

The Use Of Psychological Interventions For Injured Athletes To Regain Peak Performance

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Psychological skill training (PST) has been shown to benefit injured athletes to regain peak performance. Imagery is a part of PST that has been proposed as a predominant intervention. Imagery in sport serves multiple functions. They are mainly tailored according to individual differences and athletes' requirements. Psychologists have recommended various imagery functions in sport, including: skills practice and learning; performance enhancement and competition preparation; facilitating psychological skills development; injury rehabilitation and recovery from heavy training; tactical and game skills development process. Sport psychologist recommended imagery interventions for athletes as an injury prevention technique and rehabilitation procedure for recovery during the post injury phase. Imagery can be a monitoring technique to detect any general life and athletic stress conditions among athletes, and with the implementation of a relaxation imagery intervention for injury rehabilitation, the condition can be reduced. For post injury interventions, imagery has been used to facilitate the recovery process, to enhance adherence to rehabilitation sessions, and to replace actual physical activity during injury to maintain performance (Arvinen-Barrow et al., 2015). Athletes' rehabilitation programs should be developed by recommendation and implemented under the supervision of a sports medicine team (e.g., physician, athlete, trainers, coach, and sport psychologist). Overall, mind-body rehabilitation processes that consist of psychological and physical aspects can be implemented and should expedite athletes' injury recovery. For example, imagery has been specifically used as part of injury rehabilitation techniques. Lebon, Guillot, and Collet (2012) reported the use of a combination of imagery and physical therapy to enhance muscle strength during rehabilitation sessions on anterior cruciate ligament surgery patients. Athletes are normally involved in demanding physical activities during their training and competition sessions. In summary, as imagery is a mental procedure, imagery training could be incorporated as a potential strategy for athletes to recover from heavy physical activities, injury rehabilitation, and to regain peak performance.