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Psychological Interventions to optimise Post-Injury Recovery

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There are several psychological interventions that can accelerate injury recovery. This presentation will focus on imagery, deep breathing, and muscle relaxation techniques, which help reduce anxiety and pain.

Additionally, we will explore support groups that enable injured athletes to share experiences, connect with peers, and alleviate feelings of depression, fear, frustration, and loneliness.



In sports injury prevention and rehabilitation, sports medicine professionals typically focus on physical factors.

However, psychosocial factors also significantly impact both injury risk and rehabilitation outcomes¹. Despite the development and scientific evaluation of various psychosocial interventions for use before and after injury, these approaches are often underutilized or overlooked in clinical practice².



In adopting a holistic perspective on injuries, we can:

- **Examine** psychological interventions that have been shown to optimise post-injury recovery
- **Articulate** benefits of these interventions
- **Discuss** ways of implementing them in rehabilitation programmes.



Imagery, deep breathing, and muscle relaxation techniques can accelerate injury recovery by reducing anxiety and pain. Support groups help injured athletes share experiences, connect with peers, and reduce depression, fear, frustration, and loneliness.



Research indicates that psychosocial interventions can facilitate post-injury recovery by **managing fear and anxiety, increase motivation**, positively influence **therapy compliance** and speed up the rehabilitation process³.



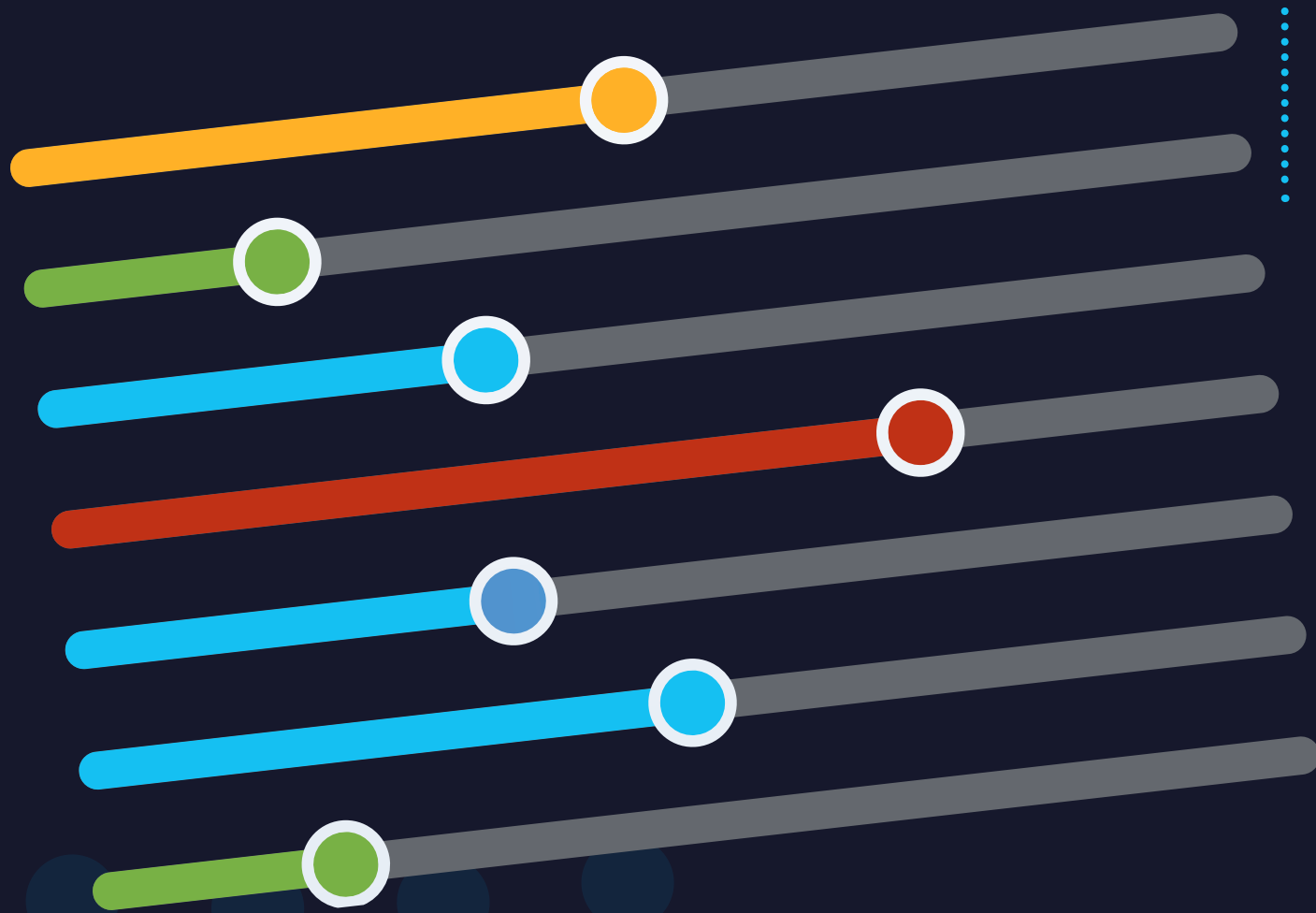
Strategies for integrating relaxation techniques, imagery, and support groups into rehabilitation will be discussed, with examples from experience with injured athletes. **Emphasis will be on** daily implementation, effective communication, interdisciplinary collaboration, and ongoing education.



Take home messages

1

Regularly monitor stress levels
in both injured and healthy athletes.



2

Integrate psychological interventions
into rehabilitation programs.



Establish support groups
for injured athletes
within your sports
medical centre

References

1. Johnson, U., Ivarsson, A. (2017). Psychosocial factors and sport injuries: prediction, prevention and future research directions. Current Opinion in Psychology 2017, 16:89–92
2. Gledhill, A., Forsdyke, D. and Murray, E. (201A). Psychological interventions used to reduce sports injuries: a systematic review of real-world effectiveness, British Journal of Sports Medicine, vol. B2, no. 1B, pp. 967-71.
3. Covassin T, Beidler E, Ostrowski J, Wallace J (2015). Psychosocial aspects of rehabilitation in sports. Clin. Sports Med., 34: 199-212



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