

# Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for Sports Injuries & Concussions

CJ Puotinen • for Carol Wilcock • Dynamic Health Technologies



When it comes to sports, injuries happen. Athletes of every age and skill level suffer sprains, bruises, abrasions, muscle aches, and broken bones, and in contact sports, concussions and closed-head injuries are common.

One treatment used by professional sports teams and athletes was developed in the 1940s to treat decompression sickness, the illness that results when deep sea divers return to the surface too quickly. The treatment is hyperbaric oxygen therapy, or HBOT, and it involves lying in a pressurized chamber filled with air and supplemental oxygen.

During HBOT, air pressure is slowly increased until it's two to three times that of sea level. As patients breathe normally, their lungs absorb increased amounts of oxygen, several times as much as they do breathing air at sea level. As a result, according to HBOT advocates, super-oxygenated blood is carried throughout the body, promoting the release of growth hormones and helping the body heal.

As hyperbaric oxygen chambers have become safer, more efficient, more economical, and more widely used, the treatment has become more familiar to the American public. But there are still common misunderstandings about HBOT.

At Dynamic Health Technologies, Carol Wilcock supervises the use of two hyperbaric oxygen chambers.

"The first thing people worry about is safety," she says. "This is because in the early days of HBOT, there were spectacular explosions in which whole hospital wings were destroyed. Treatment centers and hospitals that supply oxygen at two or three times atmospheric

## HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT)

FDA approved medical device used to manage neuromuscular conditions, enhance healing of diabetic wounds & promote healing after trauma or stroke. (Vitaeris, soft chamber)

pressure are especially dangerous. They need physicians in attendance and multiple safeguards to protect against combustion."

In contrast, the hyperbaric oxygen chambers at Dynamic Health Technologies supply oxygen at 1.3 times atmospheric pressure. "This is sufficient increased oxygen to produce excellent results, plus we don't

have to worry about sparks or combustion," she says.

Treatments typically last 60 to 90 minutes. It takes about 10 minutes for a hyperbaric oxygen chamber to reach full pressurization. Inside the chamber one breathes normally. Some patients sleep, while others read or use their cell phones, iPads, or other devices. The only unusual thing most patients notice during treatment is their ears popping, the way they do in airplanes as the pressure increases and decreases.

To learn more about hyperbaric oxygen therapy, see *The Oxygen Revolution: Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy: The New Treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Autism and More* by P.G. Harch, MD, and V. McCullough. ■



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