



Extra-time Kickoff for December 2021

Parents as Life Coaches – Rest (Breaks) & Recovery for our Children

Over the past few years, we have worked hard to build a family/team environment at our Club. Part of this is ensuring that every single player, coach, and official, have a home environment that cares about the health and wellness of all members. Having worked professionally in sport for almost 20 years and studied sport science, educating parents/guardians and players on youth self-care is a role I take seriously.

Over the years I have seen too many young people to count, that have suffered from concussions, muscle/joint injuries, dental injuries, etc., that negatively impacts their quality of life. This is especially the case when young people are going through growth stages. During that period, we should be scaling back their overall 'load' instead of ramping it up. With Covid placing additional pressures on our young people, we need to provide extra care and attention to their physical and psychological needs.

Rest and recovery breaks are especially important for young pre-pubescent female players/athletes, as they are suffering from an epidemic of knee injuries. Although there are many potential causes, overloading young players can result in a build-up of fatigue that results in torn ligaments. We can all do a better job of prevention, and all youth sport organizations should build rest periods into their yearly schedule. Our Club breaks for example, are in March, August, late October, and during the Christmas break. The purpose for this is to allow our young people an opportunity to recover and to take pressure off parents/guardians. Yes, adults need recovery time as well.

Recently, I was asked by a Club parent/guardian if they should register their child in programs, camps, etc., over the holidays. As a youth advocate and looking at this question from a sport science perspective, my honest response is to take time to assess your child. Children need the time to recover, be a kid, and to re-energize. Remember that 'load' adds up over time and burnout is one of the reasons thousands of young people leave sport. In addition, there are many social pressures on our young people today and rest time provides opportunities to provide extra care and attention.

Below is a post from website I have forwarded many times to members in the past. If you have a minute, have read through and feel free to keep the conversation going.

[HTTPS://WWW.ATYOUROWNRIK.ORG/REST-AND-RECOVERY-FOR-ATHLETES/](https://www.atyourownrisk.org/rest-and-recovery-for-athletes/)

NATA's statement has been endorsed by Professional Football Athletic Trainers' Society, Professional Hockey Athletic Training Society, Professional Soccer Athletic Trainers' Society, National Basketball Athletic Trainers' Association, Professional Baseball Athletic Trainers' Society and the NATA Intercollegiate Sports Medicine Council. The statement includes the following recommendations, all aimed at address the health and well-being adolescent and young athletes:

1. **Delay specializing in a single sport for as long as possible:** Sport specialization is often described as participating and/or training for a single sport year-round. Adolescent and young athletes should strive to participate, or sample, a variety of sports. This recommendation supports general physical fitness, athleticism and reduces injury risk in athletes.
2. **One team at a time:** Adolescent and young athletes should participate in one organized sport per season. Many adolescent and young athletes participate or train year-round in a single sport, while simultaneously competing in other organized sports. Total volume of organized sport participation per season is an important risk factor for injury.
3. **Less than eight months per year:** Adolescent and young athletes should not play a single sport more than eight months per year.
4. **No more hours/week than age in years:** Adolescent and young athletes should not participate in organized sport and/or activity more hours per week than their age (i.e., a 12-year-old athlete should not participate in more than 12 hours per week of organized sport).



5. **Two days of rest per week:** Adolescent and young athletes should have a minimum of two days off per week from organized training and competition. Athletes should not participate in other organized team sports, competitions and/or training on rest and recovery days.



6. **Rest and recovery time from organized sport participation:** Adolescent and young athletes should spend time away from organized sport and/or activity at the end of each competitive season. This allows for both physical and mental recovery, promotes health and well-being and minimizes injury risk and burnout/dropout.

ONE LAST THING

As you can see, recovery is essential to an athlete's ability to stay in the game they love. Your athlete can do all the right things: attend recovery sessions, follow their athletic trainer's recovery recommendations, and even follow the NATA's guidelines to reduce the risk of injury. BUT it is all in vain without one key piece to every athlete's routine.

When it comes down to it, sleep plays a major role in athletic performance and recovery. The quality and the amount of sleep, to a great extent, determines the effectiveness of recovery. The majority of muscle repair and growth occur during sleep when hormones are being released. Athletes who do not get enough sleep will see a decrease in their game, increase the possibility of fatigue, have low energy levels and poor focus. This puts an athlete at a greater risk for injury. The American Academy of Pediatrics Childhood Sleep Guidelines recommend children between the ages of 6-12 should get 9-12 hours of sleep and teenagers 13-18 should sleep 8-10 hours to promote optimal health. You might be thinking- "*How is my kid going to get 8 hours of sleep?*" Let me remind you, that everyone is given 24 hours in a day. As a parent but especially a parent of an athlete, it is IMPERATIVE that you make sleep a priority. Without it, your athlete will not reach their full athletic potential.