and put an end to your season.

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