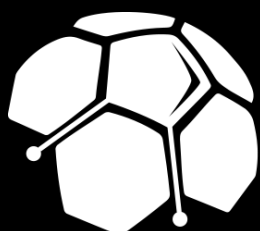


Recovery & Injury Prevention



PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE & PRACTICAL TOOLS



The Non-League
Network

OVERVIEW

Recovery & Injury Prevention

In football, performance isn't just built through training — it's built through **how well you recover**. Managing load, preparing the body correctly, and respecting recovery principles are essential to staying available, consistent, and injury-free across a long season or training block.

This section provides both **professional guidance** and **practical tools** to improve recovery and prevent injury.



Warm-Up Properly

A structured warm-up is one of the most effective injury-prevention tools. It prepares the **muscles, tendons, joints, and nervous system** for the demands of training or conditioning.

Why it matters:

- Increases heart rate and blood flow
- Improves joint mobility and muscle elasticity
- Activates key muscle groups (glutes, core, calves, hamstrings)
- Reduces risk of muscle strains and tendon injuries

Example Warm-Up (8–12 min):

- **Pulse Raiser (2–3 min):** light jog, high knees, heel flicks, side shuffles
- **Dynamic Mobility (3–4 min):** walking lunges with rotation, leg swings, world's greatest stretch, ankle mobility
- **Activation (2–3 min):** glute bridges, mini-band walks, calf raises, deadbugs/plank
- **Progressive Running Prep (2–3 min):** A-skips / B-skips, short accelerations, light changes of direction





Yoga & Mobility

Yoga and mobility sessions help improve joint range of motion, flexibility, and movement quality, and are ideal on active rest days or post-training.

Gym Days (10–15 min):

- Hip flexor stretch
- Hamstrings and calves
- Thoracic spine rotations
- Shoulder mobility flows
- Controlled breathing for downregulation

Active Rest Days (20–30 min):

- Full-body mobility flow
- Hip openers
- Spinal mobility
- Balance and control exercises

Key Tip: Sessions should be restorative, not fatiguing.



Sleep

Targets:

- 7–9 hours per night
- Consistent sleep and wake times
- Dark, cool room, limited screens before bed

Why: Sleep drives muscle repair, hormonal regulation, and nervous system recovery. Poor sleep increases injury risk and slows adaptation.



Foam Rolling & Soft Tissue Work

When: Post-training or evenings

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Focus Areas:

- Calves / Achilles
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Glutes
- Upper back

Roll slowly and under control — mild discomfort is normal; sharp pain is not.



Heat Therapy

Use to:

- Loosen stiff muscles or joints
- Prepare for mobility sessions
- Promote blood flow on rest days

Options:

- Hot bath
- Sauna
- Heat pack (localised)

Avoid heat immediately after sessions causing acute muscle damage.





Ice Baths (Cold Water Immersion)

Use strategically after:

- High-intensity sessions
- Weeks with increased training load
- Feeling sore or heavy

Guidelines:

- 8–12 minutes
- Cold but tolerable
- Avoid overuse, as frequent use may blunt training adaptations



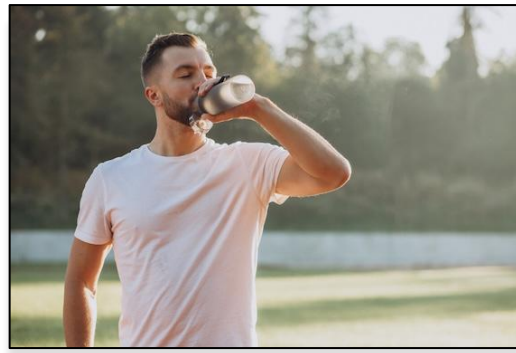
Load Management & Listening to Your Body

Many injuries occur from **accumulated fatigue**, not one single session.

Warning Signs:

- Persistent soreness
- Heavy or tight legs
- Reduced performance
- Poor sleep

Adjust workload early — training smart beats pushing through pain.



Nutrition & Hydration

Key Principles:

- Fuel sufficiently to support training
- Protein for muscle repair
- Carbohydrates to replenish energy
- Healthy fats for overall recovery
- Stay hydrated throughout the day

Tip: Under-fuelling is a major cause of fatigue and recurring injuries.

Weekly Recovery Structure (Example)

Day Type	Recovery Focus
Training / Conditioning	Warm-up → Training → Post-training mobility/foam rolling
Active Rest	Yoga / mobility (20–30 min), light walk or cycle
High Load / Congested Week	Ice bath, extra focus on sleep, nutrition, mobility

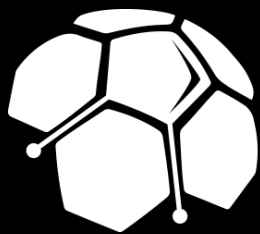


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Warm up properly** before every session
- **Incorporate yoga and mobility** on gym or rest days
- **Use foam rolling, ice baths, and heat strategically**
- **Prioritise sleep and nutrition**
- **Listen to your body and manage load**

Final Thought: Football performance is built on **training smart and recovering smarter**. Consistency, recovery, and awareness of your body are what allow you to train, perform, and avoid injuries over the long term.





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