

[Read the following text:](#)

What's Up Footballers' Socks?

Fans watching England at the World Cup may have noticed players missing a good chunk of fabric from their socks when they took to the field. But why do footballers cut holes in their perfectly good socks? Believe it or not, there is a health reason behind this rather ugly fashion choice.

The holes in the socks became an unexpected but regular sight during the World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Many people were questioning this strange phenomenon until an article from IFLScience explained that most soccer players receive a new pair of socks immediately before the start of every game. Because it is a new pair of socks, the synthetic fabric isn't flexible enough and can even be too tight, especially for those players with big calves. The tight socks can be very uncomfortable and restricting, and sometimes can even cut off blood circulation, which can lead to cramps. To ease the pressure, some players simply cut holes into the back of their socks, where the calf muscle is the biggest. In case you wondered—yes, other players simply pull their socks down a bit.

Cramps don't only happen because of physical exertion—they can also happen because of a lack of water. This is because our body is mainly made up of water (on average around 60%), which is critical for keeping the level of salts in the cells of the body, including the muscle cells, at the right level. Additionally, water is important to preserve the right levels of magnesium and potassium in the body. These minerals help control and preserve the healing mechanism of the muscle cells and therefore prevent the over-contraction of the cells and ultimately, the cramps.

So what can you do if you have a muscle cramp during exercise? You should stop what you're doing and slowly stretch the affected muscle. You should keep holding it in a stretched position for at least 30 seconds. It might also help if you gently rub and massage the muscle, drink some water and have some salty food if you think you might be dehydrated. You'll then need to rest, to give your muscle time to recover, or the cramp might return.

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions about the text:

1. What does the phrase "ugly fashion choice" refer to?
 - a. Chunks of fabric
 - b. Holes in socks
 - c. Footballers' uniform

2. According to paragraph two, what is the main disadvantage of new socks?
 - a. They are too tight.
 - b. They are not long enough.
 - c. They have holes.

3. According to paragraph two, what other solution is there for the socks' problem?
 - a. There is no other solution.
 - b. Folding of the socks.
 - c. Playing with no socks.

4. Lack of water _____ cramps.
 - a. causes
 - b. helps

c. keeps

5. In the sentence “These minerals help control and preserve the healing mechanism of the muscle cells” (paragraph three), what does the word “these” refer to?

a. Muscle cells

b. Water

c. Potassium and magnesium

6. Paragraph four consists of _____.

a. explanations

b. recommendations

c. solutions

7. According to paragraph four, what can help dehydration?

a. Eating salty foods.

b. Stretching the muscles.

c. a gentle massage.

8. Under what conditions can a cramp return?

a. exercising too much.

b. Not enough rest.

c. waiting less than 30 seconds.

Vocabulary

1. Which word in paragraph one refers to “athletes”?

a. Players

b. Fans

c. Socks

2. What is a synonym for “regular”?

- a. Common
- b. Tight
- c. Simple

3. What is another word for “article”?

- a. News
- b. Research
- c. Essay

4. The words “restricting” and “limiting” are synonyms.

- a. True
- b. False

5. “Lack of water” means _____.

- a. plenty of water
- b. not enough water
- c. a bowl of water

6. The opposite of “slowly” is _____

- a. fast
- b. gently
- c. regularly

Grammar

Rewrite the following sentences as QUESTIONS using the question words in brackets:

1. Footballers cut holes in their socks. (**who**)

2. There is a reason behind this act. **(what)**
3. The holes in the socks became a regular sight during the World Cup 2022 in Qatar. **(when)**
4. A scientific article explained the strange phenomenon. **(what)**
5. Soccer players receive a new pair of socks immediately before the start of every game. **(who)**
6. The synthetic fabric isn't flexible enough. **(how)**
7. Cutting off blood circulation can lead to cramps. **(what)**
8. Cramps happen because of physical exertion. **(why)**
9. Magnesium and potassium are minerals. **(what)**
10. You should hold your affected muscle in a stretched position for at least 30 seconds. **(how long)**

Answers:

1. Who cuts holes in their socks?
2. What is the reason behind this act?
3. When did the holes in the socks become a regular sight?
4. What explained the strange phenomenon?
5. Who receives a new pair of socks immediately before the start of every game?
6. How flexible is the synthetic fabric?
7. What can lead to cramps?

8. Why do cramps happen?

9. What are Magnesium and potassium?

10. How long should you hold your affected muscle in a stretched position?