

PROPRIOCEPTION: Regaining What was Lost After Injury

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After an injury the most noticeable repercussion is the **proprioception**. A proprioceptor is the sensory nerve ending in muscles, tendons, and joints that provides a sense of the body's position by responding to stimuli from within the body. Proprioception (from Latin proprius, meaning "one's own" and perception) is the sense of the position of parts of the body, relative to other neighboring parts of the body. Unlike the six exteroception human senses of sight, taste, smell, touch, hearing, and balance, that advise us of the outside world, proprioception is a sense that provides feedback solely on the status of the body internally. It is the sense that indicates whether your body is moving with required effort, as well as where the various parts of the body are located in relation to each other.

Proprioception is very important to consider when working towards rehabilitation and the prevention of future injury. Restoring the sense of awareness after injury allows the body to regain stability and orientation during movements. Any type of injury can interrupt the sense of position and may inhibit your potential for improvement.

Let's look at one of the most common injuries: An ankle sprain. If you have experienced this, you may have felt a little unbalanced although it no longer hurts. A simple test to see how much proprioception was lost is to simply stand on your uninjured leg for a few seconds and then switch to the injured leg. You will most definitely notice the difference, and of course the more severe and recent the injury, the more damage you will notice. If proper rehabilitation is not done then your injury may turn from something acute to a more chronic problem. There are many types of balance training/exercises to choose from: A wobble board, standing on one leg at a time and alternating body position as you progress, or you can do a number of creative positions on the stability ball. These are just a few examples; just remember that proprioception is a must for all movements from the simplest activities of daily living to the most intricate athletic maneuvers.