



Policy statement

NZMF is committed to initiating vocational rehabilitation programmes whenever appropriate for competition related personal injury. The aim is to assist optimum recovery, safe return to training and resumption of normal lifestyle without undue delay. The benefits of rehabilitation are greatest when the process is begun as soon as possible.

Athletes are expected to participate fully in their own rehabilitation programme which will be established through a consultative approach. The injured person is entitled to support, advice and representation from their nominated representative⁸. Medical information will be obtained with formal consent from the Individual Athlete Member and will be treated confidentially.

Purpose

Through planned rehabilitation, to manage proactively the early return of Athlete members to as normal a life as possible, having regard to the consequences of the personal injury.

The Gym Owner is responsible for:

- identifying suitable alternative training, where possible, to enable a safe return to work for the Athlete member
- confirming that a concussion rehabilitation plan is established, following any stand down period
- monitoring the Athlete member's progress towards recovery and the suitability of the training that works with the Athlete's rehabilitation programme
- taking steps to see that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained consistent with the principles of the Privacy Act 1993
- reviewing health and safety management after a critical event, or if there is a change in training practices and procedures or health and safety policy
- acting as the health and safety representative and person responsible for liaison with ACC on behalf of your organisation if the injury is sustained during training. If the injury is sustained during an Event the NZMF representative will act as the health and safety representative.

Athlete members are responsible for:

- participating in an appropriate rehabilitation programme, including a concussion return to training programme which requires alternative training or restricted training and contact
- providing ongoing medical certificates to the Gym Owner.

Rehabilitation procedure

Safe return to Training for all athletes

An Athlete member who has experienced a serious injury and who has taken time off to recover will be supported in a return to training as early as possible and in accordance with medical advice. This involves a partnership between the Athlete member and the Gym Owner, medical treatment providers and others as appropriate in the circumstances (see concussion return to training guidelines). At any stage the Athlete member can choose to be accompanied by a representative or support person. A safe return to work may involve a modification of the person's training environment, alternative training practices for a temporary period, and/or changes to the normal training hours.

⁸ For example, friend, colleague, trainer, family member

Medical information

The Athlete member must give a copy of their completed ACC forms, or medical certificate, from the treatment

provider (this must be a registered medical practitioner if stand down time longer than 30 days is involved, if a period of 30 days or less is imposed the notification can be from the NZMF Medical Commission), to the Gym Owner.

The medical certificate will state the Athlete member's capacity or incapacity for training and specify a date for review (second visit) by the treatment provider if required. Selected or restricted activities may also be specified for a certain period of time. If the injured person (Athlete Member) is stood down from training for more than 90 days they must provide a medical certificate confirming they are 'fit to train' to the NZMF and the Medical Commission of the NZMF.

Capacity to train and compete

The provision of suitable alternative and safe training is an essential part of rehabilitation. Alternative training is aimed at providing appropriate and safe training while an Athlete member rehabilitates to his/her full health. This is a proactive approach to enable an athlete to return to training as safely as possible and maximise the chances of full recovery.

The Gym Owner, in consultation with trainers and others as appropriate, will try to identify suitable alternative training schedule after considering:

- the nature and severity of the illness/injury
- the medical information provided and the restrictions imposed by treatment providers
- the previous technical and fitness level of the athlete
- the predicted timeframe for rehabilitation (if known).

Regular review

The Gym Owner will review the rehabilitation programme in consultation with the Athlete and other medical treatment providers at regular intervals (usually every two weeks) involving others as appropriate. Where uncertainty exists about the suitability of activities being performed or where the progress of a Athlete member is slower than anticipated, the Gym Owner will seek additional professional assistance as appropriate.

Future care

Where at any point it becomes clear that an Athlete member is not improving the Gym Owner will remove the athlete from training and refer the athlete to a medical professional. The Gym Owner will report and referrals to the NZMF Medical Commission and Board.

Definitions

- **'Rehabilitation'** means a process of active change and support with the goal of restoring the Athlete Member's health, independence and participation to the maximum extent practicable. It comprises treatment, concussion rehabilitation and physical rehabilitation.
- **'Rehabilitation plan'** means an individualised rehabilitation programme to facilitate the early and safe return of the Athlete Member to the same or equivalent training as those previously undertaken on a long-term basis.
- **'Alternative duties'** are early return to training interventions. They may include alternative activities, and removal from all training of a contact nature. These restrictions are a temporary modification of the athletes training schedule. They must not aggravate the personal injury or delay healing, must be compatible with medical and concussion specialists, and be subject to regular review.
- **'Serious harm'** means resulting in an injury or condition that amounts to or results in permanent loss of bodily function, or temporary severe loss of bodily function and/or any harm that causes the person to be hospitalised for a period of 48 hours or more.