



# RETURN TO PLAY

## WELLBEING RESOURCES

### VOLUME 2

To assist in your preparation as a player, this booklet includes 4 Wellbeing resources with tips and strategies to help you maximise your potential and give you the best opportunity to return to play effectively.

The activities and information provided are to enhance all parts of your wellbeing, it is important that we train both the body and the mind, in Volume 2 we will cover:

Body:

**Training Sessions-** Multi-sport cross training

**Nutrition-** Supporting your immune function with a healthy diet

Mind:

**Mental Performance-** Get clarity

**Wellbeing-** Building routines to achieve goals

### Physical Wellbeing Aspects:

**Multi-Sport Cross Training-** An opportunity to get the balance right between specificity and multi-sport cross training.

**NSWRL Women's State of Origin Coach Andrew Patmore**

**Rationale:** In the last 20 years many studies have been conducted and papers have been written on athletic development working toward elite levels during the adolescent years. In 1993 Andres Ericsson produced a study that had a major impact on how we looked at skill acquisition and youth training. He basically stated **10,000 hours of deliberate practice** is needed to become an expert performer, this included all skill based activities from playing instruments to coordinated skill sports.

Tunnel vision coaches and parents jumped on this concept in a naive manner and applied it to coaching young athletes across a number of skill acquisition sports, increasing specialisation of youth athletes in a single sport at younger and younger ages.

As coaches, parents and players we need to look at the 'whole' athlete development. Many experts such as Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery Dev. K. Misra have stated '**early specialisation of an athlete is a recipe for physical and emotional damage.**'



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My sermon is almost over and I promise to give some practical things to do soon but the same Professor has stated 3 basic ideas for the health development (physical and emotional) of young athletes.

1. Don't specialise in one youth sport.
2. Limit participation (training and playing) in your chosen sport to less than 8 months a year.
3. Limit participation (training and playing) to fewer hours per week than your age in years.

**Training in isolation-** Self-isolation or partner training has forced us to train differently (in some ways better) and we need to consider the benefits of multi-sports training and bringing some fun and enjoyment into your training. Below are a few sports and activities to consider and the benefits of doing them.

**a) Shooting Basketball Hoops-** setting up some cones, dribbling the ball (left and right handed) between them, while visualising defenders to avoid, then shooting goals has so many athletic development components. Playing one on one enhances creating space to shoot and helps develop hand/eye skills, coordination of feet movements and execution of soft hands for shooting. Lots of footy skills.

**b) Kicking a Soccer Ball around-** whether it be on your own or with a partner, dribbling and kicking a ball (left and right foot) builds coordination, stability in knees and ankles and feet movement patterns. Lateral feet movements are so important in any game, so those little steps to transfer weight and gain balance to kick are transferable to Rugby League.

**c) Tennis-** a great activity to work on transferring weight through good feet patterns and coordinating your upper body and hands to gain good timing in hitting the ball. Any elite sports person never looks like they are trying too hard, timing is everything.

**d) Simple Old School Handball-** A piece of chalk on the road or footpath and a partner to play against and your hand/eye coordination and small feet movements can begin.

By our very nature we are competitive and these activities gives us another chance to play games and achieve an outcome. These can all be done at varying levels of intensity to gain a cardio affect or as a skill development break between doing cardio work such as shuttles or 'Malcolms' style of training.

We need to break the mentality that unless its 'deliberate practice' or specific to the sport it is not developing our skill acquisition or athletic development.

Enjoy your training!



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## **Nutrition**

### **Supporting your immune function with a healthy diet**

NSWRL Dietician Peta Carige with Sports Dieticians Australia.



## Supporting your immune function with a healthy diet

Nobody wants to miss a game, race or competition because they are sick, do they?

Having a strong immune system will help us to reduce the risk of illness, and good nutrition practices play an important role.

### Prioritise quality nutrition

Eat a variety of foods across all food groups to provide a wide range of nutrients. Specifically, eating a variety of brightly coloured **fruits and vegetables** will provide plenty of micronutrients (like vitamins and antioxidants) that are known to be beneficial for immune function.

Aim for at least 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables every day.



In addition, eating **red meat** and their alternatives will provide the minerals iron and zinc, which are also important for good immune function.

### Fuel appropriately

Under-fuelling (i.e. not eating enough) can compromise our immune function. Therefore, it is essential to consume enough energy to meet the demands of training loads. Specifically, make sure you are fuelling your training with **carbohydrate**-based snacks and top up during long sessions. On days with a higher training volume and intensity, you will need to consume more carbohydrate. A Sports Dietitian can guide you further.

### DO

- ✓ Consider the use of **probiotics**...foods such as yoghurt, kefir and fermented foods like sauerkraut; or a supplement (your GP or Sports Dietitian can guide you on this).
- ✓ Head outside and get some fresh air and a little sunshine for **Vitamin D**.
- ✓ Get adequate and good quality sleep.
- ✓ Reach out as needed for **management of stress**.
- ✓ **Wash your hands**, especially prior to eating.

### Don't forget personal hygiene & food safety

- Avoid sharing drink bottles and foods to prevent the spread of illness.
- At the conclusion of training, where facilities permit, hand washing/sanitising should be a priority.
- In camp settings, and where facilities permit, athletes should shower after training sessions before meals.
- In all situations, practise good food safety and safe food handling.

### DON'T

- ✗ Don't - consume excessive alcohol.
- ✗ Don't - over-train. Ensure training loads are managed well.
- ✗ Don't - bother with a multi-vitamin. A balanced diet should provide all the vitamins and minerals you need.

### Putting this into practice

- Plan out your weekly meals, considering your training schedule where possible. Aim to vary your meals to ensure a wide range of nutrients.
- When making your shopping list, make sure to include appropriate snacks so that you can meet your recovery requirements.

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#### **Mental Performance-** Get clarity, NSWRL Psychologist Steve Johnson

The starting point for excellence is getting clarity in two key areas:

- Knowing what's important in your life
- Knowing what your goals are

#### ***Knowing What's Important in Life.***

##### **Instructions**

- Think about your whole life, yourself, your family, friends, culture, spirituality, work, sport, community, finances, and the environment.
- Start by making a list of the things, people, organisations and causes that are important to you. You might end up with a list of somewhere between 15-20 items on your list, or more.
- Reduce your list down to the top 6-8 that are most important to you
- Then put them in rank order 1-6 or 1-8
- To check the accuracy and reality of your list, ask yourself these 5 questions:

“Do I spend my time on my list”

“Would I like to spend more time on my list?”

“Do I spend a lot of free time thinking about my list”

“Do I constantly talk to others about my list”

“Do I spend money on my list”

If you can answer yes to each question above, your list should stay as it is.

If you can't answer 5 yes's to each item on your list of 6-8, go back to your long list and check there for new items which you can place into your top 6-8.

For each item you replace from your original list, ask the same 5 questions above.

Once you've got your list and you've got 5 yes's for each item on your list, you're all set to go.



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What you just created are your **Valued Living Priorities** (or how to live your life in alignment with what's important to you).

Now take a blank sheet of paper and write up your list neatly and then place it at eye height in two places where you will see it regularly e.g. bedroom, bathroom, in your car. You could even create a screen saver for your phone.

***This is to remind you daily of what's really important.***

### ***Knowing What Your Goals Are***

Now that you know your “valued living priorities” (your list of 6-8) the next step is to set some goals around them for the next year.

*Goals help focus our attention, keep us motivated, allow us to monitor our progress and bask in their achievement.*

In short, goal setting is a powerful tool employed by successful people in sport, business and life.

For each item on your list of 6-8 valued living priorities write a goal.

A goal should be **SMART**

**Specific**

**Measurable**

**Achievable** (challenging but not impossible but also not too easy)

**Realistic** (can be done in the timeframe and with your current knowledge and skill set)

**Timebound**

When you have written a goal for each 6-8 valued living priority evaluate its quality using the SMART test above. You also might like to think about whether there is anything you need to learn before you can develop a plan for each goal.

Once you have a goal for each valued living priority, now it's time to write a step-by-step plan on how you'll achieve each goal. Make sure each step is sequenced in rank order because as you achieve each step you can cross them off as completed. That way you're always monitoring your progress.

That's enough to get you started for now. I hope that by identifying what's important in your life and setting goals around these priorities, you can see the value of managing your mind and starting the journey of mental performance.





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#### **Wellbeing-** Building routines to achieve goals NSWRL Wellbeing & Education Manager Holly Fuda

For many, our daily routine has changed, first initially at the beginning of the pandemic with lockdown and now as we move towards normality with restrictions easing, training resuming and games starting.

This is a great opportunity for us to look at what we do when on autopilot and see if there are areas we can make changes. Keep it simple, small changes can grow into life changing outcomes. Here are some tips to help you create a new routine, this will work in nicely with the activity above on setting goals.

Start by writing down all the things you do when you wake up...Wake up, lights on, brush teeth, walk dog?

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to get started:

- What things should I do before going to work?
- Which tasks should I do to prepare for training?
- What should I do to exercise today?
- What meals will we have today?
- What can I do for me today?

Break your list of tasks up into these 4 main areas- In the morning, During the day, Getting ready for sleep and During the night. It is important to include something specific for yourself- such as meditation, exercise, phone call with friend, listen to music.

Your routine and expectations might not fit in nearly as perfect as you expect, and that is okay. You want to give yourself some direction throughout the day to assist in rebuilding your habits, to prepare for Rugby League returning.

The point is to make use of your time and help introducing activities that bring you joy and are in line with what is important to you. Example, prior to starting work, I will listen to my favourite song to put me in a good mood.

If you make just one change that saves you 10 minutes per day, you can regain 60 hours of your precious time back each year.

Why not introduce something new to your life, by allocating that 10 minutes. Example, I will read for 10 minutes before bed, instead of scrolling through social media.



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Below is a plan you can use to design your Daily Routine, and over the coming weeks you can use this template to help you prepare for your return to footy and adjust to the changing environment around us as we move towards restrictions easing.

STAGE	ACTIONS & GOALS
<b>IN THE MORNING</b>	Eg. Exercise before starting work, alternate with yoga.
<b>DURING THE DAY</b>	Eg. Listen to my favourite tunes whilst showering
<b>GETTING READY FOR SLEEP</b>	Eg. Read a book for 30mins before bed, instead of being on my phone.
<b>DURING THE NIGHT</b>	Eg. Get 7.5-9hrs sleep