101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER 2014

Chapter 5
June 20, 2014

Risk management has a role in everything we do, both on and off duty. It continues to be the job of the safety professionals to provide guidance to all Airmen about the dangers of the season. Airmen use sound risk management every day on duty and, while the main focus of the Critical Days of Summer campaign is off duty activities, Airmen must use the same risk management techniques in all circumstances.

Chapter 5: The World's Greatest Athlete

Topic: Physical Preparedness

If you're like many, your winter workouts may have consisted mainly of sprints to and from the refrigerator during commercials. Even if you included workouts at the gym, you may still need to do some preparation for your favorite summer sport. Too much activity too soon and you might be enjoying the season on the sidelines as a spectator; ease into your activity at a comfortable level and gradually increase the duration and intensity over a recommended period of 4-6 weeks. You also need to consider lessons or some form of instruction before diving in. Trying to go above your skill level can lead to disaster. Had the Airman in the example below applied personal risk management techniques and prepared differently for this sport, he might not have been injured.

While skydiving, an Airman's parachute did not open properly. He made an attempt to cut the parachute away but could not. He released the secondary parachute, but since he had become entangled with the first parachute, the second one did not open fully. He landed violently on the ground. He was airlifted to a local trauma center with a fractured back, pelvis, lacerated kidney and spleen. He was hospitalized for two months and spent another two months on quarters.

Many sports injuries also occur when your body of not prepared for the activity. Many people who start exercising after being sedentary sustain a sports injury. However, with the proper preparation, sports injuries can often be prevented. Here are some things you can do to help prevent an injury (https://www.luriechildrens.org/en-us/care-services/specialties-services/institute-for-sports-medicine/sports-injury-prevention/Pages/prevention-tips.aspx):

- Warm up
  - Ten minutes of light jogging or cycling before practice will increase circulation to cold muscles, making them more pliable and less prone to strain or rupture. Studies have shown that an active warm-up is associated with better athletic performance than a warm-up that consists only of static stretching.
- Stretching
  - Tight muscles are more prone to injury. Tight muscles also put more stress on the attached tendons and bones, putting these tissues at risk for injury as well. Regular stretching can improve muscle flexibility. The ideal time to stretch is after your workout. Include all major muscle groups. Hold each stretch for 20 to 30 seconds and do not bounce.
- Rest
  - Allow an appropriate amount of time for rest and recovery between workouts. Schedule at least 1 to 2 days off each week. It is also important to schedule an "off-season" -- a minimum of four weeks of rest from sports each year. This is easily overlooked when you play more than one sport or play one sport year-round.
- Hydrate
  - Young people are more prone to dehydration and heat illness than adults, so you should not wait until you are thirsty to drink. Drink before, during, and after workouts. Drink water for exercise that lasts less than an hour. Use a sports drink for longer workouts. Avoid caffeine, juices and carbonated beverages.
- Respond Promptly to Injuries
  - Pain is a sign of injury, stress or overuse. You should not play through pain. If pain does not resolve after a day or two of rest, consult your physician. The sooner an injury is identified, the

sooner proper treatment can begin. The result is shorter healing time and a faster return to sport.

- Participate in a Variety of Sports
  - A variety of sports provides for balanced muscle development, prevents burnout and decreases the risk for overuse injuries. Specializing in only one sport is not recommended until after puberty.
- Begin New Activities Slowly
  - A good way to prepare for a new sport is to participate in a pre-season conditioning program. Increase distance or duration no more than 10 percent per week.
- Use the Right Equipment
  - Be sure equipment fits properly and is in good condition. Runners should change their shoes every 300 to 500 miles.
- Get a Sports Physical
  - Before sports seasons begin, find a sports medicine physician who can help assess readiness for sports, address any medical issues that may cause risk of injury and offer recommendations to ensure safe sports participation.

For more information on the prevention of sports injuries:

http://onsmd.com/2012/06/22/enjoy-your-summer-sports-but-dont-get-injuried/
http://www.iiimef.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/967/Article/146654/summer-sports-injuries-easily-prevented-treated.aspx
http://www.outsideonline.com/fitness/injury-prevention/How-Much-Do-You-Know-About-Sports-Injuries.html