



PLAYER BURNOUT

INFORMATION SHEET

INTRODUCTION

Burnout occurs where people who have previously been highly committed to a sport lose interest and motivation. Typically it will occur in hard working, hard training, hard driven people, who become emotionally, psychologically or physically exhausted.

This can occur where:

- ✦ You find it difficult to say 'no' to additional commitments or responsibilities
- ✦ Someone has been under intense and sustained pressure for some time
- ✦ A perfectionist coach does not delegate
- ✦ Someone is trying to achieve too much
- ✦ Someone has been giving too much emotional support for too long
- ✦ Often it will express itself in a reduction in motivation, volume and quality of performance, or in Dissatisfaction with or departure from the sport altogether

SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT

Burnout will normally occur slowly, over a long period of time, it may express itself physically or mentally.

Physical Burnout

- ✦ Feelings of intense fatigue
- ✦ Vulnerability to viral infection
- ✦ Immune breakdown

Mental Burnout

- ✦ Feeling of lack of control over commitments
- ✦ An incorrect belief that you are accomplishing less
- ✦ A growing tendency to think negatively
- ✦ Loss of a sense of purpose and energy
- ✦ Increasing detachment from relationships that causes conflict and stress, adding to burnout



AVOIDING BURNOUT

If you are training and performing hard, then you should take great care not to burnout. You can avoid physical burnout by keeping the sport fun: intense, difficult training sessions that significantly improve technique should be mixed with lighter, enjoyable sessions that use new skills to good advantage. A relatively slow build-up from off-seasons can be adopted so that your body is not put under excessive stress. You should respect feelings of intense physical fatigue and rest appropriately.

Similarly, you can avoid mental burnout by ensuring that the sport remains fun: there is a limit to your mental energy that you should respect. As you get



better at a sport, people will want more and more of your time, and will rely on you more and more. It is easy for commitments to get bigger and bigger: people tend to be quite happy to consume other people's mental resources without worrying about the consequences.

PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

If you feel that you are in danger of burning out, or are not enjoying your sport, the following points can help you correct the situation:

- ✦ Re-evaluate your goals and prioritise them
- ✦ Evaluate the demands placed on you and see how they fit in with your goals
- ✦ Identify your ability to comfortably meet these demands
- ✦ If you are over-involved, reduce the commitments that are excessive
- ✦ If people demand too much emotional energy, become more unapproachable and less sympathetic. Involve other people in a supportive role
- ✦ You owe it to yourself to avoid being bled dry emotionally
- ✦ Learn stress management skills
- ✦ Examine other areas in your life which are generating stress, such as work or family, and try to solve problems and reduce the stress
- ✦ Get the support of your friends and family in reducing stress

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TIPS

- ✦ Get adequate sleep and rest to maintain your energy levels
- ✦ Ensure that you are eating a healthy, balanced diet (bad diet can make you ill or feel bad)
- ✦ Get adequate regular aerobic exercise
- ✦ Limit your caffeine and alcohol intake
- ✦ Perhaps develop alternative activities such as a relaxing hobby to take your mind off problems
- ✦ Acknowledge your own humanity, remember that you have a right to pleasure and a right to relaxation