

Return to Training After Injury Policy



Effectivity date: May 2026

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe and structured approach for swimmers returning to training following injury. It ensures that all swimmers receive appropriate medical clearance, progress gradually under the guidance of their coach, and reduce the risk of further injury. The policy promotes communication between swimmers, parents/guardians, coaches, the Welfare Officer and medical professionals, so that every return to training is safe, supportive, and in the best interests of the swimmer's health and long-term development.

Medical Clearance

- A swimmer must not return to training until they have been assessed and declared fit for light physical activity by a qualified healthcare professional (GP, physiotherapist, or relevant specialist).
- Written confirmation (e.g., letter/email from physiotherapist, GP note, or parental confirmation of professional advice) must be provided to the Head Coach and the Welfare Officer before training recommences.

Staged Return to Training

The return-to-swimming process will be gradual and tailored to the individual, considering the injury type, medical advice, and training age of the swimmer.

Stage 1 – Light Swimming (approx. 1–2 weeks):

- Low intensity swimming only (no sprinting, racing starts, or heavy kick sets)
- Reduced volume (e.g., 25–50% of normal training load).
- Avoid strokes or movements that may aggravate the injury.
- Swimmer may be asked to swim in an alternative squad to support recovery

Stage 2 – Controlled Progression (approx. 2–4 weeks):

- Gradual increase in training load and intensity as tolerated.
- Introduction of drills, controlled kicking, and aerobic sets.
- Land training modified or excluded depending on the injury.
- Swimmer may remain in an alternative squad to support recovery

Stage 3 – Return to Full Training (after 4–6 weeks, or as advised):

- Normal training activities resumed once pain-free and cleared by coach in consultation with swimmer/parent and the Welfare Officer
- Land training reintroduced gradually.

Communication

- The swimmer (and parent/guardian for under-18s) must keep the coach informed of and discomfort, pain, or setbacks.
- Coaches will adjust sessions in line with medical recommendations.

Safeguarding & Individual Needs

- All return-to-training plans will be age-appropriate and swimmer-centred.
- No swimmer will be pressured to return faster than medically advised.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following significant medical/sporting guidance updates.