

Kyle

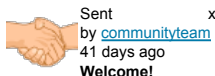


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# Stack on Sports

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## NBA players train to avoid injury

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Written by [kylestack](#) on 08/19/2010 11:48:43 AM

You might think that athletic trainers serve their most vital role after an athlete gets injured. While injury rehabilitation is important, how an athlete is trained to prevent an injury is just as essential to a trainer's job. Call it pre-rehabilitation.

That's the term coined by Chip Schaefer, Director of Athletic Performance and Player Development for the Los Angeles Lakers. He explains exactly what "pre-hab" means.

"It's identifying the particular needs or issues a guy might have based on tightness or restriction around the joint or particular strike deficiency around the joint," Schaefer explains. (Strike deficiency means the area that is weakest when that particular joint makes contact with an object. Think of the weak area in the knee when the foot hits the ground.)

By addressing those needs and issues, Schaefer and other trainers who practice pre-hab can enhance an athlete's performance and lessen the blow of injuries when they do occur. It's an interesting take on training.

Take Andrew Bynum, for example. The Lakers center recently underwent arthroscopic surgery for a torn lateral meniscus in his right knee. Part of his rehab will also serve as pre-hab. Schaefer has him doing exercises for his core (lower back, abs, hips) that will protect his knees from future injuries.

As Schaefer explains it, one body part's actions affects another's, so that there is a sequencing throughout the body. The more in line the body's actions are with each other, the more efficiently it moves.

Bynum's work on his core will ensure that when he makes a movement, his lower back, abdominal muscles and hips use the least amount of energy to complete his desired movement. The increased strength and balance he'll have in that area will permit his knees to move smoothly along with his body. It's a part of athleticism that us fans rarely consider.

We tend to think athletes move well because they're athletic. Yet even the world's best athletes need to condition their body. They want maximum performance with maximum efficiency and with just some luck, an ability to avoid injury. Pre-hab is the way for them to achieve that.

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