

## CAN WE PREVENT HAMSTRING INJURIES?

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Hamstring strains are the most prevalent muscle injuries reported in football, with a very high recurrence rate (1 in 4 players have a recurrence)(Petersen et al. Scand J Med Sci Sports 2010; 20(4): 588-592).

Research efforts over the past 10 years has been directed at optimising injury prevention and return to sport after hamstring injury, but continued high prevalence of injury rates seem to exist, and this fact have been suggested to indicate that traditional prevention and rehabilitation programmes are not effective. However, as the intensity of soccer play have also increased dramatically, with sprint distance and number of sprints increasing in the English premiere league by more than 30% (Barnes et al. Int J Sports Med 2014; 35: 1095-1100).

While the potential benefit of eccentric training has been recognised and proved in controlled studies (Petersen et al. Am J Sports Med. 2011; 39: 2296-2303), the precise mechanism by which eccentric hamstring exercise is effective is not fully understood, and continues to be debated (1, 2) (Mjølsnes et al. Scand J Med Sci Sports 2004; 14: 311-317; Opar et al. Med Sci Sports Exerc 2014 Aug 18. [Epub ahead of print]).

Unfortunately, a lack of compliance with eccentric training for the prevention of hamstring injuries has been recognised in some reported randomised trials and is suspected to be the main explanation for obtaining inferior results in these studies (Goldman & Jones, Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2010; 1: CD006782; Goode et al. Br J Sports Med 2014 Sep 16 [Epub ahead of print]).

The question therefore remains whether football clubs at the highest level are performing the Nordic protocol as intended, and which barriers may be present in elite football clubs that make this intervention difficult to implement.

### References

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