

## **Do You Have Muscular Compensations That Could Lead To Pain And Injury?**

A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that sudden sports trauma lands 4.3 million Americans in the emergency room each year (most of them male) and the Institute for Preventative Sports Medicine states that sports injuries are one of the most under-recognized problems in U.S. health care. As a result of these injuries a number of problems can arise:

1. Weight gain – Someone with a back injury is estimated to gain 36 pounds over a two-year period.
2. Rapid deconditioning – the human body was built for motion and when a sports injury requires even temporary immobilization, deconditioning can proceed at an alarming pace.
3. Muscular compensations – Someone with muscular imbalances caused by a sports-related injury may find that, over time, their pain and discomfort increases.

It is important to recognize the signs of muscular compensations from sports-related injuries. How do you know if you might have muscular compensations taking place?

1. Your muscle feels tight even when you are not working out (i.e. chronically tight hamstrings or lower back muscles).
2. Your range of motion on one side of your body is much greater than the other. For example you can side bend to the right much easier with a greater range of motion than to the left.
3. You are doing an exercise and it feels like an entirely different muscle or muscles are doing all the work. For example you are doing a squat and all you feel is your lower back muscles.
4. You are well-hydrated and as you are working out you feel your muscles beginning to cramp. Muscle cramping can be a sign of muscular weakness. I worked recently with the catcher for the Chicago Cubs. When testing one of his rotator cuff muscles he experienced some muscular cramping. After treating this muscle and retesting the muscle the cramping was completely gone.
5. You are walking down the stairs and see that you are favoring one side over the other. Most people experience injury in the eccentric phase of the activity like walking down the stairs. Typically they will feel their hips and knees on one side much more than the other.
6. You are driving and have to turn your whole body instead of just your neck as you pull out of a parking spot.

If any of these sound like symptoms you experience, you may have muscular compensations and muscular imbalances taking place. Muscle Activation Technique is a noninvasive, biomechanically-based therapy that corrects muscular imbalances by using a range of motion assessment designed to allow practitioners to check their work by correlating limitations in range of motion to muscle weakness. Once a limitation of range

of motion is identified, then particular muscles that move the joint into that position will be evaluated in order to determine if they are in proper neurological input.

There are two types of treatments that are simple and effective to improve neurological connections to the muscle and restore balance: they include precision manual therapy where a cross friction pressure is placed on both ends of the muscle to stimulate the communication between the muscle and the central nervous system, and a program of light isometric exercises that can be done in the comfort of the client's home or in the gym before working out. Muscle Activation Technique is the missing link that can get you back into action from sports-related injuries resulting in muscular compensations.

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