



# Returning to Gaelic games post COVID - Keeping your squad fit and preventing injury



# DISCUSSION POINTS

Individual training over the coming weeks

Returning to play post COVID

Individual Prep & Warm up

Specific Injury Avoidance

Running - Speed, mechanics & conditioning

RTP post injury - What are the risks?

Q & A (10-15mins)





# CURRENT ISSUES

Shin / Ankle / Achilles/ Calf injuries

Lack of football/hurling/camogie

Essentially entering pre-season 2

Pre season length and transition into playing

Individual training -> Small group -> Team training  
->Championship

Shortened schedule - minimal time between games

Dual?



# CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITY

Calf issues such as soleus strains, Achilles tendon issue, Tib post tendon issues, Stress injuries around the foot

Knee issues

Massive opportunity??





# LESSONS FROM THE PAST? NFL LOCKOUT 2011

- Timeline (March - August)
- Pre season: 12-14 weeks -> 17days
- Achilles tendon ruptures 4X
- Rookies vs Veterans (23.5 vs 29)
- Increase in injury recurrence
- Why??



# Start with the end in mind

What do you require from your players for game 1 championship?

Injury free

Physically fit

Sharp

Hungry



more under Jürgen  
Rodgers

# What do you require from your players for game 1 championship?

Premier League

# more under Jürgen Rodgers

More	Position	Club		Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	GF	GA	GD	Points	Form
	1 •	Liverpool		29	27	1	1	66	21	+45	82	
	2 •	Manchester City		28	18	3	7	68	31	+37	57	
	3 •	Leicester City		29	16	5	8	58	28	+30	53	
	4 •	Chelsea		29	14	6	9	51	39	+12	48	
	5 •	Manchester United		29	10	13	6	41	34	+7	43	
	6 •	Wolverhampton Wanderers										



# Injury epidemiology - GAA

Acute injury 3 times more likely when compared with chronic

Non contact 2.8 times more likely

ANKLE  
11.7%

HAMSTRING  
23%

GROIN 14.9%

QUAD 9.3%

KNEE 11.1%

(Roe et al, 2018)



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# What do we know?

Sports injuries compromise team success

Inappropriately prescribed training load can lead to injury

Increasing training load too quickly can lead to large increases in injury

Increases of 50% in training load -> 38% chance of injury (Gabbett, 2016)

Undertraining can lead to leaving athletes underprepared for competition



A photograph of three male athletes in action during a Gaelic football match. The athlete on the left, wearing a yellow and blue jersey, is running with the ball. The two athletes on the right, wearing green and white jerseys, are chasing him. The background is a blurred stadium setting.

**What do we need to do?**

Prepare the athlete for competition

Make the athlete as robust as possible

Give the athlete the best possible chance to perform

Pitch it correctly



# RETURN TO PLAY ISSUES -SMALL GROUP TRAINING

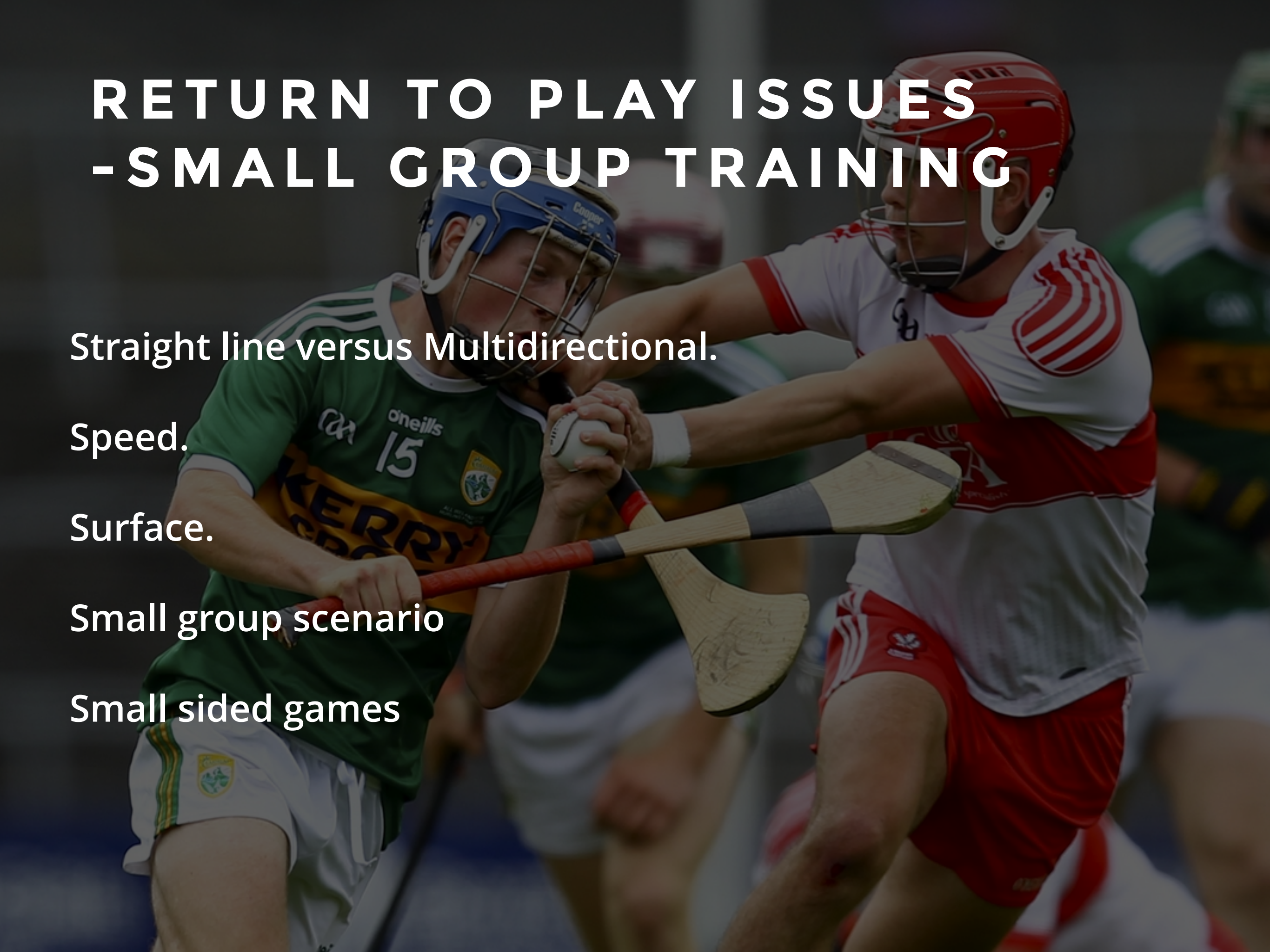
Straight line versus Multidirectional.

Speed.

Surface.

Small group scenario

Small sided games





# DECREASING INJURY RISK

Incremental loading - training type / speed

Recovery pre & post session

Use the various training modalities wisely

Small group training drills





# RETURN TO PLAY ISSUES - LARGER GROUP TRAINING

LACK OF TIME PRE COMPETITION

RISKS

LACK OF MATCH PLAY

LACK OF FITNESS





# SO WHAT CAN WE DO??

START CONDITIONING WORK NOW

TO DO LIST

MULTIDIRECTIONAL CONDITIONING

DONT TRY TO DO IT ALL



# RTP POST INJURY

Biggest risk for future injury is previous injury

Poor rehabilitation due to access/ current situation

‘Rest’ is not the answer!

Need to ensure all boxes are getting ticked before RTP

Strength - Control- Reactive strength - Running volume- running speed and other RTP markers



# SPEED VACCINE

Sprinting can play a key role in injury prevention

Developing lower body strength, repeat sprint ability and speed -> increases tolerance to work load & reduces injuries

Under- and over-exposure of players to maximal velocity events increased the risk of injury. (Malone et al,2018)

Use it or lose it but dont abuse it





# WHEN TO SPRINT

Start of a session versus the end?

Pre season vs Pre Championship?

How often to expose?





# WHEN TO SPRINT

Need to find the optimal amount of HSR

Need to condition to it

Avoid over loading athletes too quickly

Movement variability really important- need to do in variety of ways

NEED max speed exposures - Regular (minimum 1 per week-10days)





# WHAT ABOUT SSG?

Pitch size will alter the goals of the session

Positives: increased ball contacts, cod, accel/decel.

SSG when well designed can match the demands of Gaelic football

Differences in hamstring activation and fatigue between accel/decel and max speed.

Increased forces through hip & groin -> Decel/ Accel / Cod

Ankle & Knee issues



# GOALS OF STRUCTURED WARM UP

The background image shows two female hurlers in action. The player in the foreground is wearing a red jersey with 'O'NEILLS' and the number '4' on it, and a white sash that says 'NEW IRELAND'. She is holding a hurley and has a white ball in her hands. The player in the background is wearing a blue and yellow jersey with 'Tipp FM' and the number '14' on it. Both players are wearing helmets and are running on a grass field.

Maximise player availability

Decrease preventable injuries

Increase athlete performance

Improve consistency of approach (specifically injury related)

Decrease recurring injuries



# Evidence for

There is a growing body of evidence supporting the argument that injury prevention programs have the inherent ability to decrease injuries and the time loss associated with such injuries.

Many programmes available - FIFA 11+ , Activate & GAA 15 in gaelic games

All positive??

Compliance is an issue in studies undertaken.

Cherry picking exercises may lead to key components such as landing/cutting/running skills being left out, leading to increased injury risk.



# FIFA 11+

DECREASED  
OVERALL  
INJURIES BY  
46.1%

DECREASED  
TIME LOSS BY  
28.6%

64% DECREASE

76.5% DECREASE



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# STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS- WARM UP

- GAA 15 & Activate (Ulster Council) warm up
- Based on FIFA 11+

## SECTION 1 - Part A: Running [Max 5 mins]



Slow Run



Hip Out



Hip In



Heel Flicks



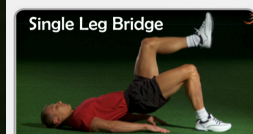
Touch Toes



Run (50%)



Run (80%)



Single Leg Bridge



Forward Lunge



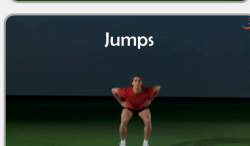
Reverse Lunge



Squats



Core Drills



Jumps



Single Leg Deadlift



Nordic Hamstring Curls

## PART F | SPORT SPECIFIC

Duration - 3 minutes (max.)

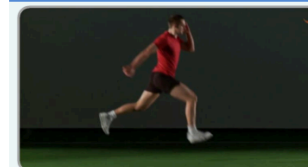
### 16. SPEED RUN (80%)



#### TEACHING POINTS

1. Run approx 20m across the pitch at 75-80% of maximum pace and then jog back.
2. Keep your upper body straight.
3. Your hip, knee and foot are aligned.
4. Do not let your knees buckle inwards.
5. Jog easily back.

### 17. PLYOMETRIC BOUNDING



#### TEACHING POINTS

1. Take a few warm-up steps then take 6-8 high bounding steps with a high knee lift and then jog back.
2. Focus on technique
3. Repeat twice

#### Technique

- Lift the knee of the leading leg as high as possible and swing the opposite arm across the body.
- Keep your upper body straight.
- Land on the ball of the foot with the knee bent and spring.
- Do not let your knee buckle inwards.

### 18. PLANT AND PUSH WHILE JOGGING



#### TEACHING POINTS

1. Jog 4-5 steps straight ahead.
2. Then coach will indicate that player must turn left and the person must plant on the right leg and cut to change direction to the left and accelerate.
3. Sprint 5-7 steps (80-90% of maximum pace) before you decelerate.
4. Coach will indicate right and person must plant on the left foot and cut to change direction to the right.
5. When changing direction, bend knee and hip, lean body forwards.
6. Do not let your knee buckle inwards. Repeat the exercise x 30 seconds.

Nordics - 70% decrease - Petersen et al (2011)  
85% decrease prev injured hamstrings



# STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PRE WARM UP- INDIVIDUAL PREP

Individual/ Dressing room  
based exercise

Based on hip/core/dynamic  
system activation





# RUN MECHANICS

- Integrate run mechanics into every warm up
- Integrate multidirectional mechanics into every session
- Standing starts vs rolling starts - Gamespeed and game specific





# SPECIFIC INJURY AVOIDANCE: HAMSTRING

Avoid heavy hamstring based gym work the night prior to training

Work up to max sprints - minimal work the day prior to a 'max effort' session

Muscle recovery vital post these session

Regular exposure to sprinting with variation

Avoid end of session sprinting until sufficient conditioning achieved

Hamstring strengthening work from now







# SPECIFIC INJURY AVOIDANCE: GROIN

Avoid multiple very small sided games especially as training returns

Include multidirectional running early on -building up

Muscle recovery vital post these session

Regular exposure to sprinting with variation

Avoid shuttle running and small sided box drills on a regular basis and on RTP

Address any issues with 'at risk' players by altering their training







# SPECIFIC INJURY AVOIDANCE: ANKLE & KNEE

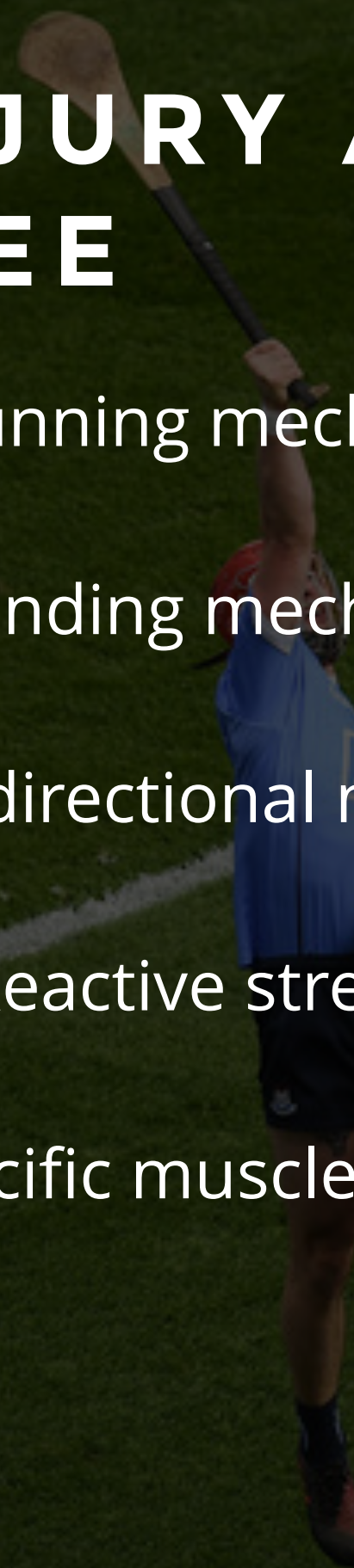
Running mechanics

Landing mechanics

Multi directional mechanics

Reactive strength

Specific muscle control





A close-up, angled view of a clock face. The clock has a grey background with black tick marks. The words 'TIME TO' are printed in large, bold, black capital letters. The word 'RECOVER' is printed in large, bold, green capital letters, curving along the edge of the clock face. Several black rectangular bars, representing recovery methods, are positioned across the clock face.

**TIME TO**

**SLEEP**

**HYDRATION**

**RECOVERY CARDIO**

**COMPRESSION GARMENTS**

**NUTRITION**

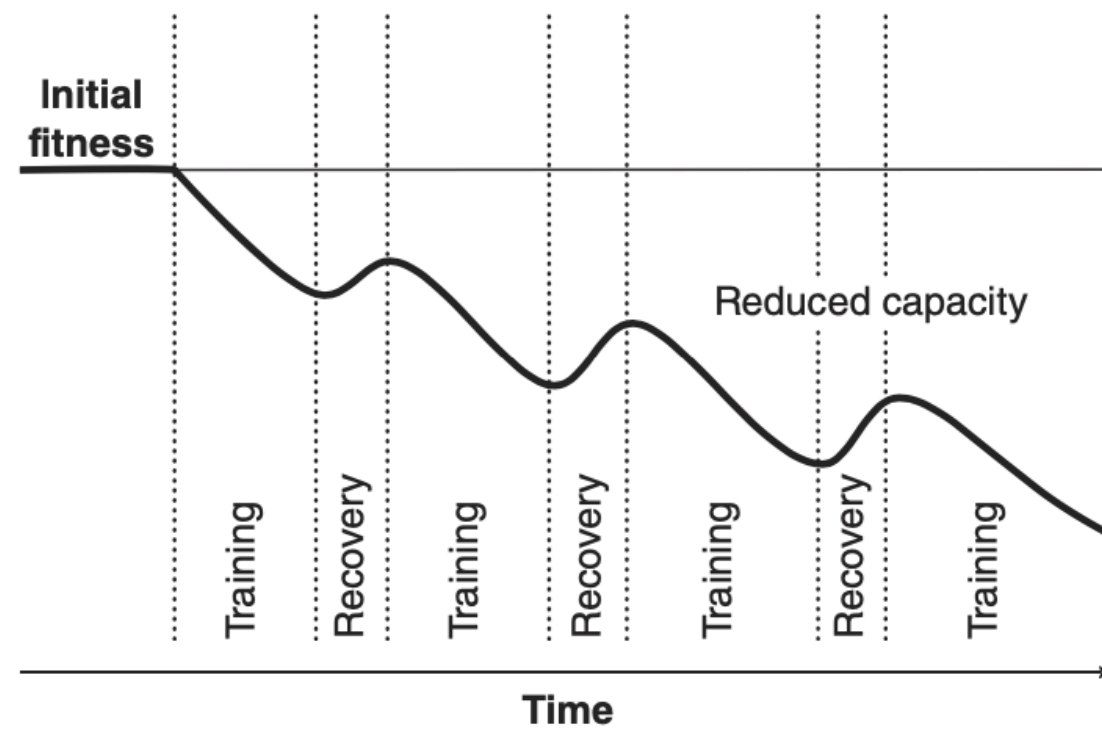
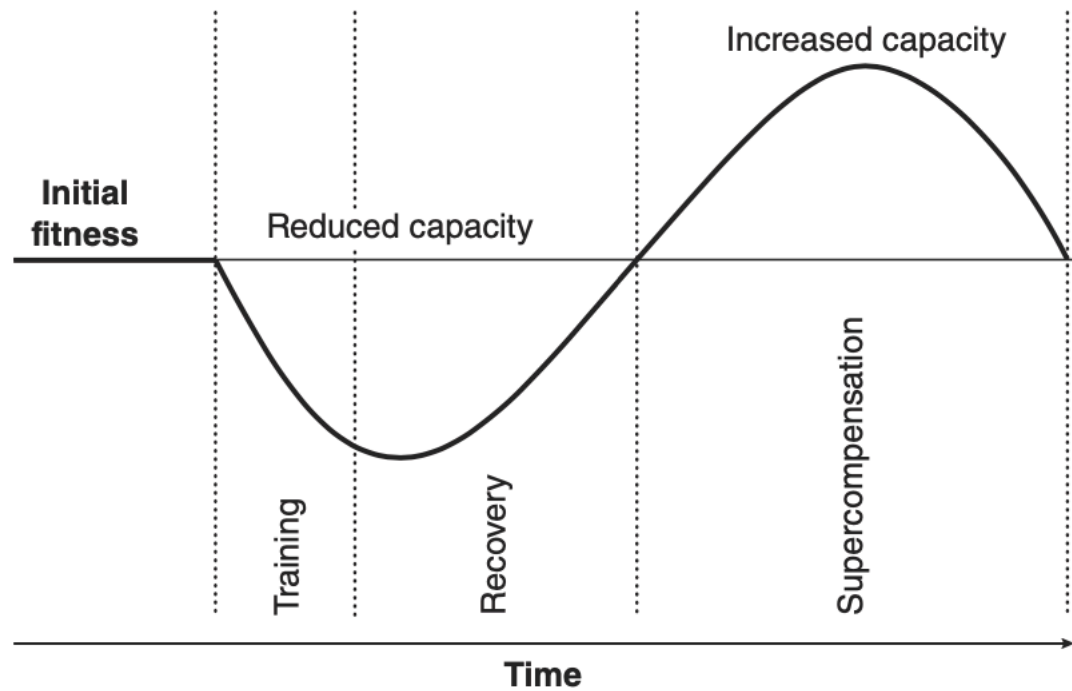
**POST GAME MASSAGE**

**CONTRAST BATH/WATER SUBMERSION**

**RECOVER**



# RECOVERY





# CONCLUSION



Coming weeks- > Incremental loading with variability of movement

GAA 15 - Activate warm ups reduce injury by 35%-50%

Sprint quickly wisely

SSG Monitor pitch size/player numbers & know their interaction

Recovery pre & post sessions will impact on performance & potentially availability



# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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For exercise video examples



[sparcdublin](https://www.instagram.com/sparcdublin)