

# Performance Point

## Psychology of Injury Management



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Athletes who experience an injury have several issues to deal with besides just the physical impact of the injury. Below are some general psychological guidelines that will **allow you to manage your injury** instead of **having the injury manage you**.

### 1. Be a “Driver”, not a “Passenger”

It is your responsibility to get better and to use all the resources around you in the process. Be in control and be ACTIVE in your rehabilitation process, not PASSIVE – don't wait for others to make you better, do it yourself with their support and guidance.

### 2. Look to the Future

If you are constantly 'living' in the past and re-visiting your injury and the experiences around it then you are not giving yourself the best opportunity for a successful rehabilitation. Therefore, reflect on the past and learn from it, but keep moving forward.

- Living in the Past = negative focus on rehabilitation, bitterness of situation, focus on the obstacles and barriers to getting better, blame-focused and angry
- Look to the Future = positive focus on possibilities, optimism about recovery, focus on solutions, setting goals, focus on what is important now in order to move forward

### 3. Work Smart

Working smart involves making smart decisions inside/outside the rehabilitation program and realizing that injury rehabilitation takes place 24/7, not just while you are at physiotherapy, etc. This 24/7 approach includes being smart about nutrition, sleep, activities of daily living, hobbies and interests.

### 4. Be Bigger Than Your Injury

It is very important that you are "bigger" than your injury, and it isn't bigger than you. When you let the injury be bigger than you, then it takes control of your life. You need to keep your injury in perspective and not let it interfere with all the other areas in your life that are only minimally impacted by your injury. This involves maintaining your normal social activities, modifying hobbies and activities of daily living as needed, and finding alternative activities to do during the day (when you would normally be training) so that you can maintain a 'regular' schedule.

### 5. Emotional Balance

The road to injury recovery often has many ups and downs from an emotional and psychological standpoint. When you are on a 'high' there is a risk of doing too much and trying to rush the recovery, which often leads to a setback. When you are in a 'low' there is a risk of feeling helpless and hopeless for the future, which often leads to missed opportunities and ignoring small but significant progress. These are normal reactions and you need to 'temper' the 'highs' and 'lows' so that you can keep a consistent and progressive approach to managing your injury.

The **Canadian Athlete Insurance Program (CAIP)** exists to provide athletes with comprehensive sport injury insurance protection. This allows athletes to seek therapy and medical care without the full financial burden. For more information on this program, please consult [Meagan Ponton](#)

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