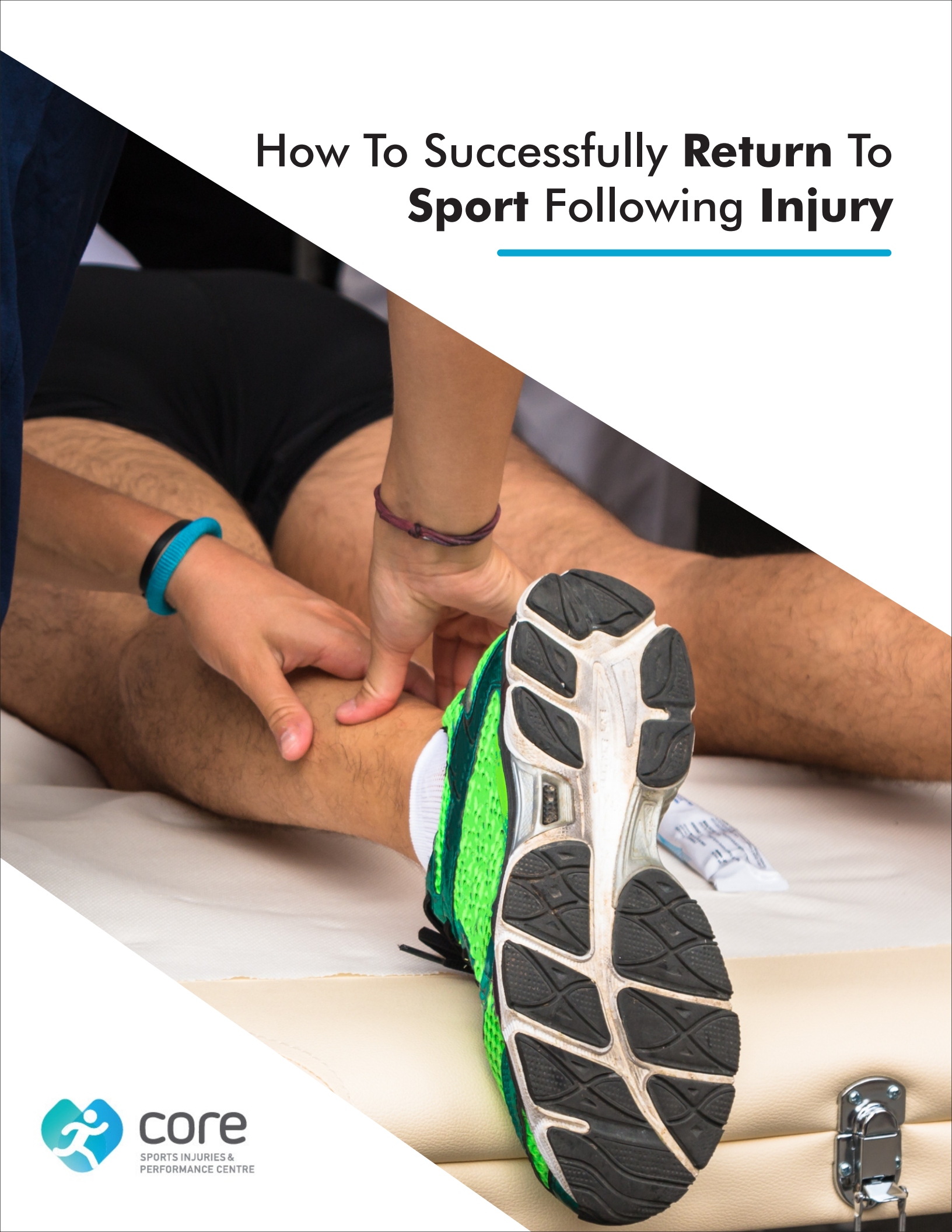


How To Successfully **Return To Sport** Following **Injury**



core
SPORTS INJURIES &
PERFORMANCE CENTRE

How To Successfully Return To Sport Following Injury

There are several factors contributing to why previous injuries can impact on a successful return to sport and exercise, and subsequently have an impact on the quality of your performance when you do return.

If you are an elite or high level athlete, or someone who just wants to get back to your weekly exercise routine to stay fit and healthy however injuries keep plaguing your ability to perform these tasks, then you need to read this report to understand how you can achieve the rehab outcomes you desire with our unique **'Core Sports Injuries and Performance Centres' Rehab Program'**.





INTRODUCTION

I'm Joel McPhee, one of the senior physiotherapists at Core Physiotherapy and Exercise Centres. I've been lucky enough to work in the sports rehabilitation field for over 10 years with a background in sports science, exercise prescription and physiology, sports psychology and physiotherapy.

I have worked with social exercise participants and weekend warriors, through to national and international sporting teams and athletes. I have been exposed to a multitude of different sporting injuries, and unfortunately, witness to why some rehab programs have failed to allow the participant to make a successful return to their chosen sport. I now understand the main reasons why some people find themselves under prepared to return to sport, suffer recurring injuries time and time again, or are not confident mentally to return to competition following injury.

As a physiotherapist and sports injury consultant I became aware of the pressure and common misconceptions people make about how injuries occur, and what should be done to recover and prevent them moving forward. Unfortunately, in most sporting environments, time is not a luxury most can afford. There is often pressure to make deadlines for certain games, competitions and events, or just not wanting to lose the first 4 weeks progress of an 8 week bootcamp challenge!

The 3 main factors that can delay a successful return to sport are:

1. Poor or inadequate initial assessment and diagnosis
2. Changes to biomechanics and movement patterns causing secondary issues/injuries
3. Not having a clear understanding of what sport and exercise rehabilitation looks like versus general exercise for fitness and strength training.

Often a major cause of why some injuries seem to take longer than expected, or fail to recover in time, can be related to the initial assessment and diagnosis you receive. Not everyone has the luxury of elite athletes to have access to free, state of the art radiology equipment and sports physicians the day after their injury. Therefore, having an experienced physiotherapist to perform a detailed history and objective assessment is crucial. Understanding appropriate healing times and what guidelines to adhere to during your rehab will make a significant difference to obtaining your desired outcome. This may also include understanding how the body adapts and compensates with certain movement patterns while injured; as with many things in rehab – more does not equal better! What works for general strength and conditioning may not be appropriate for recovering from an injury. You need to train smarter not harder.



There are 3 main ways we can help athletes overcome injuries:

1. Education and understanding of the injury – empower you to be in charge!
2. Accurate diagnosis of not only the current injury – but often what underlying biomechanical issues caused the injury to occur in the first place.
3. The design of a specific rehabilitation program unique to the individual that not only focuses on recovering from a current injury but preventing future recurrences and reinjuries.

It is no secret that exercise and sport is addictive. Most people want to participate in their chosen sport or activity, not sit on the sidelines. Having a clear understanding of what caused your injury, and what you can expect in your rehabilitation is key. Often this involves understanding what **NOT** to do, as much as what **TO** do; where pacing becomes more important and when a handbrake is required to allow sufficient healing time.

Outside of traumatic injuries caused by external circumstances, understanding the factors that may have directly or non-directly caused the injury to occur is essential. Far too often in rehabilitation the focus is on treating the individual's symptoms, which very often is not related to the underlying cause of the pain. This can lead to reinjury and poor performance when returning to sport as the underlying biomechanical weakness or instability may still be present long after the pain has gone.



When it comes to sport specific rehabilitation and strengthening from an injury, it is important to understand the differences in the structure of the area that is injured. For example, in the shoulder joint there are several different structures that could be injured, from the bony joint itself to the soft tissue ligaments, tendons and muscles surrounding it. Having an injury of the structures deep within the joint are not going to necessarily benefit from getting in the gym and doing upper body weights. I like to use the analogy of a house. There is no point in building a highly reinforced, heavily structured house, if you are building it on an unstable foundation like quicksand. Think of the shoulder like the house – there is no point in building up the superficial muscles on the outside of the shoulder, if you don't have adequate control of the deep stabilising muscles of the joint – the foundation. This goes for all joints in your body including your spine – which is where people will often confuse having a strong and stable “Core” with having a 6 pack.

Often when it comes to rehabilitation for athletes or people that are reasonably fit and have been active most of their lives, they have fairly good compensatory movement patterns. When an injury or weakness starts to occur, their body is good at using other muscles to perform the task, which is why some injuries get lumped into the “she'll be right” category. Until they aren't. Often these compensatory patterns can make injuries really hard to recover from, as it is a matter of avoiding over use of the secondary muscles or movement pattern and allowing the weak area to rehabilitate and get stronger. The old saying “many hands make light work” is appropriate when it comes to strengthening a weak area. Having all the muscles work together is more beneficial for sports performance and reducing re-injury rates, than a few muscles taking the load for all of them. This is often how secondary tendonitis, bursitis, muscles strains and joint irritation can occur following an injury. A focus on muscle efficiency as opposed to just strength is integral in sports rehabilitation.

When it comes to returning to competition or sport following an injury it is essential that the individual is prepared for the demands of the chosen activity. Unfortunately, no amount of rest or time can prepare for the demands of high intensity activity. Injuries can reoccur when the demand or load of an activity is greater than the injured area can tolerate. This is where gradually building up an area's exposure to repetitive loads, speeds, resistances, directions and forces needs to be integrated into a sport specific rehab program. As it is difficult to reproduce the forces and demands of most sports within a clinical treatment room setting, Core's Sports Injuries and Performance Centre's utilise both onsite and offsite gym and pool environments to reproduce and replicate the demands of the activity the individual is returning to. Fitness assessments and return to sport evaluations are essential to ensure that you are ready both physically and mentally to return to the desired activity.



IN SUMMARY

From my experience working in the sports rehab environment there are many reasons as to how injuries can impact a return to sport, however, by integrating the preceding steps into your rehab plan you will gain an understanding of what it takes to successfully and completely rehabilitate from injury. Shifting your focus from treating the symptoms and hoping time will be enough to get back to the level of activity you desire is essential. Knowing what to do following an injury to prevent future recurrences will reduce the likelihood of time spent on the sidelines – as they say – “prevention is better than cure”.

If you would like more information on how our Core Sports Injuries and Performance Centre's can assist you, please visit <https://corehealthcare.com.au/physio-exercise/sports-physiotherapy>

To book an initial Physiotherapist and Sports Injury Consultants Assessment please call 1300 012 273, or direct message us at www.facebook.com/CorePhysioExercise/

Thanks for taking the time to learn how to successfully return to sport following an injury!

Kind Regards

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