

Guidelines for **Appropriate & Safe Training** for Gaelic Games



□ **Prepare**



▶ **Perform**



⊕ **Recover**



GAA

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Guidelines for Appropriate and Safe Training for Gaelic Games

Training and preparation for Gaelic Games has evolved in recent years. Many new methods of preparation and recovery have become available to GAA teams and players at all levels. The GAA's Medical, Scientific and Welfare (MSW) and Games Development Committees (GDC) have agreed the following recommendations and checklist to assist players, coaches and clubs in training for and playing our games while ensuring player welfare is always of paramount importance.

Recommendations for Safe Training and Exercise

The Games Development Committee have developed the following resources in relation to Safe Training and Exercise.

Training activities should be appropriate to the players' stage of development. The GAA Player Pathway provides a framework for identifying appropriate activity types and developing capacities relevant to each stage of a player's development.

Click link for more info: <http://learning.gaa.ie/playerpathway>

Training sessions should be organised based on the **Principles of Training**. Frequency should ensure appropriate time is allowed for recovery and adaptation between training sessions. Training Loads should be monitored to support this. An appropriate Cool Down should take place at the end of every training session and match.

Click link for more info: <http://learning.gaa.ie/PrinciplesofTraining>

Training should have regard for the Principle of Specificity and utilise a **Games-Based-Approach** where possible.

Click link for more info: <http://learning.gaa.ie/coach10>

The **GAA 15** Injury Prevention Programme and Warm-Up should be utilised for all youth and adult teams before training sessions and matches.

Click link for more info: <http://learning.gaa.ie/GAA15>

Arising from research carried out in UCD via the GAA National Injury Surveillance Database, it has been discovered that the majority of injuries in Gaelic Games are non-contact injuries with the vast majority of these being lower limb injuries. Hamstring injuries are the most common injury, followed by ankle, knee, and groin injuries.

Almost a quarter of all injuries are recurrent injuries (a player suffering a second or further recurrence of a previous injury). Recurrent injuries are most likely to occur when a player returns to training or fixtures without fully recovering from the previous injury or playing while injured.

A player will be more vulnerable to injury when they have a very high activity level between training and matches and this risk is increased if playing across a number of teams, codes or sports. Additionally, players are similarly at increased risk of injury when returning to training from a lay off either due to injury, holidays, off season etc. Flexibility and appropriate resistance training, as provided for in the GAA15, should be built into training programmes to allow players to train at an appropriate load and allow for these factors.

Cardiac Screening

All members are reminded that it is recommended for all GAA Players over the age of 14 to undergo cardiac screening on one occasion. It is also advised that this process be repeated before the age of 25. Screening should consist of completion of the GAA's Cardiac Screening Questionnaire, Physical Examination and an ECG with the player by a doctor (preferably the player's GP if equipped to do so as the GP will be more likely to be aware of the player's family history).

See <http://learning.gaa.ie/cardiacscreening>

Clubs are reminded of the GAA's Defibrillator Guidelines, must endeavour to have an AED unit(s) at training/fixture venues and must ensure that the unit(s) is checked and serviced regularly. AED units can be lifesaving devices if a cardiac event occurs on the club grounds. With the introduction of Eircode, clubs are advised to place a sticker with the Eircode for the location of the defib on the unit or on its container. This will assist the emergency services in locating the incident and time can be critical in such a situation.

Further information is available on <http://learning.gaa.ie/Defibrillator%20Scheme>

Medical Cover for Club Players

First Aid

Clubs should ensure at least one mentor per team is trained in First Aid. There are numerous companies/organisation providing sports specific First Aid training. It is the responsibility of each club or County Board to arrange training and to ensure the training providers are appropriately qualified. A fully stocked First Aid kit should also be available at all training sessions and matches.

Physiotherapy Cover

Clubs should where possible only engage qualified chartered physiotherapists or athletic training therapists if cover additional to First Aid at training or fixtures is required. If personnel other than chartered physiotherapists or athletic training therapists are being engaged for this purpose, they should be appropriately qualified to diagnose and treat injuries. Players, Coaches, Club officials and these personnel themselves should be conscious of the limitations to their training, qualifications and experience and refer players to a chartered physiotherapist and/or doctor when required.

Preseason Injury Screening

By arrangement with a chartered physiotherapist or athletic training therapist who specialises in sports injuries, clubs can arrange preseason injury screening for their players which may identify existing and potential injuries and lead to better overall injury prevention, management and awareness in a club. This screening is recommended as most appropriate to teams playing at a level who employ formal strength and conditioning programmes.

Further resources in relation to preparation, performance and recovery are available on <http://learning.gaa.ie/player>

Advice for Players and Clubs on Bikram Yoga, Military Style Team Building Activities, Cryotherapy & Hypoxic Training

The following activities can potentially cause medical issues. Provision of a defibrillator is also recommended before engaging in the following activities.

Bikram Yoga

Bikram Yoga or Hot Yoga has been shown to cause dramatic increases in heart rate and core temperature in participants (which could potentially cause Heat Exhaustion, Heat Stroke and in extreme cases heart related complications if there is a previously unidentified underlying condition). The MSW Committee recommends Yoga/Pilates as an alternative as it provides the same benefits as Bikram Yoga and is a safer option for players.

If a club/team insists on Bikram/Hot yoga the MSW Committee recommends

- reducing Bikram sessions to 60 minutes (A typical Bikram session is 90mins) to minimise the potential for heat intolerance
- the importance of staying hydrated before, during and after a session. There is no benefit to refraining from water during a session.
- If a participant shows any symptoms of Heat Exhaustion (such as Headache, Paleness, Dizziness, General Weakness, Low Blood Pressure) or Heat Stroke (Hot dry skin, rapid pulse, bright red skin colour, labored breathing) they should stop exercising immediately, rehydrate and in cases of heat stroke, be transported immediately to a hospital.

Military Style Team Building Activities

In general, team building activity days can provide a positive benefit in terms of developing team spirit. However, in the event of more extreme activities such as overnight camping, sleep deprivation, activities in cold water, nocturnal endurance training etc; there are risks to players such as exhaustion, pneumonia and potential heart complications if there is a previously unidentified underlying condition. Clubs should secure the written consent of players and/or parents guardians (for u-18s) if pursuing such activities.

Cryotherapy

There is insufficient evidence available at present to support the use of whole-body cryotherapy (WBC) and cold water immersion (ice-baths).

Advice for Players, Coaches and Clubs on Hypoxic Training

Hypoxic(Altitude) Training

The GAA's Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee does not recommend teams of any level pursue this activity as part of their preparation as this activity does involve a significant financial outlay for clubs and counties which could be more efficiently spent on other sports medicine or preparation supports.

It is the view of the GAA's Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee that the weight of evidence on Hypoxic (Altitude) Training has not yet scientifically proven the practice to be beneficial to on-pitch performance in Gaelic Games and can potentially endanger the health and welfare of players, if not monitored and supervised correctly.

Queries or requests for further advice/information in relation to the above or other training/recovery methods can be e-mailed to playerwelfare@gaa.ie

PLAYER SAFETY AND WELFARE CHECKLIST FOR GAA COACHES

Coaches have a duty of care to all players under their instruction. Coaches should ensure players are suitably and safely attired with the correct equipment and ensure there is adequate provision for First Aid. The following checklist has been devised to assist coaches with these responsibilities. Resources in relation to these topics are available on learning.gaa.ie

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Goalposts (both permanent and temporary)	Should be checked to ensure they are anchored securely and there are no potential injury threats from their structure by Coach before each training session/ match. Risks include danger of collapsing due to weather or interference/ collisions.	Coach []
Weather Extremes & Pitch Conditions	Is there a risk of injury due to weather and or pitch conditions at the training venue?	Coach []
Equipment	Coach checks that hurling equipment (hurl and helmet) is fit to use and meets GAA rules.	Coach []
(For reference Hurling and Mouthguard Info)	Coach checks that the mouthguards (football) are in use by all players as per guidelines	Coach []
	Coach checks players footwear for suitability before each match/session	Coach []
Conduct of players	Coach should respect the decisions of the referee. Coach should encourage fair play among his/her players and treat players fairly with regard to Team Selection.	Coach [] Coach and Players []
Injury Prevention (For reference GAA15 Warm-Up)	Players should warm up using the GAA15 and cool down properly after matches / session. Each coach has access to an adequately stocked first aid kit. At least one mentor who is trained to have a relevant and up to date first aid qualification. Players with injuries or medical complaints should let these be known to their coach. Registered players have coverage by GAA club injury insurance. Players should make sure they are paid up members of their club.	Coach [] Coach [] Coach [] Players [] Players []
Concussion	If a player suffers a collision or impact which could result in a potential concussion, a coach should remove the player from play/training and not allow to return on the same day. The coach should advise the players parents/guardians/ family of such an event occurring so as to ensure the player is monitored for the 24 hours following the concussive impact. All players are educated in relation to the GAA'S Concussion Management Guidelines. As part of this a player and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) should advise the coach in the event of a concussion occurring while participating with another team, in another sport or in other circumstances. A player who has suffered a suspected concussion is not allowed to return to full contact training without written medical clearance being provided to the coach of the team.	Coach [] Coach [] Coach to arrange for players [] Coach/Player/ Parent/Guardian []

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Cardiac Screening Info / Defibrillators	Coaches should create awareness among players of the recommendations regarding cardiac screening. Before commencing any extremely arduous activity the coach should check with players to see if they have undergone cardiac screening as recommend by the MSW Committee.	Club/Coach []
	Coach is aware of the location of Defibrillator / AED units and is trained in the use of same.	Club/Coach []
Anti-Doping and Supplement Advice / Recipes for Success	It is club policy that players under the age of 18 are not provided or advised to use any supplement.	Club/Coach []
	If supplements are being provided to adult players, only supplements which have been recommend for the player by a qualified sports dietician/nutritionist for each player on an individual basis are provided and have been batch tested and do not include ingredients on the WADA prohibited substances list.	Club/Coach []
Dehydration	Players are encouraged to bring their own water bottles and should be given multiple opportunities to take on water during a session.	Players []
Training Load	Coaches should be mindful of players other GAA, sporting, work and academic commitments when it comes to scheduling training and should encourage players to take breaks from attending training to rest and recover when appropriate/if required.	Coach []

Training sessions should be undertaken in compliance with the rules of the Association and the specific code.

<http://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/rules-regulations/>

