

What is injury recovery?

Exercise can play a key role in injury recovery by getting you back up to full speed as soon as possible.

Injuries can occur at work, on the sports field, as the result of an accident or through repetitive strain being placed on a joint or muscle. They can strike when you least expect it, and can have a debilitating effect on your everyday life and work.

Common injuries include:

- muscle pull and strain
- shoulder injury
- sprains, breaks or dislocation
- sprained ankle
- knee injuries

Exercise can play a key role in injury recovery however by getting you back up to full speed as soon as possible.

How does exercise help injury recovery?

One of the best ways to prevent injury is to listen to the warning signs the body gives out. The common expression “no pain, no gain” creates a large misconception. Pain is the body’s way of telling you something is not right!

What type of exercise is best for injury recovery?

The most effective way to minimise the risk of injury during exercise is to complete both a warm up and a cool down session of about 10 minutes duration. Light cardiovascular exercise using the same muscles that will be used during the main activity will prepare the body for exercise by:

- slowly increasing heart rate.
- raising breathing rate.
- flexibility is absolutely a part of every good warm-up.
- increasing the blood flow to the working muscles.
- warming up the muscles.

Once the muscles are warm, they become more elastic and are ready to be used.

A cool down is just as important as a warm up so following activity add some gentle stretches. Whether choosing to perform static stretches (by holding each position for 10-30 seconds) or performing dynamic stretches (by moving the body through a functional range of motion) flexibility is essential for the muscles, tendons and joints.

For those wanting to maintain their exercise regime whilst in recovery, you could consider the below alternatives:

- For **sore hips** do high box squats, half box squats shouldn’t be the primary exercise for people that are fit and healthy, but the high box squat is great for when those are experiencing an injury to their hips or if hips are feeling stiff and sore. By decreasing the range of hip flexion the high box squat will be less aggravating on the hip joint.
- For **sore shoulders** the floor press is a great alternative to the traditional bench press for those with shoulder issues. With a decreased range of motion there will be less stress on the shoulder capsule as well. The floor press is also a great exercise to help bust through that sticking point.
- **Sore knees** require a re-focus from knee dominant movements such as squats and lunges to more hip dominant movements like deadlifts (and variations), back extensions & good mornings. The more vertical shin angle during these exercises means less knee flexion and more hip flexion allowing different aspects of the lower body to be trained when knees aren’t being friendly.

Always seek professional advice from an Accredited Exercise Physiologist. Find one here: www.essa.org.au/find-aep