

The Palm Beach Post

Stunts Raise Injury Risks for Cheerleaders



A new study has found that stunts cause 60 percent of cheerleading injuries in the United States.

HealthDay News

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Anyone who has witnessed a modern cheerleading competition will not be surprised to learn that a new study has found that stunts cause 60 percent of cheerleading injuries in the United States.

The analysis of data from 2006 and 2007 also revealed that 96 percent of reported concussions and closed-head injuries among cheerleaders were the result of stunts.

"In our study, stunts were defined as cradles, elevators, extensions, pyramids, single-based stunts, single-leg stunts, stunt-cradle combinations, transitions and miscellaneous partner and group stunts," study author Brenda Shields, research coordinator in the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, said in a hospital news release.

Strains and sprains accounted for 53 percent of injuries sustained by cheerleaders. Most injuries (83 percent) occurred during practice, and the body parts most commonly injured were the ankle (16 percent), knee (9 percent), lower back (9 percent), and head (7 percent), the researchers found.

Nearly 90 percent of the most serious fall-related injuries occurred while cheerleaders were performing on grass, artificial turf, traditional foam floors or wood floors, the study authors noted.

"Only spring floors and 4-inch-thick landing mats placed on traditional foam floors provide enough impact-absorbing capacity for two-level stunts," Shields said. "There is a greater risk for severe injury as the fall height increases or the impact-absorbing capacity decreases, or both."

The study findings are published in the November issue of the *Journal of Athletic Training*.

More information

The Nemours Foundation has more about [cheerleading injuries](#).

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