



Minimizing Risk of Injury Upon Return to Sport Post COVID-19

- **Thorough Warm-up**
 - A comprehensive warm-up program will be more important than ever to help prevent musculoskeletal injuries as players return to exercise and sport.
 - Include a combination of aerobic work, balance and proprioception drills, muscle activation and strength exercises, as well as agility and light plyometrics
 - FIFA 11+ is a great resource to utilize - has been validated for both men's and women's soccer, there are different "levels" of drills for the varying levels of athletes, and it has shown to reduce the risk of all injuries by about 30% and reduce the risk of more severe injuries, such as ACL injuries, by about 50%.
 - Below are a few resources that provide some insight into the FIFA 11+ program:
 - Generalized overview (5mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HYcUd2L7FU>
 - FIFA 11+ Warm-up:
 - [Generalized exercise overview](#)
 - [Detailed overview with exercise break downs](#)
 - Full FIFA 11+ Manual:
https://www.fifamedicalnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/cdn/11plus_workbook_e.pdf
- **Gradual return to previous practice parameters**
 - Remember that most players have had little to no training since the start of the pandemic. Most soft tissue and joint injuries occur after trying to do too much too fast after doing too little for too long.
 - A gradual increase in practice intensity, duration, and frequency over the first few weeks of returning to sport is crucial in minimizing the risk of injury and keeping players safe, healthy, and on the field.
- **Communication**
 - Open communication between coaches, players, and parents is paramount.
 - Be sure to review proper form and technique utilized for slide tackling and complex skills, and encourage players not to play through pain.



- **Recovery**

- Highly important but often under considered in the youth population
- Things to consider:
 - Post-practice cool down - similar to a warm-up before activity, it is important to gradually decrease activity levels to help with recovery
 - Nutrition & hydration - encourage adequate hydration and nutrition before, during, and after exercise
 - Sleep - studies have shown that adolescent athletes who get less than 8hrs of sleep per night increase their injury risk by 1.7x compared to those who get greater than 8hrs. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25028798>)

**If an injury is suspected, orthopedic or concussion, please don't hesitate to call your medical partners, LifeMotion Physical Therapy and Balance Center. We can evaluate, diagnose and treat the condition to ensure the athlete returns to play quickly and safely. Contact our team at 918-574-2575.