

# Cheerleading Safety



*Cheerleaders rally the team and the crowd during games and represent their schools in intense competitions. Unfortunately, many cheerleaders are injured while practicing and performing each year in the United States. With proper training, rules and spotting, however, many of these injuries can be prevented.*

## Cheerleading Injury Facts

- The most common injuries are strains and sprains.
- The body parts most commonly injured are feet, ankles and legs.
- Most injuries happen during practice.
- Most serious injuries happen on artificial turf, grass, traditional foam floors, or wood floors because these surfaces are not able to absorb impacts well.
- Most injuries are the result of cheerleading stunts, such as cradles, pyramids and elevators.
- Nearly all concussions happen when cheerleaders are performing stunts.

## Cheerleading Safety Tips

- Aboveground stunts should only be performed on floors that absorb impact well, such as spring floors or 4-inch thick landing mats placed on traditional foam floors, never over hard surfaces such as concrete or asphalt.
- Practice, strength training and proper lifting technique can help prevent strains and sprains.
- Proper warm-ups, like stretching, before and during performances will help prevent injuries.
- Coaches should complete cheerleading safety training and coach certification programs. Newly certified coaches should work under the supervision of more experienced coaches.
- Cheerleading teams should have and enforce a set of safety rules. These should include guidelines for returning to participation after an injury.
- Coaches, athletic trainers, cheerleaders and parents should learn about the signs and symptoms of concussions.