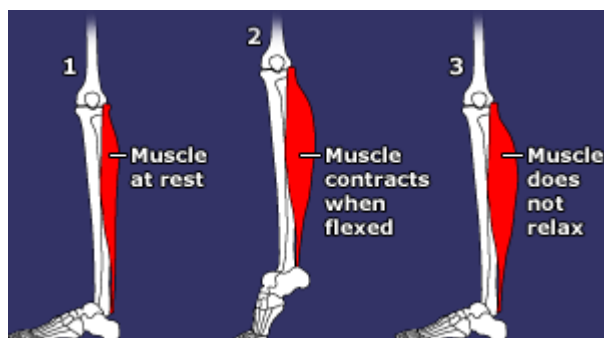


What is it That Gives You Cramp?



Cramp is another common injury for athletes at all levels and affects hard working muscles such as the calves in runners and the arm in tennis players.

But despite being able to cure all kinds of killer diseases, scientists still don't know what causes it!

What is cramp?

It is when a muscle goes into spasm and refuses to relax.

Pain in affected muscle can range from a slight spasm to agonising pain. It can last a few seconds to 15 minutes and can recur.

Why do we get cramp?

There are three major factors:

- ? **Fatigue:** Cramp sets in when our muscles are tired
- ? **Hydration:** We get cramp when we have not drunk enough water
- ? **Conditioning:** The less fit we are, the more likely we are to suffer from cramp

Scientists are unsure how much influence each of these areas has on cramp.

Who?

It is common in most athletes, especially long distance runners and tennis and football players. Also affects people with diabetes or a history of diabetes in their family.

How?

Can set in during long bouts of exercise, particularly when the weather is hot and a player is dehydrating.

Treatment?

The immediate treatment for muscle cramp is to stretch and gently massage the muscle. Use ice packs for severe cases and drink water or a sports drink.

How do you deal with calf cramp?

Grasp the muscle with one hand and pull back on the toes with the other. Point toes upward to help relieve the spasm.

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How can you avoid cramp?

Proper warm-up (especially stretching), a good fitness level and plenty of fluid coupled with a nutritious diet. Increase your Quinine Sulphate intake by drinking a small amount of Soda Water each day.

Return?

Often return is immediate and the subject can continue after a massage. If the pain too acute then 24 hours rest is advised.