

## -- 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 six rules will build a positive attitude and speed up your recovery.

### **SLOW DOWN TO SPEED UP**

- Recovery is not a race. Don't sacrifice long-term healing for fabricated goals. Allow yourself to heal on a natural timeline and you will likely return to doing what you love faster.
- Slowing down means sleeping and resting more  
Sleep = healing and rebuilding  
No sleep = increased anxiety, impatience, and frustration

### **INVEST IN YOUR OWN RECOVERY**

- Your recovery is your responsibility; take charge.
- Be engaged; ask questions, then ask more questions.
- Carry a notebook and 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. 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 the goal of each exercise and how your body wants to cheat the desired motion.

### **MANAGE YOUR ATTITUDE AND TIME**

- Demonstrate respect for your support system by being engaged and following instructions.
- Make your physical therapist's day by showing up on time with a positive attitude.
- If you're debating participation in a physical activity ask what advice you'd give to a loved one facing the same situation. For example, "Should I go for a hike on a healing knee or not?"

### **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.
- Confide in your physical therapist. Think of it like a confessional. If you tell the truth, you will be absolved of your sins. If you lie about physical activity, pain, etc., you're 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.
- Be honest with yourself 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 those of other patients. Your history, injury, and rehab are different from everyone else and your recovery will be too; faster than some, slower than others.
- Talk to your physical therapist about ways to maintain fitness within your restrictions.
- Big gains come from an accumulation of small gains. Expect some setbacks along the way.

I help athletes overcome the mental fallout of injury and stop the emotional roller coaster.

Please contact me ([Heidi@InjuredAthletesToolbox.com](mailto:Heidi@InjuredAthletesToolbox.com)) if you feel stuck or frustrated.

I wish you all the best and keep getting better. Forward...

Heidi Armstrong, Injury Recovery Coach and founder of Injured Athlete's Toolbox

