

Safe Return to Training Following Inactivity...

Some Guidelines and Best Practice Recommendations to reduce the incidence of non-contact related injuries.

Injuries are more likely to occur during periods when athletes are transitioning from relative inactivity to regular training, specifically during the first 2 to 4 weeks upon return to activity.

Conditioning periods should be phased in gradually and progressively to obtain proper exercise acclimatization which will help to minimize health risks.

Recommendations

As athletes transition back into training, workouts should have lower Work-To-Rest Ratios and progress gradually up to full intensity. A Work-To-Rest Ratio (W:R) compares the amount of time working (run, lift, etc.) to the time resting before another work period. Example...20 seconds of sprinting (work) and 80 seconds of rest. W:R would be 1:4.

Conditioning Activities

Utilizing a four weeks conditioning progression protocol, with a 50/30/20/10 percent reduction in total volume from your previous maximum work volume, should allow for a safe and positive adaptation. First week 50% reduction of former volume, Second week 30% reduction and so on...

Plyometrics

With the same 50/30/20/10 % Rule,

Week 1, <70 foot contacts, low intensity, 1:4 W:R.

Week 2, <80-100 foot contacts, low intensity, 1:3 W:R.

Week 3, <80 foot contacts, moderate intensity, 1:3 W:R.

Week 4, 80-100 foot contacts, moderate intensity, 1:3 W:R.

Week 5, 80 foot contacts, high intensity, 1:3 W:R.

Weight Training

Due to its highly individualized nature, weight training should be adapted to the athletes chronological age, maturation age and training age. All three of these conditions must be understood before a comprehensive weight training program is initiated.

A return to training program could begin with body weight exercises (push ups, pull ups, squats, lunges etc) with moderate sets and reps. Example...3 to 4 sets of 12 to 15 repetitions.

A gradual progression with the addition of external resistance (weight, dumbbells, med balls etc.) could begin in week 2, with 2 sets of 5 to 6 repetitions with light intensity (weight). With the addition of resistance, a 1:4 W:R is suggested.

Weeks 3 to 5 could be 3 sets of light to moderate intensity with 3 to 6 repetitions.

These suggested recommendations should help athletes as they prepare for a safe and healthy return to training after a period of relative inactivity.

And as always...Dynamic stretching before the workout and Static stretch after. Remember, we “warm up to play, not play to warm up”

Works cited:

NSCA Strength and Conditioning Professional Standards and Guidelines, Strength and Conditioning Journal, Vol. 39; No.6, 1-24, 2017

CSCCa and NSCA Joint Consensus Guidelines for Transition Periods, Strength and Conditioning Journal, Vol.41, No.3, 1-23, June 2019

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