

USING MENTAL IMAGERY IN INJURED ATHLETES

Read below for the TOP TIPS!

VISUALIZE & PRACTICE

- Find a quiet space
- Use all 5 senses - feel the muscles activating, imagine the emotions.
- Picture the injury healing - the swelling decreasing and the tissue repairing.
- Think positive thoughts - how you will come back stronger
- Incorporate imagery in with with rehab as they work hand in hand.



SET IMAGERY GOALS

- Keep it specific to a task - “i want to complete this rehab exercise with correct form”
- Ensure they are realistic

Align them with recovery milestones:

- Early stage - visualize swelling decreasing & tissue repairing
- Mid-stage - Mentally rehearse strength building exercises
- Late-stage - visualise full-speed drills & back in a game scenario.



EXPERIMENT AND FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU!

Visual perspective:

- Try 1st person perspective (from your own eyes)
- Or 3rd person perspective (seeing yourself from your coaches eyes or opponents eyes)

Sensory inputs:

- Visual - seeing the movements clearly
- Kinaesthetic - feeling the movement and muscle activation
- Auditory - hearing the sounds of the sport or the coaches voice



CONSISTENCY IS KEY

- Daily 5-10 minute sessions are shown to be beneficial in an athletes return to play post injury (Hare, Evans and Callow, 2008)
- It will help to re-build confidence and reduce fear of re-injury.