



Physical Therapy and Hand Center, L.L.C.

# Prevention of Biking Injuries

## Off Road/ Mountain Biking

- 1. Treat your hand and arm muscles like you would all other muscles that need to be properly stretched prior to riding:**
  - Make sure hands are warmed up before you ride. Spread your fingers wide apart and then into a fist. Repeat 5 times and frequently throughout your ride.
- 2. Make sure that your bike is adjusted to fit you,** following ergonomic principles below will help to lessen the stress on the arms and hands and prevent strain injuries:
  - A good suspension fork will absorb the shock and lessen the vibration to your upper body.
  - Handlebars with an 8-10 degree sweep will place your wrists in a more efficient position for grasping. Straight bars force you to bend your wrists towards your thumb which can lead to tendonitis and joint strain.
  - Attach bar ends to your handlebar to increase leverage when climbing and increase comfort for long distance riding. Bar ends that are L-shaped will provide multiple hand position change options that will decrease fatigue and numbness in the fingers.
  - Dual density carbon fiber handlebar grips will help to decrease vibration and provide a better contour to your hand to distribute the stress. New handle bar grips cost about \$10.00 and are available in an ergonomic hexagonal design.
  - Choose a stem with a higher degree of rise or a riser handlebar to relieve neck fatigue and decrease pressure on the palm of the hands. Riser bars are available with ½ to 2 ½ of rise. Be careful not to raise your handlebar much higher than your seat or you will be unable to maintain weight on your front tire when climbing. If you need to shorten your reach to the handlebar, replace your stem with a shorter one. Typical length is 90-140 mms.
  - Check the width of your handlebar. The length can be trimmed to fit your shoulder width. This will decrease the arm fatigue and help you steer.
  - Over inflated tires will cause a stiffer ride. Keep your tire pressure between 35-45 lbs.
- 3. If you are getting numbness or tingling in your hands examine the palm of your glove for wear patterns.**
  - If the worn area matches the pain location in your palm then try a new glove that offers more padding in this area.
- 4. If you do injure your hands be sure to see a Hand Specialist to receive an accurate diagnosis and proper treatment.**
  - Untreated arm and injuries can become a serious long term disability if neglected.

\* Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or need a recommendation for a local Professional Bike Fitter \*

Owned by Sports Medicine Atlantic Orthopaedics

