



THE MINDFUL ATHLETE'S HOLISTIC GUIDE TO RECOVERY



SUPPORTING YOUR MIND, BODY AND
NERVOUS SYSTEM TO ENHANCE YOUR
RECOVERY

EMILY PERRIN

E: EMILY@PERRINWELLNESSPERFORMANCE.COM

W: PERRINWELLNESSPERFORMANCE.COM



HELLO AND WELCOME!

I am thrilled that you have downloaded this holistic guide to Athlete Recovery.

I created this Guide because I believe that Athlete Recovery is a critical component to not only how we perform but overall health and well being. I also believe that it is important to acknowledge the link between Athlete Recovery and Athlete Mental Health.

This guide is meant to help you think about recovery in a way that supports the overall health of your mind and body. When we prioritize our recovery we are setting ourselves up for success around performance.

I highly suggest you check out my 3 part Blog Series:

[Why Failing to Prioritize your Recovery is Impacting your Mental Health](#)





PERRIN WELLNESS AND PERFORMANCE



Hi There!

I'm Emily Perrin, LMSW.

**Im a Mental Health
Therapist and Mindfulness
and Performance Coach.**

**I'm also a former DI Athlete
and former DI Coach.**

I educate and empower Elite Athletes to become the best they can be both on and off the field. I combine Mindfulness Training, Meditation, Breath Work and Yoga to provide athlete's with the tools and skills they need to navigate life more efficiently.

"The recovery process has been a critical part of how I not only continue to perform at a high level but also take care of myself. Emily has the knowledge and skill to help an athlete fine tune this process for any athlete and has helped me address this in order to take my own game to the next level. If you want to play at the next level and sustain elite performance recovery has to be a piece of the puzzle you take seriously."

Jules Heningburg, PLL Redwoods, Founder of JukeLab and Mission Primed



@emilyperrinlmsw



@emilyLperrin



KEY RECOVERY TAKE AWAYS

As a former DI athlete and DI coach I know the life of an elite athlete very well. As someone who has experienced significant physical injury as well as mental health challenges I have firsthand experience of how recovery impacts health and well being.

I believe that too many athletes, coaches and sport organizations fail to recognize how critical recovery is not only for mental health but for overall health and well being. This guide is to help athletes address their recovery more efficiently.

Recovery at a foundational level is our ability to restore BOTH mentally and physically after training or competition. This restoration is largely rooted in our nervous system. My 3 part Blog series breaks this down in detail. In order for an athlete to sufficiently recover both mind and body they need to be shifting in to what we call the Ventral Vagal branch of the Parasympathetic Nervous System. Its never as simple as a quick stretch or using a Thera- gun! Recovery is extremely nuanced and individual.

Why Failing to Prioritize Recovery is Impacting your Mental Health

3 Part Blog Series



[**Read Blog Here**](#)





THE LINK BETWEEN RECOVERY AND MENTAL HEALTH

What we need to know:

1. The foundation of Mental Health (and overall well being) AND Athlete Recovery is rooted in the **nervous system**.
2. The life of an elite athlete is extremely demanding (mentally, physically, emotionally).
3. When we perform (compete, train, lift, condition etc) this is stress or “load” on our mind-body system. This stress is ON TOP of everything else that we experience in our day to day lives.
4. Stress or “load” on the mind-body system is **CUMULATIVE**. Recovery is what allows us to combat the cumulative effect and actually RESTORE our system.
5. When we neglect recovery there is the potential to constantly be operating in SPORT and life from a deficit.
6. Operating from deficit impacts not only performance but how we function (and how our mind-body system operates) on a daily basis. This WILL INCLUDE how we handle emotions, think and process information and navigate stress (i.e MENTAL HEALTH).

Athletes: If you want to set yourself up for optimal health (mental, emotional, physical) both on AND off the field, it's time to prioritize how you recover.





DISCLAIMER

The Mindful Athlete's Guide to Recovery is **NOT** a replacement for Medical or Mental Health treatment. The information throughout this Guide are presented based on my own personal experience, science, research and working with athletes of all ages.

This is **NOT** an individual or tailored "prescription" for recovery.

Every single human is unique. The practices of Mindfulness, Meditation, Breath Work, and Yoga need to be practiced with care and consideration.

Due to the prevalence of Trauma and Mental Health issues in today's world it is important that we ALWAYS consider the potential impact this may have on our practice. The main goal of any Mindfulness practices when it comes to Recovery for an athlete are this:

1) Does this practice feel safe to me?

2) Does this practice serve and support me both mind and body in recovery?

If at any point these answers are a "NO" please reach out or speak with a trained professional. Please contact me ASAP.

Contact Here





Restorative Postures

Restorative Postures are excellent for Athlete Recovery. In a **Restorative posture**, the body is FULLY supported by the ground or props (i.e: blocks, bolster, pillow, wall).

These postures allow the physical body to fully relax and have been shown to help us shift in to our **Parasympathetic Nervous system (PNS)**. This is the Nervous system state we need to shift towards in order for the mind-body system to fully recover!

Restorative postures can be paired with meditation, reflection, listening to music or breath work. Ideally we want to facilitate ease and rest during this time.

I encourage my athletes to add restorative postures in 2-5 times per week after training, games or prior to getting in bed. Postures can be held for 5-10 minutes or however long feels best to you!





Restorative Postures



Restorative
Postures:

- 1) Legs up the wall
(or on a chair)
- 2) Supported
bridge
- 3) Single Leg Frog



Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is a critical piece of the recovery process. However, I find that many athletes struggle with sleep. They can't fall asleep, can't stay asleep or don't get enough of it! This will impact not only day to day functioning but also performance.

Sleep hygiene can help!

Sleep hygiene involves both the habits and the environment we create in order to support us in sleeping well.

Athlete's typically prepare for everything in and around performance (games, practice, scout etc). **Sometimes we need to ALSO prepare our body for rest and sleep.**

Thinking about your sleep environment as well as your habits in and around sleep can be a game changer for overall well being and your mental health.



Youtube Practice
for Sleep



Sleep Hygiene

Environment

Start by thinking about WHERE you sleep. Is this conducive to helping you rest? Things to consider adjusting

- 1) Temperature of room
- 2) Noise or sounds that could be influencing or helping sleep (ie white noise machine or fan)
- 3) How dark is it in your room?
- 4) Your actual bed, sheets, pillows etc. Are these actually comfortable and relaxing?

Pre Bed Routine

- 1) Start with how much sleep you think you need. Work backwards to find your "bed time" or the time that you want to be FALLING asleep.
- 2) How much time leading UP to bed time do you need to prepare your body for sleep?
- 3) Add relaxing and easeful behaviors and practices to help calm and soothe the mind-body system

Sleep Hygiene Practices:

- Journaling or Reflection
- Gratitude Practice
- Meditation
- Slow mindful movement
- Restorative postures
- Breath Work
- Myofascial Release or foam rolling
- Hot shower
- Limiting phone/tech time
- Listening to calming music
- Reading

Key Take Away:

- Find what works for you!
- Sleep Hygiene will be unique and individual for every person
- Find what helps you find ease and relaxation to support a restful nights sleep!



Breath Work

At a foundational level **Breath Work** is about bringing intentionality to your breathing. We breathe automatically but we can also control and manipulate our breath pattern.

Before manipulating the breath (holding, prolonging, shortening) I suggest all athletes start by getting to know their natural breath.

(see next page for practices)

The breath is INTIMATELY linked to your Nervous System which is why it can be a great tool to help with recovery. This is also the reason the manipulating the breath should be done slowly and safely. Breath Work is unique and individual for EVERYONE.

***For those navigating heightened levels of anxiety or other mental health challenges, please know Breath Work has the potential to heighten or exacerbate physiological symptoms. Please consult a Medical or Mental Health professional if this is the case for you.**





Breath Work

The Natural Breath:

Start by getting to know the natural breath. Research has shown that by just bringing our attention and awareness to the FEELING of our breath we can activate our Parasympathetic Nervous System. This is what we want for recovery!

Youtube Practice

Side Lying Belly Breathing:

Belly Breathing can be a great beginners practice for athletes to implement in to their recovery routine. Belly breathing helps us engage our diaphragm as we breathe and has been show to help us shift in to the Parasympathetic Nervous System state.

Youtube Practice



Take Breath Work SLOW and at a pace that feels good to you. If you are finding that breath work makes you MORE anxious or activated, it may not be a practice for you right now. Thats ok!! This can actually be a very common experience.

Recovery is about finding what WORKS for you.

Remember that this is not a 1 size fits all. The practice of Breath work is individual and unique.



Myofascial Release

Myofascial Release (MFR) is a practice that targets the fascia or connective tissue throughout the body. Your fascia is extremely important as it surrounds every muscle, cell and organ in the human body. It is **ALSO** intimately connected to the **Nervous System!**

This is why MFR can be an excellent practice to incorporate in to your Recovery routine. Many athletes find that MFR can have a meditative and calming effect on the mind-body system.

MFR uses gentle applied pressure to target the connective tissue to release tension and improve mobility.

***With any mind-body practice we need to remember these are ALL individual and unique. Please consult a medical or Mental Health professional for individual and specific needs.**





Myofascial Release

MFR can be done with:

- Lacrosse Ball
- Tennis ball
- Foam Roller
- Hands / Thumbs
- Any type of massage ball or tool

MFR for feet and Calves

Our feet are critical for athletic performance! They are the foundation for the entire physical body but are often neglected. If you are new to MFR this can be a GREAT practice to start incorporating in to your recovery routine a couple times a week. Grab some type of MFR ball (foam roller is option) and check out the link below!

[**Youtube Practice for Feet**](#)

[**Youtube Practice for Calf**](#)



Typically with MFR we want moderate pressure. Think on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being very painful. The pressure we want throughout our practice is somewhere around a 5-7. It doesn't always need to be PAINFUL to be effective!



TIPS FOR SUCCESS!

1) Find what works for YOU

The recovery process will be unique and individual for everyone. What works for one person may not work for another. At the end of the day this is about finding what supports our own mind-body and nervous system to make that Parasympathetic shift! Don't forget about finding practices that you ACTUALLY LIKE :)

2) Think less about a large chunk of time in a day or week and more about consistency

Recovery is LESS about carving out an hour of time in a day or per week and more about the small practices you can CONSISTENTLY be adding in your daily routine. Remember that how you recover is the FOUNDATION of how you perform and take care of yourself. A few minutes every day consistently is better than 1 recovery day per week.

***Addressing recovery holistically (mind, body and emotions) is going to be key!

Sometimes recovery looks like spending time AWAY from sport and performance and doing things in life that bring you JOY!





WHERE CAN YOU FIND ME?



Emily Perrin, LMSW is also the Director of the Medical Advisory Board for Morgan's Message. A non profit dedicated to ending the stigma and creating awareness around Mental Health.
