



Performance, Injury Reduction & Return To Play After Prolonged Inactivity

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1. Introduction

The following resource was presented by IRFU National Talent Athletic Development Lead Martin Kennedy at the #ReturnToRugby Webinar: Injury Prevention & A Safe Return To Rugby on July 21st 2020.

This is a companion document to the webinar, which can be viewed in full at <https://youtu.be/EwRnuvR1Usc>

The Training Intensity Scale outlined in this presentation is available as Appendix A.

Further Resources:

World Rugby have prepared documents which are relevant to this presentation:

[Load Management Guidance For Coaches](#)

[Player Load](#)

2. Why A Graduated Return To Training

- ✓ Optimise performance | matches & training
- ✓ Protect players against the risk of injury | avoid under/over training
- ✓ Increase player participation & availability

FITNESS

How much a player has trained in the past 4 weeks

VS

FATIGUE

How hard can we push a player this week

3. Plan | Get Ready Smartly

Less Is More, Initially: Gradually progress and add challenge

Warm Up Well: ≥15 mins; follow best practice; specific to training goals

Increase Training Load: In A Planned & Controlled Manner

Use Training Intensity Scale: Session Planning & Understanding Your Players

KEY CONSIDERATIONS	
FREQUENCY	
<i>“How often”</i> you train as a squad (e.g. 1-3 times pw)	
DURATION	
<i>“How long”</i> is a training session (e.g. 40 - 60min)	
INTENSITY	
<i>“How hard”</i> is the overall session, and individual activities.	
VOLUME	
<i>“How much”</i> work is done for a given activity	

3. TRAINING INTENSITY SCALE

Number Rating	Verbal Rating	Example
0	Rest	No effort at all, sitting doing nothing
1	Really Easy	Your effort is just noticeable
2	Easy	Walking slowly at your own pace
3	Moderate	Light effort
4	Somewhat Hard	It still feels like you have enough energy to continue exercising
5	Hard	Strong effort needed
6	Really Hard	Very strong effort needed
7	Really Really Hard	You can still go on, but you really have to push yourself. It feels very heavy and you are very tired
8	Extremely Hard	Nearing exhaustion, it is difficult to continue at this level of effort
9	Gruelling	Almost maximal effort, close to the hardest training session you have every completed
10	Maximal	Absolute maximal effort, hardest session ever completed

Adapted from Modified Borg scale of perceived exertion(1-10)

4. TRAINING LOAD PLANNING TARGETS (SAMPLE)

Week Commencing	Week No.	Frequency	Duration (Excl. Warm Up)		Intensity
		Sessions/Week	Session	Week	Session Targets/Week
July 20 th	1	2	45	90	#1 Somewhat Hard (4)
			45		#2 Somewhat Hard (4)
July 27 th	2	2	50	100	#1 Somewhat Hard (4)
			50		#2 Hard (5)
August 3 rd	3	3	40	135	#1 Moderate (3)
			45		#2 Hard (5)
			50		#3 Really Hard (6)
August 10 th	4	3	45	135	#1 Somewhat Hard (4)
			50		#2 Really Hard (6)
			40		#3 Really Really Hard (7)
August 17 th	5	2	55	115	#1 Somewhat Hard (4)
			60		#2 Hard (5)
August 24 th	6	3	55	135	#1 Somewhat Hard (4)
			40		#2 Really Hard (6)
			40		#3 Really Really Hard (7)
August 31 st	7	3	45	155	#1 Hard (5)
			50		#2 Somewhat Hard (4)
			60		#3 Really Really Hard (7)
September 7 th	8	2 (+ Match)	45	160	#1 Hard (5)
			35		#2 Moderate (3)
			80		#3 Match (7+)

4. SET #RETURNTORUGBY TRAINING GOALS

Coach

- ✓ *Plan to progressively increase load, as appropriate to your players, and their level of fitness*
- ✓ *Ensure players warm-up well*
- ✓ *Watch out for excessive fatigue within a given activity and across sessions.*
- ✓ *Ask players for feedback after sessions using the 'training intensity scale' as a conversation guide*
- ✓ *Plan 'easier' training weeks to allow players to both recover from, and adapt to, the return to training (e.g. Week 5, week commencing August 17th)*

Player

- ✓ *Prepare for each session so you can enjoy participating & optimise your game!*
- ✓ *Look after yourself between sessions and in preparation for the next one*
- ✓ *Be proactive & take responsibility for your own recovery strategies, especially your nutrition and sleep*
- ✓ *Check out existing IRFU & Provincial resources (e.g. Eat2Compete)*

