

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Athlete Note

Developing Champion Athletes on and off the Field

Injury Recovery is a Three-Pronged Proposition



younger ages, and other factors.

Nearly 30 million U.S. children and adolescents participate in some form of organized sport today. As a result of this increase in participation and sports specialization at an earlier age, there has also been a rise in sports-related injuries. According to the Center for Disease Control, youth sports are now the leading cause of adolescent injury. Injuries that were uncommon to see in young athletes 25 years ago are now prevalent due to athletes specializing in one sport at

Every athlete will need to deal with injury at some point. Most of these injuries are minor cuts, scrapes and bruises. However, when it comes to recovering from a more serious injury like a broken bone or ligament tear, some young athletes may have to undergo a lengthy recovery process to work their way back to good health.

Injury Recovery Impacts

Physical	Mental (Thoughts)	Emotional (Feelings)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow physical healing (rest & heal) Restore full range of motion to injured area Regain normal gait (leg injuries) Regain muscle strength – all parts of the body Regain cardiovascular endurance Rebuild sport-specific physical skills Dealing with physical pain of recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughts of possible career end* Concern over possible re-injury Loss of team status (playing time, starting role etc.) Lack of confidence in ability to return to former performance levels (What if I can't?) Pushing self - I know my body better than the doctors & trainers Who am I now, what is my purpose? Will I be forgotten? Rebuild mental toughness skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustration that recovery isn't fast enough Fear of failure (won't recover) Depression/loss of self-esteem Fear of embarrassment after recovery Anxiety over re-injury Loss of identity if self-esteem is too closely tied to athletics Boredom of recovery routines Feeling detached from team Dealing with emotional pain of recovery Feeling like a failure/disappointment to others

*may include suicidal thinking

©WR Matthews, 2019

Athletes recovering from a sports-related injury, should remember that recovery takes place on three levels – the **physical**, the **mental** and the **emotional**, as outlined in the accompanying chart to the left ([click here to download the document](#)). Athletes need to follow the trainer/doctor physical recovery recommendations, and especially remember to monitor their mental/emotional state. Work to remain optimistic and not become too discouraged during recovery.

This video to the right developed by **Athlete's Connected** at the University of Michigan explains how injury affects athlete mental health and what athletes, with the help of their coaches, trainers and parents can do to deal with the emotional trauma brought about by sports injuries.

Experts in sports medicine suggest the following [Four Keys](#) to manage both the

physical and emotional recovery process:



1. [Set goals, but keep them realistic.](#)
2. [Ensure you are actively participating in the recovery process.](#)
3. [Connect with other athletes who have had similar injuries.](#)
4. [Stay involved with your team during recovery.](#)



Season and Career Ending Injuries

When an injury cuts an athlete's season short or ends a career, it can be devastating. Many young athletes have been training since a very young age. Their daily routines have been built around their sport, and for some, their identity has become defined by their sporting success; then, it's all taken away in a matter of seconds, typically through no fault of their own. In this situation, an athlete often feels incredible

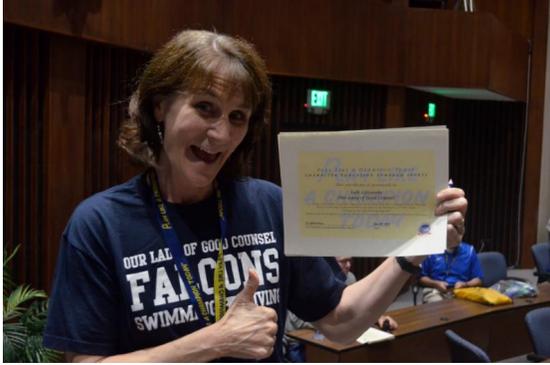
sadness and can become so distraught that they consider or even attempt suicide. If this happens to you, asking for help is a sign of strength. In another video produced by **Athletes Connected**, NCAA All-American heavyweight wrestler, Adam Coon, shares his struggles dealing with a season-ending injury.

According to Douglas D. Glazer, DPE, ATC, author of recent study on psychological readiness to return to sport, and Assistant Professor of Sports Science at Endicott (MA) College, "When it comes to injury rehabilitation, it's really impossible to separate what's going on in the athlete's brain from what happens in the rest of the body." Psychological readiness to stick with rehab and have the mental and emotional desire to return to play usually increases as athletes progress through the rehabilitation process; so athletes a positive mental attitude will help improve the whole process.

Athletes are typically eager to return to playing their sport as soon as possible; however, returning too soon or too fast will actually set you back further. Be disciplined to take the proper steps for injury recovery physically, emotionally and mentally. Ensure that your parents, coaches, athletic trainers and sports medicine specialists are monitoring your progress. Proper injury recovery takes time, patience and encouragement.

Send Your Coach to the *Play Like a Champion Sports Leadership Conference* to Learn More...

One approach to dealing with the mental/emotional aspect of injury recovery that is rapidly gaining acceptance in the sports psychology world is Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC). According to research conducted by Kristin Neff, PhD, people with higher levels of MSC practice are more



resilient. In one study conducted on returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, Neff and colleagues found that levels of MSC were a better predictor of the development of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than length of time in a war zone – soldiers with higher levels of self-compassion were much less likely to develop PTSD than those who were more self-critical. To find out more about Mindful Self-Compassion (and other valuable youth sports topics), join us for a

session on the topic at this year's [Play Like a Champion Today Leadership Conference](#) June 21-22, 2019.

This is the final week to get the REDUCED EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION, so [ACT NOW!!!](#)

Prayer of an Injured Athlete

Dear Lord, you have blessed me with many abilities. Now that I am injured and unable to fully utilize my gifts, I pray for your grace to endure this challenge. When I feel discouraged, help me to lift up my sadness to you. When I feel like giving up or giving in, help me to remember that you Lord endured the ultimate hardship, being put to death.



Help me to trust the recovery process and pay attention to my body, my mind and my heart. Feeling hopeless is normal, but with the hope that you bring me, I can endure and overcome.

Amen.

Play Like a Champion Today Educational Series
PO Box 72, Notre Dame, IN 46556 | information@playlikeachampion.org
www.playlikeachampion.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

