

## Stages of Injury Recovery



Common thoughts for athletes feeling far out from return to competition:

*I feel like I stopped making progress, yet working harder than ever.*

*Taking it slow and easy feels like the easy way out.*

*I just want to get back on the field.*

*I am getting closer, let's speed this up.*

### The Late Rehab Phase

Athletes begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel and experience a range of emotions including, excitement, new energy, and nerves and doubts about returning to competition.

Rehab exercises begin to emulate game play movements and may notice being overly cautious about using the injured area.

Common thoughts:

*Will my knee hold up?*

*Does this soreness/pain mean I re-injured it?*

*Alright I am back, let me start playing with my team.*

### Given the Clearance

Your AT and medical doctors have given you the clearance to return to practice. For some there is tremendous joy, excitement, and relief; determined to show the team the progress they have made. For others, the return to practice can be anxiety provoking and filled with self-doubt worried about re-injury and/or ability.

Physical clearance to return may not always correlate with psychological readiness. Many athletes share this stage is the most difficult due to fear of injury and performance expectations. **At this stage, it is important to discuss 360 degree expectations from athlete, coaches, and AT and create new goals/timeline.**

Common thoughts of self-doubt:

*Will my knee still hold up?*

*What if I lost a step?*

*I am never going to catch up to my teammates?*

*I hope coach does not think I am done.*

### The Full Go!

After hours, days, weeks, months of sacrifice, pain, and determination, the athlete is back competing with their teammates. Though in many cases, internal reactions of anxiety linger. Often once athletes trust their injured area and repeatedly use it successfully, they are able to feel confident and competent.

