

-- THE S.I.M.P.L.E. WAY TO SPEED UP YOUR RECOVERY --

Your physical therapist has experience treating your injury, is invested in your recovery, and cares about your success. To complement your therapist's knowledge of physical healing, bring a positive mental attitude. The following five rules will build a positive attitude and speed up your recovery.

SLOW DOWN TO SPEED UP

- Recovery is not a race. Blazing through rehab is not your priority. Getting back to your full life is. Don't sacrifice long-term healing for fabricated goals. The faster you get better--honestly better--the faster you'll return to doing what you love.
- Slowing down means sleeping and resting more. Sleep is one of your most important tools as an injured athlete; it promotes healing and rebuilding unlike anything else. No sleep = increased anxiety, impatience, and frustration.

INVEST IN YOUR OWN RECOVERY

- Your recovery is not someone else's responsibility; take charge.
- Be engaged; ask questions, then ask more questions.
- Get a notebook and bring it to appointments for review with your physical therapist. Keep track of the following:
 - Notes from all of your appointments, including each PT session, plus questions you've accumulated at home
 - Daily sleep hours *and* daily diet if you struggle with eating
 - Daily activities (PT and all other relevant activities) and daily pain (description and pain-scale value)
- Understand your injury. Ask for an anatomy lesson or read an anatomy book. Don't use Google to second-guess your physical therapist, but do use Google to learn the basics of your injury and ask better questions.
- At PT, take photos and videos of yourself practicing your exercises with good form. Understand how your body wants to cheat the desired motion.
- Understand the purpose of each exercise. You'll be more likely to comply if you understand why something is helping.

MANAGE YOUR ATTITUDE AND TIME

- Demonstrate respect for your support system by being engaged and following instructions.
- Show up to appointments on time.
- Make your physical therapist's day by showing up with a positive attitude even if you've had a crummy morning.
- Remember this rule of thumb: If you're debating a choice (for example, to go for a hike on a healing knee or not), ask what advice you'd give to a loved one facing the same situation.

PROMOTE ACCEPTANCE

- Suffering is the inability to accept what is. Acceptance means you'll work *with* your limitations, making sound decisions instead of obsessing about what you *should* be able to do and pushing yourself too hard.
- Do not lie to your physical therapist. Think of it like a confessional. If you tell the truth, you will be absolved of your sins. If you lie, you're going to--well--you're seriously letting yourself down. Your physical therapist can help you most if you're not stretching the truth about what's going on outside of PT.
- Do not lie to yourself. Be honest about your limitations. Write to reveal your barriers to acceptance:
 - Why is it important to remain as active as you were?
 - What will happen to your self-worth if you back off to recover?

LEGAL DUMPING ONLY

- People who are generally optimistic tend to get more from everyone and everything around them.
- Emotional turmoil is normal, but avoid what I call illegal dumping--showing up and blindsiding your therapist with your emotional struggles.
- If you are struggling emotionally, ask for help. Your physical therapist can recommend someone to help you navigate the emotional pitfalls of injury.

EXPECTATION-ITIS: HOW TO AVOID IT

- Don't compare your journey with other patients in the clinic. Your combination of history, injury, and rehab is different from everyone else and your recovery will be different. Faster than some; slower than others.
- Talk to your physical therapist about fitness exercises that are compatible with your restrictions.
- Big gains come from an accumulation of small gains and expect some setbacks along the way.

Do you feel more empowered? You'll find many more tips in my free newsletter.

Sign up at www.injuredathletestoolbox.com.

I wish you all the best on your journey. Forward...

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