

Advisory on COVID-19

SPORT MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE:

Disease Update

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is over 8.3 million with over 4.3 million recovered and 446,000 deaths. Mortality rate in Canada is 8%. Many countries are continuing to reopen aspects of their economies and loosen restrictions, and this is also happening in Canada.

In Canada we have over 99,500 cases, 8,200 deaths and 61,000 (62%) recovered. Of the 29,000 presently active cases in Canada, 97% are classified as mild. The number of recovered continues to rise and more extensive testing in many provinces has not been finding significant additional cases. The curve has been flattened for the most part and local health authorities are zeroing in on flare ups to limit their spread.

This progressive relaxation of restrictions will have an impact on training and access to facilities, but timing will differ across regions and across different sports. Each athlete and sport are working on plans and using the guidelines as set out in the R-SAT (Return to Sport Assessment Tool) and the recent publications from the High Performance Return to Sport Task Force.

Institutes and Training Facilities

At this stage, all Canadians remain under national and provincial public health guidance. With the recent changes most of the institutes are opening, at least partially. The timing and level of operations possible will be dependent on the local restrictions in place at the time and vary from one institute to another. A summary of present status is below.

INS Quebec

The facility opened on 15 June with the cooperation of the provincial government. Sports and athletes are asked to check on what services are available and how they may be accessed.

CSI Ontario

Graduated reopening commenced 4 June. Please check with them on the details of what services are open and how they may be accessed.

CSI Calgary

CSI Calgary and its high-performance training facility will be opening its doors on 6 July. Resident National Sport Organizations (NSO) and athletes who are AAP carded, qualified and/or training for 2021 Olympic/Paralympic Games or 2022 Winter Olympic/Paralympic Games, and approved by their respective NSO to train, will be prioritized for indoor group training. Athletes should contact their strength and conditioning coach or IST lead from CSI Calgary for more specific information.

CSI Pacific

Opened on 15 June. Please check with institute for details of services available and how to access.

Return to Training in Clubs and Groups

The Return to Sport Task Force has published the National Framework for COVID-19 Return to High Performance Sport as well as a Club Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist tool. These documents have been widely distributed and are available on Own the Podium's website ([COVID-19 Resources](#)). Many sport specific return to training plans are being published using these guidelines.

Travel for Purposes of Training

After review of the provincial regulations, SMAC has provided a summary of the guidelines on traveling from one jurisdiction to another for the purposes of training. This is a fluid situation and we recommend that the links be checked as provinces are changing their recommendations as the situation allows.

(**Provincial Travel Guidelines**)

Mental Health Update

Emotions are high as many are transitioning back to in-person group interactions and training. Expect a wide range of experiences including excitement, enjoyment, surprise, relief, indifference, reluctance, anxiety, fear, guilt, and even resentment. It is normal if athletes, coaches, and staff feel lost, confused, and stressed as they get familiarized with new environments and regulations and strive to implement them. Information is changing on a regular basis thus open and honest communication is most important ingredient during this transition.

Following are examples of concerns or issues that people may be experiencing and strategies to address them.

Concerns/Issues

- Mixed messages
- Mental fatigue and overload
- Reduced patience and tolerance
- Lack of clarity of role on the team
- Fear tactics to maximize compliance
- Fear of penalization if don't return to training or if have fallen behind (ex. fitness, skills)
- Lack of awareness and vigilance due to culture of invincibility
- Lack of physical and psychological safety (ex. leaving home, reduced staff in the gym)
- Fear and frustration with others who are not following protocol
- Fluctuating motivation and focus with lack of competitions

Strategies

- Name and normalize reactions
- Explore psychological readiness for return to group training
- Establish personalized safety plans based on needs and preferences
- Use solution-focused questions to promote self-efficacy rather than fear
- Monitor experiences/reactions (ex. traffic light check-in)
- Accept and give space to be vulnerable
- Remain honest, open, and transparent
- Provide autonomy to make decisions for self
- Engage in daily self-care (ex. mindfulness, connect with family)
- Identify barriers and effective responses to them
- Respect safe sport guidelines (ex. no weigh-ins)
- Use resilience and mental fitness skills to mitigate stress
- Move cautiously so as to not overwhelm
- Offer support in person and/or online (ex. MPC, mental health practitioner)

Ultimately, a commitment to social responsibility to protect everyone's health, training progression, and performance, is a priority. Promote being a role model citizen and reinforce collaboration and support. *We're in this together !*

AN UPDATE WILL BE PROVIDED EVERY SECOND WEDNESDAY AT 4:00 PM EDT OR AS REQUIRED.

Updated links from the Government of Canada and WHO

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html#faq>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Further Questions:

Further information about COVID-19 may be obtained from your NSO Chief Medical Officer or Team Physician, or the Chief Medical Officers of the Sport Medicine Advisory Committee.

- Dr. Mike Wilkinson, Canadian Olympic Committee: mwilkinson@olympic.ca
- Dr. Andy Marshall Canadian, Paralympic Committee: amarshall@paralympic.ca
- Dr. Suzanne Leclerc, Institut National du Sport du Québec: sleclerc@insquebec.org
- Dr. Doug Richards, Canadian Sport Institute Ontario: drichards@csiontario.ca
- Dr. Brian Benson, Canadian Sport Institute Calgary: bbenson@csicalgary.ca
- Dr. Paddy McCluskey, Canadian Sport Institute Pacific: pmclluskey@csipacific.ca