Compartment Syndrome – Exercise-Induced

Exercise induced compartment syndrome can occur when there is an excessive amount of pressure that builds up within an enclosed space of the body, usually in the lower legs. It often results from swelling or bleeding following an injury. Due to the dangerously high amount of pressure within the compartment of muscles, it impedes the blood flow to the tissues that are affected. In this situation, it becomes a medical emergency that may need surgery to prevent a permanent injury.

The condition begins when the pressure in the muscles begins to build to a dangerous level. Due to the pressure, the blood flow decreases, which will prevent oxygen and nourishment from reaching the muscle and nerve cells. The condition can either be chronic or acute. Acute conditions are a medical emergency that is often caused by a severe injury. If the condition is not treated, it can cause permanent muscle damage.

Chronic compartment syndrome, which is often known as exertional compartment syndrome, is normally not an emergency. Most of the time, this condition is attributed to athletic exertion.

Compartment Syndrome Exercise-Induced Anatomy

Compartments are groups of muscles, blood vessels and nerves within your legs and arms. A tough membrane covers the tissues known as the fascia. The fascia's role is to keep all of the tissues where they are supposed to be, so it doesn't expand or stretch easily.

How to Treat Compartment Syndrome Exercise-Induced:

Fasciotomy

Anterior compartment fasciotomy procedures have a higher rate of success than those of the posterior compartments. Rehabilitation lasts longer for those who have to go through a deep posterior fasciotomy than that of the anterior compartment fasciotomy. When it comes to this procedure for the lower extremities, newer techniques have been introduced to the market that helps to minimize the skin incision and maximize the release. In instances of anterior compartment syndrome, a lateral compartment fasciotomy might not be needed. Athletes that were treated with either a single or double compartment release experienced the same outcomes. After the fasciotomy is completed, the chance of the condition reoccurring is relatively unusual. Repeated pressure measures are often taken. In true recurrences, a second decompression might be required to help alleviate the pressure.

Tips:

- After beginning an exercise routine, you shouldn't experience a large amount of pain in the first half hour of the routine. If you find pain in the buttock, leg or thigh, you need to have this examined by a professional to see what's going on.
- Most of the time, symptoms tend to go away with a little rest, but that is not always the case when compartment syndrome is to blame.
- Exertional compartment syndrome will often feel similar to that of shin splints, so many people will confuse one condition with the other. The main difference is that you will probably notice swelling over the shins.
- For those who are on life support or critically ill, abdominal compartment syndrome can develop.
- If you notice pain upon participating in certain activities, you need to cease performing those activities and discuss your concerns with a health care provider to get an accurate diagnosis.