ATHLETE CENTERED APPROACH

The recovery modality selected by an athlete or team is often dictated by the expertise of the responsible practitioner (e.g. coach, trainer, sports nutritionist, sports psychologist). However, an important consideration is how separate recovery modalities may complement each other.

Biopsychosocial factors are important in the recovery process, thus experimenting with complementary approaches may enhance athletes' perceptions of well-being and the overall recovery experience. Unfortunately, specific guidance on how to integrate recovery strategies in ways that benefit athletes is lacking. To ensure that athletes are physically and psychologically ready to exercise again, when required to do so, is likely optimised by an adopting an interdisciplinary approach. This integration of disciplines is understood to achieve outcomes (including new approaches) that could not be achieved within the framework of a single discipline. One such foundational concept is that any recovery strategy employed is not exclusive to the physiological or psychological domain.

To this end, recovery programs should consider athlete-centred approaches, in which individuals are empowered to understand and lead in the planning their own recovery schedules. Giving athletes the skill of self-regulation is important in the adherence to advice for recovery. Three relevant self-regulatory skills for post-exercise recovery, include: 1. self-monitoring, 2. regulation of thoughts and emotions, and 3. self-control. As a translational tool to encourage this behaviour, athletes can be offered a suite of recovery options. These different recovery options can be 'scored'. Specific weighting of scores can be adjusted based on athlete / team priorities or practitioner experience. Figure 2. provides an example, and guide as to building strategies to your own needs.

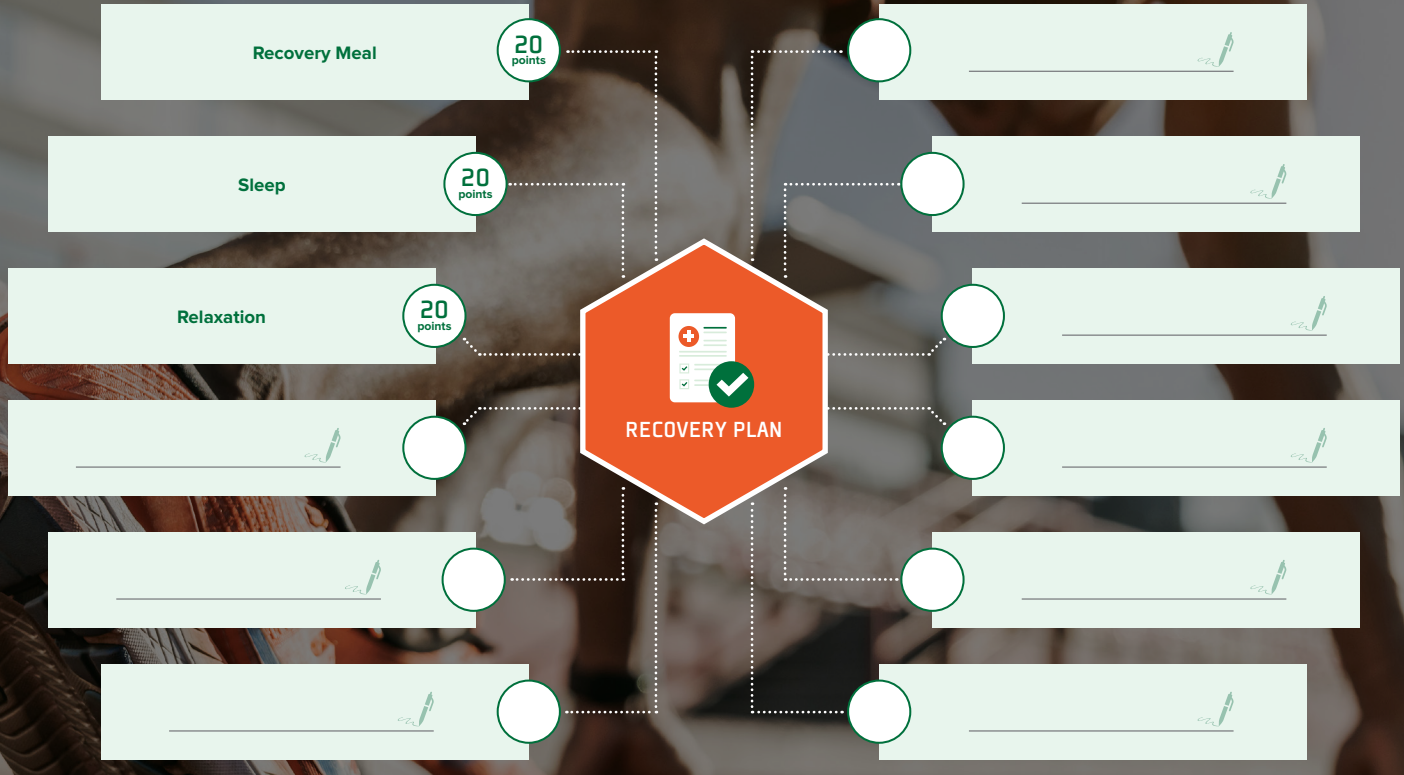

Figure 2

Recovery strategy scoring template. Scores and recovery options to be added by practitioner depending to on athlete or team priorities or practitioner experience. Examples of relevant recovery options can found in Table 3, but can also be added by the practitioner. Selected recovery options can be added into the blank boxes, as per 'Sleep', 'Recovery Meal' and 'Relaxation'. Timings may also be added, e.g. '15 minute cycle'. The practitioner can then assign each of the chosen recovery options with 10 or 20 points, depending on priorities, adding the values into the associated circles. Once completed, the figure can be used to select recovery modalities, aiming for 100 points.

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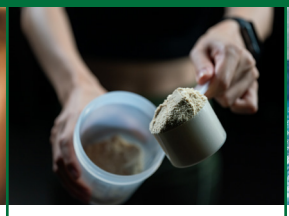
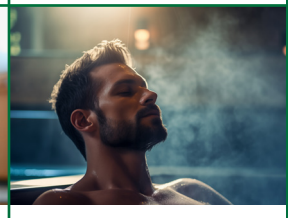
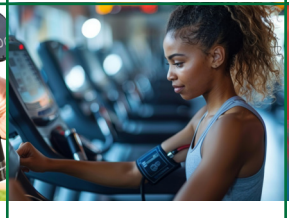
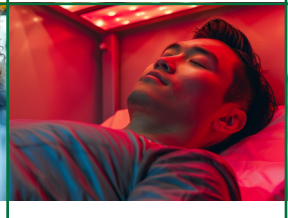
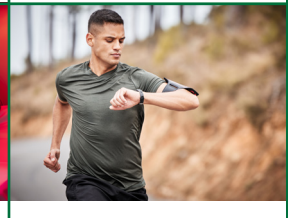
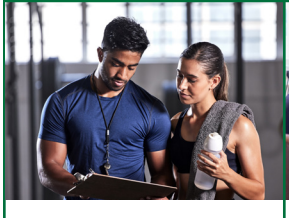
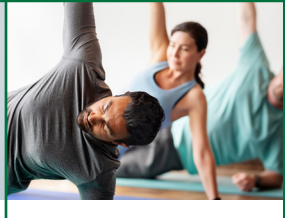
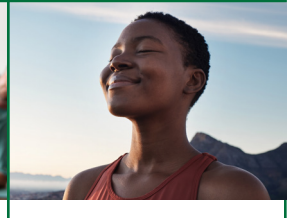
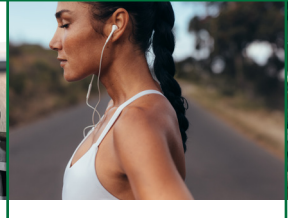
EXAMPLES OF RECOVERY OPTIONS

				
RECOVERY SHAKE	PRE-SLEEP PROTEIN	CONTRAST WATER THERAPY	COLD WATER IMMERSION	WHOLE-BODY CRYOTHERAPY
				
MOBILITY SESSION	LIGHT CYCLE	SWIM	JOG	MASSAGE
				
FOAM ROLL	COMPRESSION GARMENT	STRETCHING	HOT WATER IMMERSION	COMPRESSION BOOTS
				
MASSAGE GUN	BLOOD FLOW RESTRICTION	FAR INFRARED RADIATION	GOAL SETTING	TIME WITH FRIENDS
				
DEBRIEFING	COUNSELLING	MEDITATION	YOGA	MINDFULNESS
				
BREATHWORK	'TIME OUT' PERIODS FROM TRAINING	MUSIC	MENTAL IMAGERY	EXPOSURE TO RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

▲ **Table 3**

Examples of recovery options (in no particular order)

RECOVERY PLANNING

To help develop recovery strategies individualised to weekly demands, a recovery planning template is provided. This template can be used to list appropriate recovery modalities across different microcycles within a season. The content within this toolkit can be used as a guide to identify appropriate recovery modalities, utilising the athlete centred approach.

STEP 1

List the different microcycles experienced by the team/athlete across the top of the table. For example, for Soccer: add microcycles for the off-season, the pre-season, 1-, 2- and 3-game weeks, and weeks containing competitive finals. Multiple pages of the template can be used if required. Within each microcycle, list which days of the week are typically rest, training, or competition days.

STEP 2

Under each day, within each microcycle, list appropriate recovery modalities. These should be based on the specific demands dictated by the type of microcycle, and the specific schedule.

	TYPE OF MICROCYCLE: _____	TYPE OF MICROCYCLE: _____	TYPE OF MICROCYCLE: _____
DAY 1	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____
DAY 2	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____
DAY 3	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____
DAY 4	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____
DAY 5	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____
DAY 6	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____
DAY 7	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____	Type of day: _____