

SPORTS SHORTS

Old Ankle Sprains Increase Injury Risk

(NAPSA)—Ankle injuries may end the careers of pro basketball star Grant Hill and tennis champion Martina Hingis, but their plight could be a valuable lesson for baby boomers now getting back into fitness and sports: Get your ankles checked for chronic instability caused by sprains and other injuries that might not have healed properly years ago.

According to experts from the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS), many who have suffered ankle sprains in the past could be at risk for more serious damage as they age and try to stay in good physical condition. It is estimated that one in four sports injuries involves the foot or ankle, and a majority of them occur from incomplete rehabilitation of earlier injuries.

“Many older adult athletes who have had a previous injury that wasn’t fully rehabilitated may experience swelling and pain as they increase their physical activity,” says Robert Duggan, DPM, FACFAS. “But pain isn’t normal in the ankle area, even if you’re starting to get back in shape.”

Duggan adds that both serious athletes and weekend sports participants often misunderstand how serious a sprain can be, and they rush back into action without taking time to rehabilitate the injury properly. “A sprain that happened years ago can leave residual weakness. Subjecting the ankle to rigorous physical activity can further damage improperly healed ligaments, and cause persistent pain and swelling,” he says. “For anyone hoping to regain past athletic fitness, it’s recommended that you have that old ankle injury checked out by a



For baby boomers looking to get in shape, it’s important to address old ankle injuries—and get checked out by a doctor.

podiatric foot and ankle surgeon before becoming active again.”

Some sprains are severe enough to strain or tear the tendons on the outside of the ankle, called the peroneal tendons. However, new research shows that more than 85 percent of athletes who had surgery to repair a torn peroneal tendon were able to return to full sporting activity within three months after the procedure.

“Peroneal tendon tears are an overlooked cause of lateral ankle pain,” reports Amol Saxena, DPM, FACFAS. “Although surgery for athletically active patients shouldn’t be taken lightly, surgical repair of the peroneal tendons is proving to be very successful in helping athletes with serious ankle problems return to full activity.”

For information on ankle conditions and to locate a podiatric foot and ankle surgeon, call ACFAS toll-free at 1-888-THE FEET or visit www.acfas.org.