

ACE FIT LIFE

How to Prepare for Exercise After an Injury

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Injuries occur at any time and for any reason. If you get injured, you may not know how to proceed and prepare for exercise post-injury. This mind-and-body guide can help prepare you for a brighter, injury-free future in fitness and performance.

Seek Medical Care

Pain, swelling, discoloration of the skin and chronic discomfort is your body's way of letting you know that something is not right. Acute pain, if left untreated, eventually leads to chronic pain, which usually requires longer recovery and treatment methods. The first step to overcoming an injury is to seek medical care. Follow your healthcare professional's recovery and rehabilitation protocols to ensure that your body heals appropriately. Pushing beyond protocols and avoiding corrective care prolongs recovery, so take care of the injury before planning your first post-injury run, hike or workout.

Overcome Mental Battles

One of the hardest things to overcome when injured is the mental battle caused from a lack of movement and progress. If you're someone who thrives with regular exercise, you may find yourself disconnecting emotionally when forced to be sedentary. Also, you may be concerned about losing some of the fitness you've worked so hard to

achieve.

It is important to accept the present moment. When injured, it is easy to let the mind spiral with negative thoughts, and extreme sadness can hinder the body from healing. All of this can lead to depression or despair, so it's important to remind yourself that your body will once again reach its potential.

Question Yourself

Work to overcome mental battles by answering these questions, which will increase awareness of the injury and prepare you better for the future.

How did I get here?

This question can help you realize why or how you became injured. Reasons vary from overtraining, not wearing the appropriate footwear, pushing limits or not paying attention. If unsure, take note of what could be improved for the future.

How do I get out of here?

Once you define how the injury occurred, you can better plan for the future. Talk to your healthcare professional about appropriate rehabilitation progressions. Ask the provider to specify if the injury is an imbalance or genetic issue. For example, plantar fasciitis is most often caused by overuse, whereas a bunion (bony growth) develops in early ages and is labeled as genetic.

Ask your provider whether the injury is correctable with rehab, or if exercise alterations are required to avoid future problems.

Is the injury a blessing in disguise?

Ask yourself, "Is there a silver lining to the injury?" Sometimes the most positive situations arise out from a negative event. For example, an injured marathon trainee may be forced to correct his or her running gait during rehabilitation. Because of the improvement, the runner improves performance and spares his or her body from running hundreds of training miles with incorrect form, which could have led to a more severe injury.

What seems like a setback may actually be for your benefit.

How do I stay positive?

The first step to staying positive is to remember that your injury is temporary. Next, use positive-thinking tools, such as motivational quotes or positive-reinforcement meditations, to maintain a positive outlook. Regardless of which tool is your preference, do your best to think positively and avoid falling into the trap of doomsday thinking.

Also, talk about your injury as if it is temporary. Use sentences such as, "I will run again," rather than, "I hope to run again." Saying, "I will" trains the brain to know what it wants and focuses on the specific goal. "I will" clearly defines what you want and sets the tone for your future. This determination keeps the mind focused and clear of distractions.

The Importance of Cross Training

Cross training allows the body to exercise while moving in various planes of motion. This reduces repetitive motions and impact from performing the same exercise repeatedly. Post-recovery, it is important not to overstress the healed area, which is still susceptible to reinjury. Take the load and stress off the body with cross training.

For example, a weightlifter can benefit from alternative resistance training such as yoga or Pilates, while a runner can benefit from low-impact cardio exercise such as aqua jogging, swimming or cycling.

Are you seeking exercises for post-rehab exercise? If so, these recent ACE blog posts guide you toward improved training for various injuries and ailments.

[How to Relieve Shoulder Pain Using Myofascial Release Techniques](#)

[Injury Prevention for the Low Back](#)

[Core-strengthening Exercises That Help With Back Injury Rehab](#)

[Yoga for Neck and Back Relief](#)



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