

# Return to Training Advice

## - Club Youth & Adult (Male & Female)

WHERE WE  
ALL BELONG



Our aim is to help you return safely to playing on a full-size pitch with full contact for the full duration of a game. While doing this smartly, we want to maximise enjoyment, maximise your time on the pitch and maximise your potential performance.

**INDIVIDUAL TRAINING**  
Planning Phase

**GROUP TRAINING**  
Gradual Reintroduction

**GAMES**  
Full-Contact & Game phase

The advice in this document was developed by:

- The 'Be Ready to Play' Project Team
- The Gaelic Games Sports Science Advisory Group  
(Special Mention to the Athletic Development Sub Group)



### MORE DETAILED RESOURCES

#### Covid 19 Club Education

The GAA, LGFA and Camogie Association have partnered to provide a Covid-19 Club Education Programme to help those involved in Clubs return safely to Gaelic Games activities.

#### Be Ready to Play

The 'Be Ready to Play' programme, in partnership with UPMC, is a Coaching and Sport Science programme that will be delivered via webinars, website programmes, instructional videos and live sessions. This is a holistic programme supporting players and coaches during their return to training post Covid and in their build up to playing games again.

“Leave the Players wanting more in the first two weeks of return to training”

### Example of a gradual build-up over 4 weeks to a full game:

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
<b>WARM-UP</b>	GAA 15	GAA 15	GAA 15	GAA 15
<b>NO. OF SESSIONS</b>	2 Sessions	3 Sessions	2 Sessions + Modified Game	2 Sessions + Game
<b>AREA SIZE</b>	Small/Short	Small/Long	Medium/Short/Medium	Large/Long
<b>SPRINTS</b>	70-90% Intensity	90-100% Intensity	100% Intensity	100% Intensity
<b>KICKING</b>	Modified Kicking	Longer Kicking	Full Kicking	Full Kicking
<b>INTENSITY</b>	<b>Range</b> Time: 60-75 mins RPE: 3 - 6 Session Workload: 180-450	<b>Range</b> Time: 75-90 mins RPE: 3 - 7 Session Workload: 225-630	<b>Range</b> Time: 75-90 mins RPE: 3 - 8 Session Workload: 225-720	<b>Range</b> Time: 75-90 mins RPE: 3 - 10 Session Workload: 225-900
<b>CONTACT</b>	Highly Modified	Modified	Modified	Full
<b>KNOW YOUR PLAYER</b>	Communicate with players regularly. Ask questions on Training age; Injury history; Work completed before returning to train as a group; Technical/Fitness levels & concerns the player may have.			



## Key Tips

### Complete 'Be Ready to Play' before return to Training



If you haven't signed up already, log on to the 'Be Ready to Play' Programme. This is a detailed athletic development programme, in partnership with UPMC, updated every two weeks for youth, adult and advanced adult players. This and the coaching and sports science webinar series will guide you through the full season. This is of particular importance before teams go back training.

### Complete the GAA 15 in your warm-ups



It is advisable to complete the GAA 15 before training sessions. This is an evidence-based warm-up that helps reduce the risk of injuries. The GAA tailored programme is safe and effective in improving neuromuscular control, which reduces injury risk factors.

### Build up gradually to Games over 4 weeks or more

Gradually re-introduce players to volume, intensity, sprinting, kicking, contact and games over 4 weeks+. This should be carefully planned in the phase before returning to train and regularly reviewed. Avoid high intensity fitness testing or very high intensity fitness sessions in the first two weeks. This will result in a spike in workload which can increase the risk of injuries. Also avoid long volume in the early weeks and through the season, e.g. sessions over 2 hours long. This time on feet can also increase the risk of injuries. "Leave the players wanting more" in the first two weeks.

### Go from Small Areas to Large Areas

Move from small to large, both for field size and player numbers. Use small areas with less players initially to control running distance, speed, kicking and game intensity. Focus instead on skill execution. Aim to maximise touches of the ball. Increases in player numbers and field size will increase overall load & intensity.

- Move from small areas to large areas
- Move from short games to long games
- Move from simple rules to complex rules
- Gradually introduce contact like modifications (e.g. Down and ups)



Shorten the game play to high levels of fatigue or large numbers of players. After first try to lengthen the game into players feel okay and there are no major injuries.

Modify the rules to keep the game moving. Use the down and ups to bring contact simulation into the game.

Increase duration of games every week.



### Gradually introduce Speed

After you complete the GAA 15 warm-up you could have a section of speed for the players when they are fresh.

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Stride sprints x 4 (Build up to 70%)	Stride sprints x 4 (Build up to 80%)	High Speed Running (Build up to 90%)

Then once a week, complete a High Speed Running section or Change of Direction section post Active warm-up. 4 runs at 90%+ More advice on this will be on the Be Ready to Play programme.



### Gradually increase Intensity

The period prior to returning to collective training is a great time to plan your training programme. Key tools:

- Volume = Time
- Intensity = RPE
- Workload = Time x Intensity (e.g. 90min x 5 RPE = 450 units)

Reintroduce your player into training with a week that is below their normal week in terms of volume, intensity and workload. Then gradually increase each week over the next four weeks.

Day	Volume	Intensity
1	Low	Low
2	Low	Low
3	Low	Low
4	Low	Low
5	Low	Low
6	Low	Low
7	Low	Low
8	Low	Low
9	Low	Low
10	Low	Low

### Gradually introduce Kicking

It is recommended that kicking be modified on the first week of return to training. Modifications to kicking include:

- Focus on accuracy and shorter distance kicking. Kicks within small-sided games on smaller areas.
- Safer types of kicking include short and medium kicks. Consider limits on the height and distance of kicks, and kick without fatigue.
- Kick only in controlled circumstances, without pressure or 'chaos'.
- Progression to longer distance kicking can occur by Week 2.



### Know Your Players

It is very important to know your players, as this will allow you to plan and anticipate likely challenges. With respects to returning to normal training activity, the key factors are: Training age; Injury history; Work completed before returning to train as a group; Technical and fitness levels; Player Concerns.

With this information, training can be modified to suit the player, return based on the individual. Communicate with your players. Ask for feedback and input. Ask them how they are feeling as this can be the best measure of fatigue. This will guide you when deciding the right time to progress or regress. This is particularly important for dual players.



### Gradually increase Contact

Have a section where you reintroduce the players to tackling, as if you are teaching the tackle technique again. Increase the time and complexity of this over the 3 weeks. At the end of each week, have a game-simulation session with modifications. Week one less time and more modifications and week three more time and less modification.

**Preparation for contact** – Post touch or grab tackle, complete a down and up, a roll left or right, run to the side and fix a tackle bag or do a buttee.

**Physical preparation** – Post touch or grab tackle, run back 10m and then back into the game, run to a marker and then back in the game or sprint to the sideline line and back.



### Keep an eye on Youth Players who have had a rapid growth spurt

Youth Players are not mini adults, and our main consideration is that they enjoy Gaelic Games. Ask them what they would like to do and safely integrate that into the session.

- For the Youth Player, make sure most of your session is fun.
- Move from short games to long games.
- For the Youth Player, who could be a time of fast growth. If you notice that a player has gone through a growth spurt monitor this player closely. If there are no symptoms present, like 37/50 gain in the knee area, modify the session and refer to a medical professional. If the pain level increases to 5/10 or above, rest the player and refer to a medical professional.
- Follow the same guidelines as for the adult players but with pitch size appropriate to the age group and contact rules appropriate to the game rules for the player.
- Make the progression in volume or intensity even more gradual for the Youth player.
- Communicate to parents/guardians what your players are doing and educate them about how you are gradually introducing the players back.



### Maximise Recovery

Encourage your players to have good habits when it comes to recovery. Eat healthy food – Follow the guidance in the 'Be Ready to Play' Nutrition Webinar. Have good quality sleeping habits. Reduce screen time.

Complete micro recovery strategies. Pool sessions, stretching, low intensity steady state exercise and other strategies that are practical and that the player finds beneficial.

Nutrition Webinar    Physio/Rehab Webinar

