

NEW
JERSEY



COPS

A close-up photograph of a woman in a police uniform, wearing a black helmet. She is holding a handgun with a night vision scope. The scope's lens is illuminated with a yellow light, and the reflection inside shows a landscape with trees and a sunset. She has a slight smile and is looking directly at the camera.

**Special
Weapons
And
Tactics**

Training tips for LOD injuries

■ BY MATT BRZYCKI

In spite of how much you prepare for your role as a police officer, you're bound to sustain a variety of aches and pains while in the line of duty. It's extremely important to continue some type of strength training whenever possible, even in the event of an injury (provided, of course, that you can do so in a pain-free – or nearly pain free – fashion).



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PRUDENT TACTICS

There are several different tactics that you can employ to train an injured bodypart in a prudent manner. Keep in mind, though, that these methods aren't intended for injuries that are serious. To be on the safe side, you should get prior approval from a qualified sports medical authority (such as an orthopedic physician or physical therapist).

Try these tips:

1. Lighten the weight. This is one of the most important steps for training an injured bodypart. Decreasing the amount of resistance that you usually use lessens the stress on a bodypart and may allow you to perform the exercise in a pain-free manner.

2. Slow the speed of movement. Using a slower repetition speed reduces the stress that's placed on a given bodypart. This also forces you to use a lighter weight thereby lowering the stress even further.

3. Change the exercise angle. Another tactic is to try doing the exercise at a different angle. This essentially alters – and restricts – the angle through which your limbs are moved. For example, changing the bench

press to the decline press is often less stressful on the shoulder joint.

4. Use a different grip or hand position. Many times, changing the grip or hand position produces less stress. Dumbbells and some machines afford you the opportunity to vary the position of your grip/hands.

5. Perform different exercises. Yet another tactic for training an injured bodypart is to do different exercises that require the same muscle groups. For instance, if you simply cannot perform any type of lat pulldown without experiencing shoulder pain or discomfort, try to replace it with another exercise that addresses the same muscles such as a seated row or bent-over row.

6. Bypass the injured area. One of the biggest advantages of machines is that in some exercises, the resistance is applied above a joint which may allow you to bypass an injured bodypart. Presume that you sprained your wrist and, consequently, exercises for your torso were difficult or uncomfortable – if not downright impossible – to perform with barbells and dumbbells. In this case, however, you could use some machines to perform exercises that target the major muscles of your torso without involving your wrist joint. This includes the pec fly (a.k.a. the “pec dec”), pullover and lateral raise.

7. Limit the range of motion. There's a good possibility that pain is only present at certain points in your range of motion (ROM). If pain occurs in the start/finish position, you should stop short of lowering the weight all the way down; if pain occurs in the mid-range position, you should stop short of fully flexing or extending your muscles. As the injured area heals, you can gradually and carefully increase your ROM.

8. Exercise the good limb. Research

has shown that training a muscle on one side of the body actually benefits the same muscle that's on the opposite side of the body. So, you can still derive some benefit from training the good limb. If your left ankle was in a cast, for example, you could still do exercises for your right ankle.

9. Exercise unaffected bodyparts. In the event that you cannot train an injured bodypart due to an unreasonable amount of pain or discomfort, you should try to perform exercises for uninjured bodyparts. If you cannot train your lower body, you may be able to train your upper body; if you cannot train your upper body, you may be able to train your lower body.

MUSCLE PAIN V JOINT PAIN

It's important to understand that there's a distinct difference between muscle pain and joint pain. Muscle pain isn't necessarily cause for alarm; it usually means that your muscles are being fatigued. Joint pain, however, is something else altogether. This usually indicates some type of structural problem. If you experience pain in your joints while exercising, you're merely aggravating the condition and perhaps even causing further damage. Simply, an exercise that produces joint pain must be avoided or altered.

THE BOTTOM LINE

In the unfortunate event of an injury, employing prudent tactics can allow you to train injured bodyparts in a pain-free manner. ♥

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