

SPORTS INJURIES – CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT TO HEAL

The incidence of a sports injury can lead to several consequences that can have a negative psychological effect on a sports performer. The occurrence of an injury can cause feelings of frustration (e.g. at having to miss an important competition), despair, loneliness and isolation. These are normal reactions, but they can have a detrimental effect on our recovery. Some psychologists have even likened the occurrence of a sports injury to the loss of a loved one. Evidence has shown that the way in which people psychologically cope with injuries can affect the rate of recovery from injury. So what is the best way to psychologically cope with an injury? Generally, the more positive you are towards your injury and your recovery, the more likely you are to stick to your rehabilitation programme and recover. Additionally, certain psychological techniques have been shown to enhance your recovery and return back to training.

Mental Tips To Enhance Your Recovery

- Imagine your injury healing. E.g. imagine blood flowing to the area and the fibres coming back in line. This is an example of a technique known as mental imagery.
- If you are unable to physically practice your sport, practice it in your head. This has been shown to stimulate the muscles involved in the activity.
- Say positive words or statements to yourself (e.g. “I can do this” or “I’ll be back!”) whenever you are feeling down or to help you cope with difficult or painful rehab/treatment sessions.
- Look upon your injury as an opportunity, e.g. If you are unable to run, look on being injured as a good opportunity to work on your upper body strength.