

GAME ON!

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- *Part I of a two part series on coming back from injury*
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- *Chillin' with your MP3.*

"The mark of the great player is his ability to come back. The great champions all have come back from defeat."

-Sam Snead, pro golfer

Master your mental game & take control of your performance

INJURED, PART I

"No no no no no" was all I kept thinking when I tore my MCL in a freak snowboarding accident; it was the 2nd acute injury on my left knee. No one likes to think about it, but injury is part of the risk that comes with being an athlete. Anything from torn ACL's to broken collarbones can be an unfortunate part of your athletic experience.

When you're suddenly sidelined because of an injury, you no longer get

that daily dose of the feel-good endorphins that usually pump through your blood. Not only does that contribute to a shift in your mood, but chances are as soon as you're down for the count, you're thinking about how every second that passes equals you losing more training and fitness.



Because high amounts of stress have both a physiological and psychological impact and can interfere with the healing process, the two most important things you can do for yourself during the healing process is to stay positive and stay in control. I know. Easier said than done, but having a positive outlook is imperative for a successful recovery process.

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WHEN TO HIRE AN EXPERT

It's natural to tighten the purse strings when you hear that the banks are going belly up. So, when is it worth shelling out the money to hire an expert? Whether it's a coach, nutritionist, or sport psychology consultant – sometimes it takes some expertise and outside perspective to achieve your athletic goals. Here are some reasons to consider hiring an expert:

You've hit a plateau – If you're working hard and your goals are still just out of your reach. Or you've worked so hard that you're

feeling some burnout and need a little nudge to get moving again.

You know what you want, but you don't know how to get it – You're ready and motivated to make a change, but you just don't know what to do next. Or maybe you've even tried a few moves, but it doesn't seem to be working.

You just can't do it on your own – Even when you have the knowledge and the best of intentions - sometimes you just can't "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and go it

alone. Having someone to consult with and an honest reflection of what needs to change in order to achieve your goals are invaluable.

Although it's easy to cite time and money as the main reasons why we don't hire experts, it's usually because we think we *should* be able to do it on our own or feel like we don't *deserve* to spend the time and money on an expert. When you get an expert, you are investing in your health and wellness and **that** is a worthy investment!

Stay Positive & Relax with your MP3

During injury, excessive stress can contribute to muscle tension. Tense muscles can exacerbate the feeling of pain during rehab and can impair range of motion. In addition, a negative psychological state can prolong your recovery from injury. Try these tips for help with staying positive and relaxed.

Progressive Relaxation

Help ease tense muscles by downloading some guided relaxation.

Music

Take a break with some of your favorite music. Relax with some ballads or get energized with some funk.

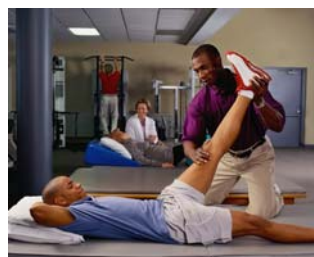
Stand-up Comedy

There's nothing that lifts the spirits like a good dose of laughter. Download some stand-up comedy to your MP3 and let the endorphins fly. (Some of my favorites: Mitch Hedberg, Brian Regan, Demetri Martin, Dane Cook, and Jim Gaffigan!)

INJURED PART I, CON'T

Get Informed - When you're 1st injured, the most powerful tool you can have is information. Whether you have a sprained ankle or are scheduled for surgery, finding out as much information as you can about your injury helps you get a handle on what you're dealing with. What is the nature of the injury? When can you expect to be fully recovered? What setbacks will you face? What can you do to help with your recovery?

Adjust Your Goals - The first part of this is accepting where you are. If you've been injured, what you were capable of before probably isn't realistic at this time. It can be frustrating to have to adjust your thinking to what is realistic for you to accomplish *now*.



Relax and Stay Positive – Your emotional response to your injury has a direct influence on your rate of recovery. You can choose to focus on what you're missing out on or choose to look forward to what you will accomplish. Many athletes take this time to work on other parts of their fitness and come back stronger than they were before their injury. If you're a basketball player and you broke your arm, use this time to strengthen your lower body. If you're a cyclist and you broke your foot, use this time to strengthen your core.

Setting new goals helps you focus on what is in your control. In that same notebook, have a section for writing down your recovery goals. Each week you should set your goals, chart your progress, evaluate, and then set a new goal for the following week.

Setting goals should be a collaborative process between you and your physical therapist. Your PT can help you figure out what goals would be realistic to shoot for throughout your rehab.

There may be times when you hit a plateau or experience a day where your injury flairs up again. Prepare yourself now for potential setbacks in your recovery so you know exactly how you want to react in that situation in order to stay positive and confident.

Look for part two of this article in the next issue, which will focus on building your confidence, getting back into action and preventing re-injury.

RESOURCES

Websites:

<http://www.sportsinjuryclinic.net/>

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/>

Books:

Anybody's Sports Medicine Book, James Garrick, M.D. & Peter Radetsky, Ph.D.

Sports Injuries Guidebook, Editor Robert Gotlin

Make sure you bring a notebook with a list of questions with you when you visit your doctor and *write down* the answers.

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