



**AN ATHLETE'S
GUIDE TO LOOKING
AFTER YOURSELF
IN THE COVID-ERA**



REWIRED



WHY HEALTH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Across the globe, people are limited, like never before, with what they can and can't do. This has, naturally, had a massive impact on everyone's life and health, meaning that it is more essential than ever to make sure that we tick all the boxes in terms of our health.



A shirtless male athlete is captured in a starting crouch on a gym floor. He is leaning forward with his hands on the floor, ready to begin a run or sprint. The background shows a gym setting with various pieces of equipment and a wall with some text, including the word 'STAY'. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the athlete's muscles.

EXERCISE

In the COVID-Era, various new laws and regulations have created obstacles to training. However, the ability to overcome obstacles is what separates us as athletes.


With many sporting events cancelled it can also be quite hard to motivate yourself to train. At the very minimum, we want to maintain our fitness over this time, however by using this unprecedented time to do more than anyone else, it distinguishes you and you will be ahead of the rest when we are released back into the sporting world again.



“Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

Michael Jordan



A woman in athletic wear is running in a gym. The background is dark with several rings hanging from the ceiling, suggesting a CrossFit or functional fitness environment. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the woman's form against the dark background.

One crucial thing to note is that it is important to do something even if it is significantly less than before. One study into resistance training showed that even when doing 1/9th of the original training, participants were able to maintain their muscle mass for the duration of a 32 week period, whereas those who did not undergo any training over 32 weeks regressed to their original muscle mass before the training plan began.

However, now is not the time for complacency or downheartedness – we have a unique opportunity to use this time to progress and focus on our health and fitness in a way that we have never before.





EXERCISE AND MENTAL HEALTH

It is also important to consider the positive effect that exercise has on our mental health. Exercise has been shown to reduce depression and anxiety and has positive effects on mood, self-esteem and cognitive function.



SLEEP

With significantly reduced social commitments it is very easy to let our sleep habits go to pot. Aside from harming our physical and mental recovery, poor sleep quality impairs our immune system, something we naturally don't want during a global pandemic.

When sleeping, there are a few crucial things to take into account: consistency, appropriate length and quality – all of which influence each other. By setting a consistent bedtime and wake up time you can reduce the time it takes to fall asleep as well as improving the quality of your sleep by allowing you to spend appropriate time in each sleep stage.



When considering sleep length it is important to remember not only to get enough sleep but also not to get too much, having too little or too much sleep is associated with worse health.

When considering appropriate sleep length it can also be helpful to think in terms of 90-minute cycles, rather than hours – a more accurate representation of our sleep. You can use an app such as 'SleepCycle' to track your sleep and wake you up at the lightest point so you feel ready to start the day.

It is crucial to practice good sleep habits, try to turn off blue light sources as you prepare to sleep so as not to interfere with melatonin secretion, which is inhibited by the presence of blue light.



NUTRITION

Strictly speaking, the immune system cannot be boosted through vitamins. However, vitamins can be used to support normal immune function. Whilst it might not be necessary to supplement vitamins or minerals, it is important to get a sufficient amount in your diet, and if you are unable to achieve suitable levels with your diet, then consider changing your diet or supplementing.



Essential vitamins and minerals for supporting immune function are copper, folate, iron, selenium, zinc and vitamins A, B6, B12, C and D. You might find it useful to use an app, such as 'Cronometer', to track your micronutrient intake and highlight deficiencies.

One vitamin to highlight in particular is vitamin D, which we typically get from sunlight. Considering the lockdown measures that many countries have put in this creates a challenge, particularly knowing that in normal circumstances 40% of Americans are deficient in vitamin D. If you have a garden, try to use it throughout the day or if your current government regulations allow, try to get outside, whilst abiding by social distancing measures. If you are unable to get outside, then consider supplementing vitamin D. Overall maintaining a healthy diet, rich in the relevant nutrients can help to maintain immune function during this crucial time.



MINDFULNESS

During this strange period, it is easy for us to become stressed and distressed by the circumstances. To help combat this, set aside some time daily to practice mindfulness and breathing exercises. Mindfulness can help us to reduce stress, something that we all will be facing to varying extents with the forced change in lifestyle.

At Rewire, we have developed a Mindset Recovery System. Two of the many protocols that this includes are guided box breathing exercises (a Navy SEAL technique) to help reduce stress and binaural beats which help to counteract the negative effects of mental fatigue.



MINDSET RECOVERY DEMO

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RW

GUIDED BREATHING

5MIN BOX-BREATHING EXERCISE

PATENT PENDING



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