

RETURNING TO NORMAL ACTIVITY AFTER INJURY

- Injuries take longer than you might initially think to heal, regardless of pain levels, or even how fast you want them to
- Fractures
 - Most fractures are immobilised in a plaster for about 6 weeks, however at this time, the injury has only healed to about 60% of the normal strength. Joints will also be stiff and muscles weak.
 - Recovery of movement and strength takes time and effort
 - By about 3 months, the injury has healed about 80% and the remodelling phase can take a year or more
 - Healing may be altered by many factors:
 - Age
 1. Children generally heal faster than adults
 2. Older adults heal slower
 - Smoking and Alcohol use can impair or delay healing times
 - Anti-inflammatory use, which can impair healing
 - Medical Conditions, such as
 1. Osteoporosis
 2. Calcium / Vitamin D deficiencies
- Soft Tissue Injuries (Ligaments, Muscle and Tendon)
 - It might take anywhere from a few weeks to several months for ligament or muscle injuries to recover to a level where normal activities can be completed, depending on the degree of damage and structures involved.
 - Tendons are generally a lot slower to recover due to poorer blood supply and require careful progression.
 - Recovery from tendon rupture, depending on the location, can take 9-12 months (such as the Achilles Tendon)
 - Some soft tissue injuries might require surgical intervention, should rehabilitation not result in satisfactory outcomes

Disclaimer: This health information is for general education purposes only and is intended to be a reminder of education provided by your health professional after a thorough examination.



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- General Advice During Recovery
 - Injuries are not fully healed after 6 weeks!
 - GRADUALLY increase the amount of activity that you are doing and above all, listen to your body.
 - Generally, for most fractures, however long you were in a splint or plaster will provide a rough guide for how long it will take to get back to normal activity. For example, if you were managed in a plaster for 6 weeks, it will likely take you another 6 weeks to return to most normal activities.
 - Some mild discomfort or swelling after activity is normal in the recovery period and this can take many months to completely resolve
 - If you have any of these features, then your body is telling you that you are not ready for that amount of activity YET:
 1. Significant pain or swelling
 2. Pain that lasts for more than 30 minutes after you stop
 3. Pain that is markedly worse the morning after activity
 - If you develop these features, allow the symptoms to settle (may need to elevate / ice) and next time, do a bit less and gradually increase activity as able.
 - If not settling after rest, review with your provider
 - For leg injuries, if you are finding it challenging to walk, you might want to go to the pool and exercise in the water.
 - With the water up to shoulder height, you reduce the amount of weight going through a sore or weak leg significantly, so you might be able to do a bit more in the pool and get used to walking without as much stress as on land
 - Progress from the deeper to the shallower water as you are able, moving back to the land as comfortable

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