

Supporting The Injured And Rehabbing Athlete With Evidence Based Nutrition Strategies

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Athletes, by the nature of their training and competition, are subject to injuries specific to the demands of their sport and training programmes. Injuries are an unfortunate, often ill-timed and unfortunate part of the world of sport at any level. Injuries range from mild to severe, vary widely in the length and the degree of the cessation of training from the short term (days) to more long term (weeks or months), with some injuries becoming career ending. Prolonged inactivity and limb immobilization have profound implications for return to play, athlete wellbeing and body composition for the injured and rehabbing athlete. Well planned, appropriate and highly individualised nutrition strategies can positively impact this phase and provide a supportive environment at an often difficult time for these athletes (and coaches). While many nutritional supplements may be promoted at this time only a limited number offer evidence for providing a valuable contribution. Good nutrition practices remain a corner stone of the care and support for the injured and rehabbing athlete at any level of competition. Avoid malnutrition and the provision of a nutrient dense diet with adequate energy and protein that is periodised and reviewed in line with the progression of the athletes response over the phases of rehabilitation and wound healing are key elements for a successful programme. The role and impact of the Sports Dietitian or Performance Nutritionist, as an integral part of the multidisciplinary team, in supporting the injured athlete and those undergoing intensive rehabilitation programmes is discussed.