



## Returning after a layoff - How much is too much?

Whether it's returning from an injury, summer vacation, or from COVID-19, it is important coaches have a detailed plan for returning to sport after a lengthy layoff.

Too much too fast can result in injury, burnout, and ultimately withdrawal from sport for any athlete.

### Tips for coaches:

- **Reset team and/or individual goals**
  - Have a conversation with your athlete(s) about realistic new goals and priorities.
  - Have them write out their SMART goals and track their progress (see template below)
- **Go back to the basics – Training Smarter, Not Harder**
  - Re-learn drills and techniques
  - Practice doesn't make perfect – Perfect practice makes perfect
  - Focus on incremental gains (building back up)
  - A reasonable starting point is about 50% of your old training volume and intensity.

Previous Daily Training Volume:

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Previous Weekly Training Volume:

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- **Monitor how your athletes feel**
  - Some soreness is to be expected, but if an athlete feels especially bad, it's best to have them take some time off and re-introduce at lower levels.
  - The way your athletes feel will determine if you should add more or less
  - Consider incremental 5-10% weekly gains, both on the field and in the gym.
  - Avoid hitting the gym at the same weight level or repetitions from before the layoff

### Daily Check-in Questions

- ✓ How are you physically feeling?
- ✓ How are you feeling emotionally?
- ✓ How are you sleeping?
- ✓ How do you think things are progressing?



- **Communicate with your athletes and parents**
  - Many athletes will think they can dive in and get back to where they were.
  - Share with your athletes WHY going back to the basics and incremental gains are important for their health and safety.
- **Make it fun**
  - Think of new ways to teach a drill with a game or activity.
  - Ask your athletes for their input, and for new ideas on drills
  - Focus on what your athletes CAN do, not any limitations they may have at the moment

#### **Signs and symptoms of overtraining:**

- Always sore – lingering pains/injuries
- Don't feel rested (sleep issues)
- Getting sick more often
- Performance plateau
- Fatigue
- Lack of excitement that used to exist
- Loss of appetite

#### References:

Kenny LW, Wilmore J, Costill D, 2020, *Physiology of Sport and Exercise 7th Edition*, Human Kinetics.  
Vealey RS, Chase MA, 2016, *Best Practice for Youth Sport*, Human Kinetics.



### SMART GOAL SETTING

<b>SMART GOAL TRACKING TEMPLATE</b>	<b>Goal 1:</b>	<b>Goal 2:</b>	<b>Goal 3:</b>
<b>Learning Objective</b>			
<b>Projected Outcome</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Target Date for Completion</b>			
<b>Progress/Status</b>			