

Soft Tissue Injury – Physiotherapy Management

Case Scenario: "The Star Athlete's Dilemma"

A 24-year-old football player sustained an ankle injury during a match. He presents 24 hours later with:

- Pain: 7/10
- Swelling around the lateral ankle
- Difficulty weight-bearing
- Tenderness over the lateral ligaments
- No fracture on X-ray

The coach wants him back for an important match next week.

Puzzle 1: What's the Diagnosis?

Question

Which structure is most likely injured?

Options

- A. Bone
 - B. Lateral ankle ligaments
 - C. Meniscus
 - D. Achilles tendon
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Puzzle 2: The First 48 Hours

Question

What is the most appropriate physiotherapy strategy?

Options

- A. Aggressive stretching
- B. High-resistance strengthening
- C. Protection, optimal loading, compression, elevation
- D. Running drills

Puzzle 3: The Coach's Request

Scenario

The coach insists the player return in 5 days.

Question

What should guide the return-to-play decision?

Options

- A. Importance of the match
 - B. Athlete's desire
 - C. Functional assessment and tissue healing
 - D. Team pressure
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Puzzle 4: Swelling Mystery

Case

Three days after injury, swelling persists.

Question

What is the most likely reason?

Options

- A. Normal healing response
 - B. Fracture
 - C. Infection
 - D. Nerve injury
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Puzzle 5: Rehabilitation Progression

Question

Which intervention should be introduced first after pain decreases?

Options

- A. Plyometric jumping
 - B. Range of motion exercises
 - C. Full-speed sprinting
 - D. Contact drills
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Puzzle 6: Balance Challenge**Case**

The athlete has regained strength but demonstrates poor single-leg balance.

Question

What should be emphasized?

Options

- A. Ultrasound
- B. Proprioceptive training
- C. Bed rest
- D. Heat therapy only

Answer

- ✓ B. Proprioceptive training
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Puzzle 7: Return-to-Sport Puzzle**Question**

Which criterion is MOST important before return to sport?

Options

- A. No swelling only
 - B. Normal X-ray
 - C. Pain-free functional performance and sport-specific ability
 - D. Coach approval
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Puzzle 8: Muscle Strain Case

Case

A sprinter experiences sudden posterior thigh pain during a race.

Findings:

- Local tenderness
- Pain with resisted knee flexion
- Mild bruising

Question

What is the likely diagnosis?

Options

- A. Hamstring strain
 - B. ACL tear
 - C. Meniscal tear
 - D. Shin splints
- ✓ A. Hamstring strain
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Puzzle 9: Tendon Injury Challenge

Case

A 40-year-old recreational runner reports gradual onset Achilles tendon pain for 3 months.

Question

Which exercise has the strongest evidence for management?

Options

- A. Complete rest
 - B. Eccentric loading exercises
 - C. Continuous icing only
 - D. Immobilization for 3 months
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Puzzle 10: The CEO Question

Scenario

A sports clinic tracks only ONE outcome after soft tissue injury rehabilitation.

Which measure is best?

Options

- A. Swelling reduction
 - B. Pain score
 - C. Return to previous functional and sporting level
 - D. Number of therapy sessions
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Rapid-Fire Viva Puzzles

Injury	Special Test	Key PT Focus
Lateral Ankle Sprain	Anterior Drawer Test	Proprioception
Hamstring Strain	Resisted Knee Flexion	Progressive Loading
Achilles Tendinopathy	Royal London Test	Eccentric Exercises
MCL Sprain	Valgus Stress Test	Stability Training
Rotator Cuff Strain	Empty Can Test	Scapular & Cuff Strengthening