

### If an injury occurs

- ▶ At least one trained first aider should be on duty at all bowls events.
- ▶ All bowls clubs should have a well-stocked first aid kit, a telephone and emergency contact numbers on display.
- ▶ Players should ensure that their injuries are completely rehabilitated and take sensible precautions to prevent re-injury, before resuming play.

## References

McGrath A, Cassell E. Rolling Injuries Out of Lawn Bowls: A review of the literature.  
Monash University Accident Research Centre. Report No. 138. September 1998



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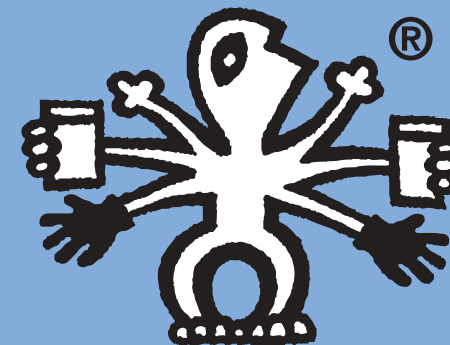
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# SMARTPLAY

Facts and  
safety tips for  
**LAWN BOWLS**

MONASH UNIVERSITY



ACCIDENT RESEARCH CENTRE

PREVENTING LAWN BOWLS INJURIES



SPORT AND  
RECREATION  
VICTORIA

# Preventing Lawn Bowls Injuries

## How many players?

- ▶ It has been estimated that 296,400 Australians, over the age of 15 years, participated in lawn bowls in 1995/96, which ranks lawn bowls as the fifth most popular sport and physical activity in Australia behind aerobics, golf, tennis and netball.
- ▶ The Royal Victorian Bowls Association (RVBA) estimates that 45,000 male and 29,000 female Victorians regularly play lawn bowls.
- ▶ More than three quarters of players are over 55 years of age and approximately 60% are male.

## The causes and types of injuries

- ▶ Falls are the most frequent cause of injuries presenting to hospital emergency departments. Other causes are over exertion and being struck by a bowling ball.
- ▶ Lawn bowls injuries that present to hospital emergency departments are mostly fractures, strains and sprains.

## How do lawn bowls injuries occur?

Anecdotal evidence from the RVBA suggests that fall injuries mostly occur when a player:

- ▶ steps backwards and falls over the bowls;
- ▶ steps forward over the ditch, rather than sideways, when crossing onto the green;
- ▶ delivers a bowl with incorrect balance

The repetitive movements of bowling are also associated with injury.

## How severe are lawn bowls injuries?

Approximately one-fifth of hospital emergency department presentations resulting from lawn bowls injury require hospital admission.

# Safety tips for Lawn Bowls

## Good preparation is important

- ▶ Promote warm-up and stretch before play to improve joint range of motion, promote elasticity of tendons and ligaments and prevent muscular strain.
- ▶ Promote cool down after play to prevent stiffness and cardiovascular complications.
- ▶ Provide simple pre-season fitness testing to ensure players are fit for competition.
- ▶ Provide training sessions for fitness and skills development.

## Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- ▶ Ensure correct technique because poor delivery or balance, or incorrect grip of the bowl, can lead to injury.
- ▶ Provide a trained coach at every club to advise and monitor the bowling technique of players at all levels of skill.
- ▶ Promote accreditation and regular training for coaches.
- ▶ Develop instruction clinics for social bowlers to improve technique.
- ▶ Promote balance training and exercises that strengthen the lower extremities, back and neck which could help prevent falls.

- ▶ Promote the use of trolleys for players who experience difficulty lifting their bowls bag.

## Use appropriate equipment

- ▶ Seek professional advice when selecting bowls to ensure bowls are the correct size, to improve technique and prevent injury.
- ▶ Seek professional advice when purchasing footwear.
- ▶ Encourage players to change footwear to shoes with grip soles when stepping off the green.
- ▶ Use non-slip bowling mats with significant grip on the top surface to allow traction between the shoe and mat.
- ▶ Promote the use of bowling arms to players and community members with physical restrictions as a means of encouraging them to remain physically and socially active.

## Environmental measures to prevent injury.

- ▶ Wear a broad spectrum sunscreen, hat and long sleeved shirt in high ultra-violet conditions.
- ▶ Avoid playing lawn bowls under extreme weather conditions.
- ▶ Ensure adequate player hydration by encouraging the sipping of water during play.
- ▶ Encourage various environmental measures to prevent falls including: hand rails around footpaths; ensuring footpaths are free of cracks or loose gravel; use of anti-slip treatments on walking surfaces; good lighting at night games; and installation of ramps around the club and across the ditch.
- ▶ Provide sheltered seating areas at the end of each green for use between play.