

# RETURN TO TRAINING CHECKLIST



With COVID-19 cases starting to drop across Canada, most locations are now easing restrictions on public locations, including gyms, pools, and other training facilities. While this is good news for us in the sporting community, here is a checklist to run through to make sure your return to training is healthy and safe.

*Each point in the checklist outline the discipline(s) that are best suited to help you with that element if you find yourself in need of extra help. Our contact information is at the end of the checklist.*



## TRAINING VOLUME AND INTENSITY

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

PHYSIOLOGY

COACH

The Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association (CSCCa) and National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) came up with return-to-training guidelines.<sup>1</sup> To make sure you follow these recommendations, look at your training level before COVID-19 closures and compare that to what you have been doing during the closures.

- What is the change in training hours and intensity?
- How many hours per week were you doing compared to now?
- How would you rate the exertion out of 10 for those session compared to now?

Talk to your coach and see what kind of training volume and intensity they will expect from you in the upcoming weeks/months and work a plan to gradually get to those expectations. The CSCCa and NSCA recommends taking the number of weekly training hours your coach has in mind and work backward 4 weeks<sup>1</sup>:

Week	Percent reduction from full training volume
Week 1 – First week back	50%
Week 2	30%
Week 3	20%
Week 4	10%
Week 5 – Full Training	0%

Keep in mind that these recommendations apply to those that will be increasing training. Some of you might have been doing a lot more at home without work or school. If this is the case for you, expect that you might have to reduce the hours you can train as you go back to work or school.

**MOVEMENT PATTERNS****PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

Many sports have certain movement patterns, or ways you move your body, that are hard to replicate when training at home. Cole Vincent (Strength & Conditioning Coach, CSCM) recommends that you examine what kind of movement patterns you have been performing during the closures and compare to your sport.

- Are they similar to those found in your sport?
- Were you performing them at the same strength or explosiveness as your sport?

Keep that in mind as you return to training. Ease into movements that you have not completed in a while, especially ones that require more strength and explosiveness. Your neuromuscular system (brain-muscle connection) needs some time to re-adjust to those movement patterns. Likewise, expect to feel some soreness after re-introducing a movement after an extended period off.

**HEAT STRESS****PHYSIOLOGY****DIETETICS**

- Does your sport involve outdoor training or competition?
- Do you train in a warm or poorly ventilated facility?

If that is the case, and you have not been training outdoors throughout the spring, consider *gradually* exposing yourself to hot or humid temperatures to reduce the risk of exertional heat illness. Starting training in heat mid-June can be challenging, and your body needs time to get acclimated to hot weather.

- ⇒ Familiarize yourself with symptoms of exertional heat stroke. This is a medical emergency.  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heat-stroke/symptoms-causes/syc-20353581>
- ⇒ Consider exercising at cooler times of the day (morning or evening) and look at your session length. A multi-hour training session can drag into hotter parts of the day.
- ⇒ Wear lighter and looser clothing, a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen during warm training sessions.
- ⇒ Reduce a session training load (volume and/or intensity) if the weather is warmer or more humid than expected.
- ⇒ Ensure you hydrate well before, during, and after training.
- ⇒ On particularly hot or humid days, have someone else with you that can ensure your safety.

**NUTRITION** **DIETETICS**

Your training load like changed drastically mid-March, and there were probably some significant shifts in your eating patterns due to being stuck at home. If you are changing your training load, recognize that your nutritional needs will also change with that.

- Does your dietary intake meet your energy needs?
- Are you taking in the nutrients you need?
- Are you hydrating adequately?

**MENTAL HEALTH** **MENTAL PREPARATION**

As you return to sport, you will likely experience some stress. This may be the longest you have been away from your sport. It might be difficult getting used to a new training load again, returning to work or school, and you may have to re-learn skills you used to have mastered. You can use the below strategies to help you manage your mindset as you enter training. There are 4 C's to hardiness:

**Commitment** – know why you are doing your sport. Know who you want to be and what that means for how you are going to deal with challenges and setbacks.

**Control** – focus on what you have control over (i.e., your response, your attitude, your thoughts). When you start to worry, bring your head back to what you can control right now.

**Compete** – embrace the challenges of this new situation. You are competitive, how cool that you have a new situation to figure out and overcome.

**Connect** – know who is on your support team. Reach out and get support when you need to.

Have regular check-ins with where you are at emotionally. Athletes often think they are invincible. We are resilient when we are honest and deal with emotions as they come up.

And maybe most importantly, be kind to yourself. Be curious when you struggle and treat yourself the way you would treat a teammate who was struggling.

**ROUTINE** **MENTAL PREPARATION**

With restrictions being lifted, life will be going back to a more 'normal' routine. This includes your sport training schedule, but also your work and school schedule. This can be particularly challenging if your work or schooling was also drastically impacted by COVID-19 closures.

Returning to a more rigid schedule means more juggling the different facets of your life and trying to balance their demands on your time. This also takes a bit more preparation and planning of your days if you spend a greater proportion of your time away from home.



Returning to a more rigid routine means more rigid sleep/wake times. Keeping in mind that returning to training will be more physically and mentally taxing, therefore sleep should be a priority to ensure proper recovery.

- Is the time you are going to sleep and waking up compatible with your training, work, or school schedule?

If not, consider a gradual shift to your sleep/wake times to ease into your new schedule.

For travelling athletes, we usually recommend shifting sleep/wake times by one hour every day to help with jet lag, starting several days before they leave. This shift can be more gradual (e.g. 30 or 45 minute shift per day) depending on how drastically you need to change your schedule, how many days you have to do so, and your ability to shift your schedule.



COVID-19 also brought some significant changes to our lives with cleanliness and hygiene. A routine training session might now involve a few more steps to complete.

As we re-open at the CSCM, there will be different procedures than before to protect the health of our athletes, our staff, and the community. Likewise, all sports in Manitoba had to submit a return-to-train plan outlining their procedures to reduce the risk of spread the virus. Talk to your coach(es) if you have questions about the expectations surrounding training.

In the meantime, follow Health Canada's recommendations:

- Stay informed, be prepared, and follow public health advice.
- Make plans and talk about them.
- Continue to practise good hygiene.
- Stay home and away from others if you are feeling ill.
- Keep practicing physical distancing.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects (including your sporting equipment).
- Stay home if you have a high risk of serious illness.
- Wear a mask or face covering.
- Limit non-essential travel.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/measures-reduce-community.html#con>

## CONTACT

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