

Returning to Training Following Mild Suspected COVID-19 Infection: A Pragmatic Guide for Scholarship Athletes



People with COVID-19 infection may have a deterioration after 1 week of illness



Evidence of heart muscle damage (myocarditis) from some cases



Only return to training (Phase 1) when 7 days clear of symptoms

For details
of RPE scale and
exercise recovery
programme:



Phase 1

Goal: Preparation for return to exercise

Exercise: - Rest
- Breathing exercises
- Flexibility/mobility

Suggested: RPE 6-8 (20pt. scale)

Min. of 7 days at each stage; drop back a stage if finding difficult, only move up when progression criteria is met. If not able to progress as expected, discuss with coaching staff

Phase 3

Goal: Moderate intensity aerobic and strength challenges, alongside preparation for sports-specific drills

Exercise: Start with 2 intervals of short (up to 5 mins) aerobic, separated by 1 block of recovery to return HR below 50% max. Add 1 interval per day. Continue mobility and flexibility exercise.

Suggested: RPE 12-14, keep <70% HR max.
Progression: Once you achieve 30 min session and feel recovered after 1 hour.

Phase 2

Goal: Mild intensity aerobic challenge

Exercise: - Walking in graduated increases by 10-15 mins/day
- Continue mobility and flexibility work; avoid resistance and intensity exercises

Suggested: RPE 6-11

Progression: Once you can walk for 30 mins at RPE 11, progress to Phase 3

Phase 4

Goal: Moderate intensity aerobic and strength challenges, alongside coordination, functional and sports-specific skills to gain confidence.

Exercise: Sports-specific exercises as guided by coaching staff; suggest using ratio of 2:1 days training.

Suggested: RPE 12-14, keep <70% HR max.
Progression: Once 3 cycles complete, fatigue levels are normal and agreed with coaching staff

Phase 5

Goal: Increase sport-specific load with higher training intensity aerobic and strength sessions

Exercise: - Return to coach-led training with daily reassessments

Suggested: RPE >15, >70% HR max. as tolerated

Any abnormal shortness of breath for activity level or return of symptoms including temperature, lethargy or chest pain: stop and seek medical advice

Look after your mental health:



Keep structure to your day



Stay connected with friends, your team & family



If you feel anxious, down or low, seek support



Only train if:

You don't feel lethargic

You feel recovered from exercise

Your heart rate recovers as normal

For more information:

www.imperial.ac.uk/sport/movefromhome
www.rehabguru.com/covid19-recovery



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