

GAA Player Welfare Booklet



□ Prepare



▶ Perform

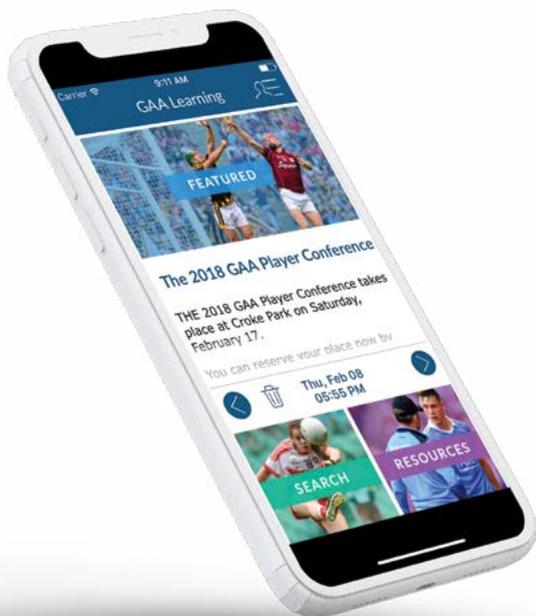


⊕ Recover

GAA

Prepare Perform Recover

Introducing the **NEW GAA Learning App**



The first GAA Player Conference also sees the launch of the GAA Learning App. Available now through the App Store and Google Play, the GAA Learning App has been developed to provide better access to key resources for GAA members and those actively promoting Gaelic games.

Whether you are a player, coach, administrator or referee the GAA Learning App will allow you to access the most up-to-date content from the GAA Learning & Development Portal (learning.gaa.ie) and its various Youtube, Twitter and Facebook channels.

The App will allow users to register for the particular content relevant to their role(s) and will allow us to send important policy and resource updates straight to your phone.

Built with you in mind the GAA Learning App is available for all Apple and Android devices, including mobile and tablet devices [recent operating systems required]. Designed to be intuitive and easy-to-use, the App will also provide users with the opportunity to access resources from our various, Coach, Administrator, Referee and Player Education Programmes.

Download now to stay ahead of the game!

CONTENTS

| | |
|----|--|
| 4 | <i>SOFT TISSUE INJURY TREATMENT</i> |
| 5 | <i>REDUCE YOUR INJURY RISK WHILE PLAYING GAELIC GAMES</i> |
| 6 | <i>'GAA 15' STRUCTURE</i> |
| 9 | <i>CARDIAC SCREENING</i> |
| 10 | <i>GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AND SAFE TRAINING OF GAELIC GAMES</i> |
| 11 | <i>HURLING HELMET ADVICE</i> |
| 12 | <i>MOUTHGUARD ADVICE FOR GAELIC FOOTBALLERS</i> |
| 13 | <i>GAA INJURY BENEFIT FUND</i> |
| 14 | <i>HYDRATION AND SLEEP</i> |
| 15 | <i>RECIPES FOR SUCCESS - YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT...</i> |
| 16 | <i>CONCUSSION</i> |
| 18 | <i>SPORT SUPPLEMENTS</i> |
| 19 | <i>ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMME</i> |
| 20 | <i>DON'T RISK THE ODDS WHEN IT COMES TO SPORT</i> |
| 21 | <i>RECOVERY</i> |
| 22 | <i>GAA'S HEALTHY CLUB PROJECT (HCP)</i> |
| 23 | <i>GAMES DEVELOPMENT - HELPING TO ACHIEVE YOUR POTENTIAL</i> |
| 24 | <i>IF YOU REALLY WANT TO LEARN ABOUT SOMETHING, TRY TO TEACH IT!</i> |
| 25 | <i>CLUB LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</i> |
| 26 | <i>GAA REFEREE RECRUITMENT</i> |
| 27 | <i>GAA HANDBALL LAUNCH A TOP QUALITY VIDEO SERIES</i> |
| 28 | <i>WHAT IS GAA PLAY IN MY BOOTS?</i> |
| 29 | <i>2017/18 CAMOGIE PLAYER WELFARE RESEARCH</i> |
| 30 | <i>SHARON COURTNEY'S MATCH DAY ROUTINE</i> |

SOFT TISSUE INJURY TREATMENT

Soft tissue injuries are the most common injuries in sport. Soft tissue refers to tissues that connect, support, or surround other structures and organs of the body.

Examples of soft tissue injuries in Gaelic Games include sprains, strains or direct blows (causing bruising etc;)

R REST

You should rest the injury area for 24–48 hours. Crutches may be needed to take the weight of an injured knee or ankle. Make sure you know how to use the crutches properly. Use them on the uninjured side to relieve pressure from the injured side. Support strained elbow or shoulder in a sling.

I ICE

Apply an ice pack (e.g. pack of frozen peas or a bag filled with crushed ice wrapped in a towel) as soon as the injury occurs. Repeat up to three times a day. To avoid frostbite do not apply the ice for any longer than 20 minutes.

C COMPRESSION

Wrap the affected area in an elastic bandage tightly – but not so tight as to cause compromise of the blood supply to the affected area.

E ELEVATION

To reduce swelling, elevate the affected area above the level of the heart.

SEEK HELP EARLY!

REDUCE YOUR INJURY RISK WHILE PLAYING GAELIC GAMES

By Dr. Edwenia O'Malley, Mark Roe



Before you try to minimise your risk of injury when playing Gaelic Games it is important that you understand how and when certain players sustain common injuries. In 2007 the GAA established the National Injury Surveillance Database to monitor injury trends in intercounty players. We have since identified that:

1. *70% of players will sustain an injury each season.*
2. *Each injury requires an average of 26 days from sport.*
3. *80% of injuries will involve the lower limbs.*
4. *60% of injuries will occur in match-play.*
5. *70% of injuries will not involve contact between players.*

We have also been able to identify that 4 body parts (hamstring, ankle, groin, and quadriceps) account for 40% of all injuries. Such information guided us to look at the reasons why these injuries were occurring and led to the creation of the GAA15 Warm Up.

'GAA 15' STRUCTURE

The GAA has developed the GAA15, a standardised warm-up programme aimed at reducing the number of injuries sustained by GAA players.

Duration – 15 minutes

Perform at the start of each training session. Ensure use of proper technique throughout.

SECTION 1 – Running [Max 5mins]

- *Running exercises at a slow speed, dynamic mobility, raise the intensity gradually.*

SECTION 2 – Activate musculature, mobilise joints, improve mechanics [Max 7mins]

- *Strengthening exercises focussing on the core and legs*
- *Balance and controlled partner contacts*
- *Jumping and landing*
- *Hamstrings*

SECTION 3 – Sports Specific Movement [Max 3mins]

- *Sports specific exercises at moderate / high speed combined with planting/cutting movements.*

Try these four sample exercises from section 2 of the programme:

LUNGE

| Sets: 2 | Reps: 8 on each side |
|---|---|
| Instructions: | Watch For: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stand with feet hip-wide apart- Step forward, bending hips and knees slowly until your leading knee is flexed to 90 degrees.- The front knee should not extend beyond the toes.- Keep your abdomen muscles tight.- Hold for count of two seconds and then step forward with trail leg repeat. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feet hip width apart- No knee buckle- Squeeze glutes on trail leg- Elbows straight- Neutral spine |



SQUAT

| | |
|---|---|
| Sets: 2 | Reps: 8 |
| Instructions: | Watch For: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hands on opposite shoulders, elbows pointing forward. - Slowly bend hips, knees and ankles, as if you are going to sit on a chair behind. - Keep your chest up, head up. - Return to standing. - Try holding a hurl or ball overhead. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feet hip-width apart - Knees flex to 90 degrees - Neutral Spine - No knee buckle |



CORE DRILL

| | |
|--|---|
| Sets: 2 | Time: 30 seconds |
| Instructions: | Watch For: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lie on your front, support upper body with forearms. - Lift upper body, hip and legs up until your body is in a straight line from head to foot. (Photo A) Hold the position for 6 seconds. - Without dropping hips/ knees turn into side plank position (Photo B). Hold position for 6 seconds. - Without dropping hips, return to front plank position (photo A) and hold for a further 6 seconds. - Next, move to side plank, opposite side (photo B) for 6 seconds. - Finally, front plank (photo A) for 6 seconds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elbows directly under shoulder - Should be able to draw a straight line from shoulder to feet. - Don't drop hips. - Order: A, B, A, B, A |



SINGLE LEG DEADLIFT

| | |
|---|--|
| Sets: 2 | Reps: 8 on each side |
| Instructions: | Watch For: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stand on one leg, extend free leg backwards and extend arms forward. - Allow standing leg to bend slightly at knee, keeping knee behind toes. - Trail leg must be straight, toes pointing towards the ground/pulled towards shin. - Return to upright, bringing trail leg forward and bend knee towards chest. - Repeat without touching foot to floor. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No knee buckle - Chest up, head up - Neutral Spine |



For instructional videos, coaching tips and further resources on GAA15 log on to www.learning.gaa.ie/GAA15 or check out the new GAA Learning App.

ACT NOW

and save a life



ACT to Ensure Heart Safety at your Club



Accessible:

Make sure your defibrillator is stored in an area where **Access** is not restricted, remember minutes are critical. Specialised cabinets are available for outdoor storage.



Charged:

Ensure your defibrillator is fully **Charged** and that 'self tests' have passed by carrying out weekly inspections. Ensure your battery & pads (pad-paks) have not reached their expiry date.



Trained:

Ensure there are enough **Trained** rescuers to respond anytime the clubhouse or pitches are occupied. Certified training courses are available from the Irish Heart Foundation training sites (www.irishheart.ie) and Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (www.phcct.ie).



ALWAYS ENSURE YOUR DEFIBRILLATOR IS IN FULL WORKING ORDER

For further information on the GAA's Defibrillator Guidelines and Purchase Scheme please see www.learning.gaa.ie/Defibrillator%20Scheme

CARDIAC SCREENING



The GAA advise that the most effective way to identify risk of cardiac issues is for 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. Players of any age, who have never been screened previously are also advised to arrange a screening. Players should consult their team or family doctor if they wish to get screened and screening should consist of completion of the GAA's Cardiac Screening Questionnaire, a Physical Examination and an ECG.

As part of its commitment in this context and to aid diagnosis, the GAA in conjunction with the Gaelic Players Association (GPA) have implemented a programme whereby any doctors carrying out a cardiac screening programme for a GAA player will be able to send that ECG to the cardiac department in the Mater to have a sports cardiology opinion on the ECG.

GAA CARDIAC SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. *Do you have a brother, sister, cousin, parent or grandparent who died suddenly and unexpectedly under 45 years of age due to heart disease or an unknown cause?*
2. *Have you had a sudden blackout where you have lost consciousness and fallen to the ground for no good reason particularly in association with exercise?*
3. *Have you been diagnosed with a heart condition?*
4. *Do you develop front of chest tightness with exercise that prevents you continuing?*
5. *Do you get sudden onset very rapid heart beating that occurs for no obvious reason and which makes you feel unwell?*

IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR GP

For further information in relation to the GAA's Cardiac Screening Position Paper, and ECG referral programme see www.learning.gaa.ie/cardiасcreening

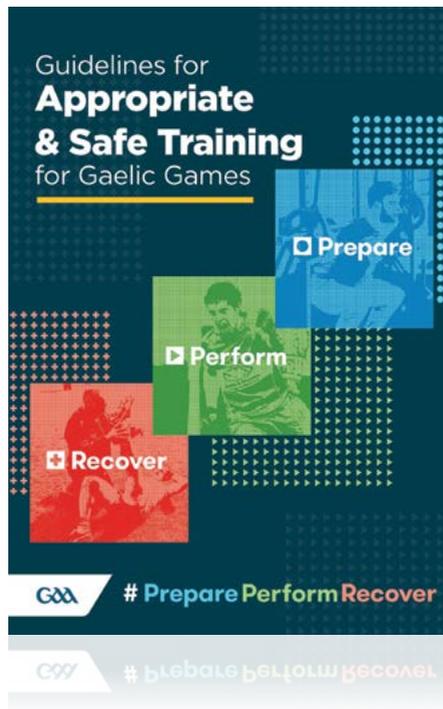
GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AND SAFE TRAINING OF GAELIC GAMES

The GAA has recently published Guidelines for Appropriate and Safe Training of Gaelic Games, which provides advice to clubs and players on how best to prepare for the demands of Gaelic Games. A collaboration between both the Medical, Scientific and Welfare and Games Development Committees the recommendations and checklist included in the document seek to ensure player welfare is of paramount importance.

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDED:

- *Recommendations for Safe Training and Exercise*
- *Medical Cover*
- *Advice on Bikram Yoga, Cryotherapy and Hypoxic Training*

To view the guidelines in full visit www.learning.gaa.ie/player



HURLING HELMET ADVICE

The GAA reminds all players at all levels in all Hurling Games and Hurling Practice Sessions that it is mandatory, and the responsibility of each individual player to wear a helmet with a facial guard that meets the standards set out in IS:355 or other replacement standard as determined by the National Safety Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

Following the introduction of the rule at underage level, it was proven that mandatory helmet use reduced the number of serious facial and eye injuries by 40%. The rule was introduced across all levels in 2010 and has seen similar reductions at senior level.

CONSEQUENCES OF WEARING AN UNAPPROVED OR ALTERED HELMET

- *Players are not covered under the terms of the GAA Injury Benefit Fund for facial/eye/head injuries suffered.*
- *Significantly increased risk of facial, dental, oral, nasal, orbital and eye injuries.*
- *Potential injuries suffered as a result of wearing an unapproved or altered helmet can be extremely serious including long term sight complications such as impaired vision, increased risk of cataracts, glaucoma and complete loss of sight.*

ADVICE

It is recommended that players

1. *Only purchase a helmet with a facial guard that meets the standards set out in IS:355*
2. *Do not replace the faceguard or remove or manipulate the bars on the faceguard in any way.*
3. *Always wear their helmet when warming-up as well as during training/practice sessions and matches. A number of players have suffered injuries while warming-up without wearing a helmet and have not been able to participate in matches as a result.*

Further information and a list of helmet providers who supply helmets which meet IS:355 is available on www.learning.gaa.ie/Injuryprevention



MOUTHGUARD ADVICE FOR GAELIC FOOTBALLERS

Since January 1st 2014, it has been mandatory for players in all grades to wear a mouthguard in all Gaelic football games and practice sessions.

The introduction of this rule has led to a drop of 37% in the number of dental injury claims made via the GAA Injury benefit fund, resulting from incidents in Gaelic football training sessions and matches in grades up to Minor in 2013. At adult level a similar drop of 39% occurred in 2014 proving the benefits of wearing a mouthguard in reducing the risk of dental injuries.

MOUTHGUARD EXEMPTION

A player can apply for a mouthguard exemption application form which can be requested by e-mailing playerwelfare@gaa.ie

The player in question must provide supporting medical evidence clearly stating why a mouthguard cannot be worn.

REMEMBER
No Mouthguard No Game!

KEY POINTS

- All Gaelic footballers must wear a mouthguard in practice sessions and matches.
- It is the responsibility of each individual player to use a mouthguard
- A properly fitted mouthguard is the best available protective device for reducing the incidence and severity of sports-related dental injuries
- Players can be sent-off in a game for not wearing a mouthguard
- Players will not be covered under the GAA player injury scheme if they don't comply with the mouthguard rule
- No Mouthguard? No Game!



GAA INJURY BENEFIT FUND

The GAA Injury Benefit Fund applies to current registered players as per the Official Guide who play on a team registered with the GAA Injury Benefit Fund, who incur accidental bodily injury while playing hurling, Gaelic football, handball or rounders' only, either in the course of an official competitive fixture or an official sanctioned challenge match or the course of an official supervised training session.

The Injury Fund is not an insurance scheme as payments from the fund come directly from GAA funds. It is only in place to provide cover for unrecoverable losses up to the limits specified.

The key benefits provided are as follows:

Medical benefit – *Otherwise unrecoverable inpatient and outpatient medical expenses are covered up to a maximum of €4,500.00. The first €100 is not covered.*

Dental Benefit – *Otherwise unrecoverable dental expenses up to a maximum of €4,500.00. The first €100 is not covered.*

Loss of wages – *Otherwise unrecoverable loss of basic nett wages as per the following terms:*

Weeks 1 – No Benefit
Weeks 2 – 26 – Up to €300.00 per week

The GAA Injury Benefit Fund does not seek to compensate fully in the event of injuries sustained but to supplement personal cover such as personal accident or health insurance or access to National Health Cover. The playing of our national games involves the risk of injury and it is each individual registered player's responsibility to familiarise themselves with the terms and benefits of the GAA Injury Benefit Fund.

Further information on the GAA Injury Benefit Fund is available on www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/administrators/gaa-injury-benefit-fund



HYDRATION AND SLEEP

HYDRATION

Whether training or during competition, staying well hydrated is important to both the mental and physical aspects of performance. Drinking little and often is the standard recommendation, whilst the colour of urine (pee) is used to monitor hydration during the day. Urine should be pale/clear in colour; if it is yellow/dark then it is likely you will begin exercise whilst dehydrated and this will adversely affect performance.

For Homemade Sports Drinks Options check out Recipes for Success www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/healthy-eating/recipes-for-success

REST, RECOVERY & SLEEP

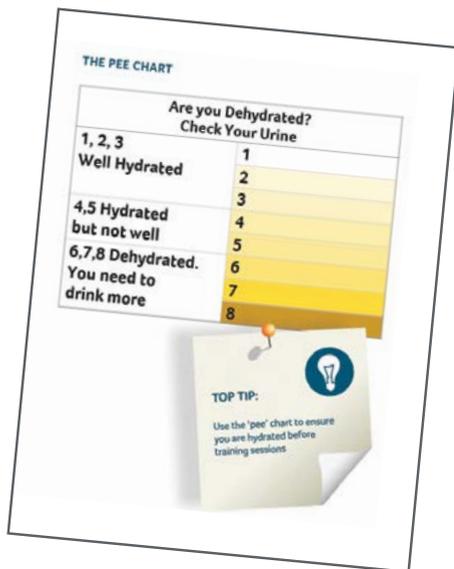
Rest & recovery are just as important to ensure performance is maximised as the training sessions themselves. Adequate sleep is critical for proper recovery and players should aim to get at least 7-8 hours sleep every night. This is particularly important for amateur athletes who don't have the luxury of the recovery periods/days available to professional athletes.

Studies have shown numerous performance benefits when athletes get the optimal amount of sleep.

- *Sleep improves split second decision-making ability by 4.3%*
- *Maximum bench press drops 9kg after 4 days of inadequate sleep*
- *Athletes who sleep less than 8 hours per night have 1.7 times greater risk of being injured than those who sleep more than 8 hours*

TOP TIPS FOR IMPROVED SLEEP

- *Go to bed early without any technology*
- *A bedtime routine relaxes the body getting it ready for sleep*
- *Sleep in a dark room*
- *Don't drink caffeinated beverages after lunchtime*
- *Too much fluid intake after training is one of the biggest disturbances of sleep; reduce your intake so you get an uninterrupted night's sleep but ensure you are fully hydrated for the start of your next exercise session*
- *Catch up on lost sleep by taking catnaps during the day*



RECIPES FOR SUCCESS – YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT...

We all want to maximise our health and our performance both on and off the field but with so many mixed messages out there about what we should eat and drink it's hard to know what's best.

The Community & Health Section in Croke Park along with the Home Economics Department at St. Angela's College, Sligo and leading sports performance nutritionist Dr. Críonna Tobin have developed **Recipes for Success** toolkit – which is filled with tasty, performance-enhancing recipes that are easy to make and aims to support GAA players and members in making the right food choices.

This unique collaboration is about bringing together expertise from an array of sectors and is designed to respond to an identified need in GAA clubs for both educational and practical programmes supporting healthy eating for sport and the game called life.

During phase 2 of the GAA's flagship programme, the Healthy Clubs project (which aims to respond to the health and wellbeing needs of our members and the wider community), Recipes for Success was brought to life by exclusively offering "hands on" cookery classes to the 60 participating clubs.

During the pilot stage of the practical element of Recipes for Success, selected minors or U21 squads from the Healthy Clubs experienced a nutritional workshop and prepared both a nutritional meal

and healthy snack from start to finish. The perfect training for any young adult potentially progressing into third level education and their first time to fend for themselves in the kitchen.

To date the feedback has been extremely positive from both players and coaches...

'A very clever approach from the GAA and the lads were delighted to get a break from training'

– U21 coach from St. Colmcilles Club

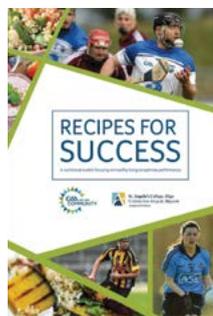
'Recipes for Success Toolkit is very educational and simple'

– Participant from Thomas Davis Club

'The dish we chose was so practical and easy to cook. I can't wait to try it at home – Mam will be delighted'

– Participant from Clonard Club

Recipes for Success toolkit is available for download at www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/healthy-eating/recipes-for-success



CONCUSSION

Concussion is a brain injury that needs to be taken seriously to protect the short and long-term health and welfare of all players. If there are any signs leading to the suspicion of concussion, a player should be removed **immediately** from the field of play pending a full medical assessment. A player suspected of sustaining/having sustained a concussion **should not return to play on the same day**. Subsequently a satisfactory, supervised return to play protocol must be completed, followed by medical approval, prior to return to play. **If In Doubt, Sit It Out**. Research has shown when a player is removed from play immediately following a potential concussive impact, this reduced players' recovery time when compared with those who remained in games and required a longer spell out of action before making a full recovery.

ADVICE FOR PLAYERS

- *Players should familiarise themselves with the signs and symptoms of concussion for their own benefit. They should report any signs and symptoms they experience to coaches and/or their GP ASAP. By reporting concussion symptoms sooner rather than later, the player will be able to safely return to action avoiding potential complications.*
- *Players should advise the coach/manager if they have noticed a team-mate suffering any of the signs or symptoms of concussion during training/play.*
- *Concussion is an evolving injury. It is important to monitor players after a potential injury for 24-48 hours.*
- *There is a risk of a catastrophic brain injury from second impact syndrome if players are returned to play before medically cleared to do so.*

- *Adult players suspected of having a concussion, must have adequate rest of at least 24 - 48 hours and then must follow a gradual return to play (GRTP) protocol. Adult players should not return to full contact training/matches for at least 1 week from when the injury has first been diagnosed.*
- *Players under the age of 18 suspected of having a concussion must rest for a minimum of 48 hours and then must follow a GRTP protocol. Players under the age of 18 should not return to full contact training/matches for at least 2 weeks from when the injury has first been diagnosed.*
- *Players must receive written medical clearance from a doctor and present to the person in charge of the team before returning to full contact training.*
- *The vast majority of players can be managed locally by a doctor with the necessary skillsets, for example GP, or Sports Medicine Doctor.*
- *Players with prolonged symptoms (greater than 4 weeks for under-18s or greater than 10-14 days for adult players, players with recurrent injuries or experiencing educational difficulties) should be referred to an appropriate specialist or multidisciplinary clinic.*
- *Players should make their coaches aware if they have suffered a concussion in another sport/event.*

Further information, including the GRTP in full, is available on www.learning.gaa.ie/Concussion



CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5©

To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults

RECOGNISE & REMOVE

Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is to be used for the identification of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

STEP 1: RED FLAGS — CALL AN AMBULANCE

If there is concern after an injury including whether ANY of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from play/game/activity. If no licensed healthcare professional is available, call an ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Neck pain or tenderness
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting

Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
- Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma

STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- "Pressure in head"
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Fatigue or low energy
- "Don't feel right"
- More emotional
- More irritable
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
- Neck Pain
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like "in a fog"

STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT

(In Athletes older than 12 years)

Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:

- "What venue are we at today?"
- "Which half is it now?"
- "Who scored last in this game?"
- "What team did you play last week/game?"
- "Did your team win the last game?"

Athletes with suspected concussion should:

- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours)
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreational/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE

SPORT SUPPLEMENTS



The GAA recognises the demands of Gaelic games and indeed the training and nutrition challenges they present. The Association also recognises that there are many factors that contribute to optimal athletic performance such as genetics, training, commitment, motivation, rest and recovery, along with good nutrition and hydration practices. Using a sport nutrition supplement will not substitute for a less than adequate nutrition and/or hydration strategy. Another important factor for consideration is that all GAA players are subject to the Irish Anti-Doping Rules. It's Your Body, It's Your Responsibility!

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SPORTS SUPPLEMENTS USAGE

Do's

- Follow a dietary plan that will allow you to adapt your eating and drinking practices to maximise your performance
- Use the online resources on learning.gaa.ie to understand the risks of taking supplements
- Seek the opinion of a qualified medical practitioner
- Choose supplements based on the ingredients that are desired after discussion with a nutritionist
- Gather as much information about a supplement manufacturer as possible
- Ensure all sports supplement choices are from brands that clearly demonstrate a batch testing and quality assurance process that is registered with and/or aligned to Informed Sports-
www.Informed-Sport.com

Don'ts

- Take sports supplements if you are under 18
- Use a sports supplement unless you have first maximised your nutrition strategy
- Take a sports supplement without knowing how and why it is going to maximise your athletic performance
- Assume that supplements are safe, effective and necessary
- Take supplements that cannot clearly demonstrate a batch testing and quality assurance process that is registered with and/or aligned to Informed Sports.
- Take advice from someone who is not appropriately qualified in the area of sports nutrition supplementation
- Take for granted information in articles from obscure internet blogs as they are not regulated and/or backed by sound science

For further information and advice on Sport Supplements and the GAA's Anti-Doping policy and educational resources see www.learning.gaa.ie/Antidoping

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION (ASAP) PROGRAMME



The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP) Programme is a joint venture by the GAA and the Health Service Executive that aims to reduce the harm caused by the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. The programme was introduced in 2006 at a time when Ireland's alcohol consumption was at an all-time high (peaking at over 14 litres of pure alcohol per person ages 15+) and is delivered by the network of County Health and Wellbeing Committees. At club level the programme is promoted by the Healthy Club officer. The ASAP programme remains one of the GAA's cornerstone health promoting programmes.

The social side of gaelic games is very important and celebrating with team members after a match is a tradition in some clubs. However, if your celebration involves drinking alcohol and especially if you drink to a point where you get drunk, this can seriously affect your fitness. If you take your sport seriously and like to do the best you can for yourself and your team, it's worth knowing the facts and what you can do to reduce your risk of poor performance.

Some of the effects alcohol can have on your performance include:

- *Greater risk of muscle cramps*
- *Greater risk for injuries and complications*
- *Reduced endurance*
- *Slower reactions*
- *Dehydration*
- *Vitamin and Mineral Depletion*
- *Reduced aerobic performance*
- *Muscle injury*

No matter how much training and conditioning you've put in, drinking up to 72 hours before a match will take the edge off your fitness. If you want to be the very best you can be at your sport you'll have more of a chance of achieving that by not drinking alcohol. However if you do want to drink it's best to drink in moderation and not too often. For more information visit www.gaa.ie/community

DON'T RISK THE ODDS WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR SPORT

There's something in the Irish sporting psyche that relishes the tag of the underdog. As players we all like to think that we can rise to the occasion and beat the odds. And every now and then we do.

In many ways, gambling firms depend on this mindset from their punters. We know the bookies always win, but we still risk our hard-earned money on a flutter. We shout about our wins. Our losses are rarely mentioned.

Did you know, as athletes you are at a higher risk of developing a gambling problem? Research suggests this is influenced by:

- *an athlete's inherent desire to win (won't accept their losses and keep trying to recuperate them, losing good money after bad – a classic sign of problem gambling).*
- *their love of sport – exposing them to increased gambling advertising and, if there is a culture of betting in a squad or group, both peer pressure and excessive banter about odds as the 'gambification' of sport continues unabated.*
- *a perceived advantage of being 'inside the game'... making it more likely that an athlete will feel they know something that the bookie (despite that such factors are carefully considered when the odds are set).*

As per a motion passed at Congress 2017,

players and officials are prohibited under GAA rule from betting on any element of a game in which they are involved. This is designed to protect the integrity of our games as much as the wellbeing of our members. Is this difficult to police? Certainly. But thanks to agreements with some of the leading bookmakers in Ireland it can and is being monitored. Sanctions may include suspension and even disbarment from the Association.

Another motion going to Congress 2018 will recommend that 'sponsorship by a betting company of any competition, team, playing gear or facility is prohibited.' The Association is trying to play its part in protecting its players from harms-way. But this will require a team effort, and players have an important role in protecting themselves, each other, and the integrity of their games.

For more information on gambling and sport and to see some of the additional resources available to GAA players and teams go to www.gaa.ie/community

If you have been impacted by problem gambling, visit www.problemgambling.ie to find help.





RECOVERY

The importance of adequate recovery from training and games cannot be over emphasised. Building periods for recovery into a training programme is as important as incorporating proper progression.

RECOVERY INVOLVES:

Replacing fluids and energy – See our nutrition resource - Recipes for Success for more tips.

Reducing muscle damage - Active Recovery can help in this regard, Reducing psychological symptoms of fatigue, such as anxiousness and irritability – Resting and pursuing other hobbies or interests can help in this regard as a break from your involvement in Gaelic games. Talk to your coach if you feel skipping a session would benefit you in the long run.

Adequate recovery begins long before the players leave the playing area or gym — it starts during the session. By trying to maintain proper hydration during training or games, players can reduce the amount of dehydration they will experience.

Sipping 125 — 250ml of water or a sports drink every 15 — 20 minutes can keep fluid levels topped up during activity.

THE WARM DOWN

All training and games should finish with a proper cool down taking place over 10 — 20 minutes. Progressively lower intensity to help speed the removal of lactic acid from the muscles and blood. Stretching exercises are an important aspect of all cool downs.

ACTIVE RECOVERY SUGGESTIONS

- *Foam Rolling – Using a foam roller or sliotar on muscles which are stiff or suffering from DOMS (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) can aid recovery but follow these tips*

DO expect a little bit of pain, BUT **DON'T** roll to the point of excessive soreness; it's not supposed to be an exercise in pain tolerance. Placing too much sustained pressure on one body part can result in further damage.

DON'T roll directly on a joint or a bone.

DON'T roll your lower back or neck. This can cause damage to your spine and may cause a serious injury.

DO roll slowly—no more than one inch per second. Never roll in a fast back-and-forth motion.

DO roll over each trigger point 5-10 times, spending no more than 20-30 seconds on each tender spot.

DO wait 24-48 hours between foam-rolling sessions. Your body needs time to recover. Stay hydrated, eat healthy foods and get enough rest between sessions.

- *Yoga*
- *Cycling*
- *Swimming*

Complete recovery is not achieved in just a few hours after the game; it can often take more than 24 hours. Adequate fluid and food intake is important over the next couple of days to ensure optimal recovery and preparation for the next game ahead!

GAA'S HEALTHY CLUB PROJECT (HCP)



The Healthy Club Project (HCP) capitalises on the key role played by GAA clubs in local communities all over Ireland and aims to build on this by making our clubs a hub for health; one that everyone can experience and enjoy.

Participating clubs work with their members and their communities to identify priority areas to target. Popular topics include healthy eating; becoming a smoke-free club; physical activity; engaging older members of the community; emotional wellbeing; gambling, drug, and alcohol education; and inclusion and integration. There are now 150 flagship Healthy Clubs in every county of Ireland. The results so far have been remarkable:

- Over 12,000 people benefitted from physical activity programmes
- Over 50% of Healthy Clubs are now smoke-free zones
- 1,000 people engaged with mental health and emotional wellbeing programmes
- Over half (55%) of Healthy Clubs delivered healthy eating programmes targeting teenagers in particular
- Over 600 older people engaged through social initiatives

CLUB BENEFITS

- Increased membership
- Broadening of the volunteer base
- Better community engagement with club activities
- Improvements in health-promoting activities
- Improved goodwill for the club
- Opening up funding avenues
- Recognition by the GAA and the Health Service Executive
- Increase in media coverage both locally and nationally

“The Healthy Club project will transform the health of your community. It will enhance your club, strengthen your club and the bonds within your club. It really grew our club and changed it in a positive way. It brought a whole new cohort of people to the club. It is a wonderful programme and I would encourage every club to get involved”.

- Healthy Club Officer, Conor Buckley from Castlehaven GAA club in Cork.

Visit www.gaa.ie/community for more information

GAMES DEVELOPMENT – HELPING TO ACHIEVE YOUR POTENTIAL

Games Development is focussed on increasing participation and improving standards at all levels of our Games. Some recent initiatives that are currently being implemented to support Club and Inter-County Players include:

MANDATORY COACHING STANDARDS

Mandatory Coaching Standards were introduced by Árd Chomhairle in 2016. The standards require that all Inter-County Head Coaches be qualified at Award 2 and that all Club Head Coaches be qualified at Award 1 on the GAA Coach Education Programme framework.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SPECIALIST COACHING INPUTS

- *Performance analysis (PA) as a sports science discipline has been embraced by GAA coaches since the early 2000s. In 2017 the GAA introduced a process for quality assuring Performance Analysts in Gaelic games. The process aims to drive and direct how PA evolves within a GAA context in line with the philosophy and values of the Association. The process recognises the various models of PA delivery which exist within GAA, and aims to support, in particular, analysts working voluntarily with opportunities to develop their skills. Approximately 50 Performance Analysts were accredited by the GAA in 2017, when the process culminated in the first GAA Performance Analyst Seminar, held in Carlow IT on November 25th. The process will now be expanded to include Fitness and Strength and Conditioning areas in 2018.*

For further information on these and other Games Development initiatives visit www.learning.gaa.ie

Or download the new GAA Learning App via the AppStore or Google Play.



IF YOU WANT TO MASTER SOMETHING, TRY TO TEACH IT!

There is a saying attributed to spiritual leader, Yogi Bajan, that goes along the lines of ‘if you really want to learn something, read about it, if you want to understand something, write about it, but if you want to master something teach it.’



The GAA's Coach Education Programme aims to ensure that all players and teams are coached by a person qualified to the appropriate level who can enable them to achieve their full potential. The Programme is open to all members from 16 years of age.

The programme provides the opportunity for coaches to specialise in catering for the particular needs of Child, Youth and Adult players as they progress along the GAA Player Pathway and strive towards Total Playing Performance (TPP). The TPP Model reflects the following aspects of playing performance: Technical Proficiency, Tactical Prowess, Team Play, Physical Fitness, Psychological Focus and Performance Awareness.



learning.gaa.ie/playerpathway

The Coach Education Programme recognises that coaches will be best qualified to cater for players' needs when using a games-based approach to training and development and when they have the required level of management and leadership capability, developed through a process of experience and reflection.

The Coach 10 Model identifies the elements which combine to drive this process and create an environment within which Coaching and Communication Inputs produce a Cohesive Team within a context of individual and collective wellbeing.



learning.gaa.ie/Coach10

The programme is grounded in the Association values of Community Identity, Amateur Status, Inclusiveness, Respect, Player Welfare and Teamwork.

To become a master of the game, contact gamesdevelopment@gaa.ie or your local County Games Development Personnel.



CLUB LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

LEADING YOUR CLUB TO THE NEXT LEVEL

CHAIRPERSON

TREASURER

PRO

SECRETARY

OVERVIEW

The Club Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) gives the Principal Officers in all Clubs - namely the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO - an opportunity to gain the key knowledge and skills to carry out their roles effectively.

GET INVOLVED

Requirements

The Club Leadership Development Programme is open to all current Club Officers or anyone interested in taking up a role of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer or PRO. Registration is online only, and a GAA Membership ID, available through a Club Secretary / Registrar is required to register.

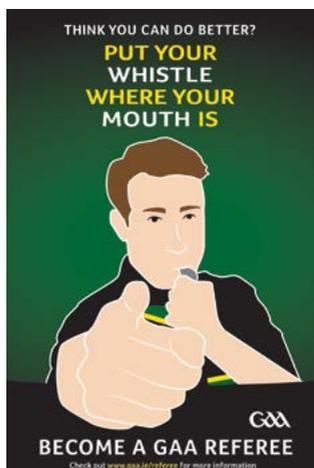
How to Register

Register online at
learning.gaa.ie/club_leadership

Enquiries

See learning.gaa.ie/club_leadership for more information or contact your County Development Officer at developmentofficer.COUNTY@gaa.ie

GAA REFEREE RECRUITMENT



Are you interested in becoming a referee? Think you can do better? Then “Put your whistle where your mouth is” and “Become a GAA Referee”

The GAA have Referee Administrators & Recruitment Officers in each of the 32 Counties to help you get started and assist you in progress as a referee.

WHY BECOME A GAA REFEREE?

- *Stay involved with the game as an alternative to playing*
- *Fitness – It’s a great way to keep fit*
- *Ambition – could you referee a County Final or even an All-Ireland?*
- *Learn more about the game*
- *Give Something Back - offers players, at the end of their playing days, the opportunity to continue in the sport*
- *Personal Development - helps to develop personal skills that are of value in all walks of life*

WHAT QUALITIES ARE REQUIRED TO BECOME A GAA REFEREE?

- *Good knowledge of the playing rules*
- *Be physically and mentally fit*
- *Have the ability to remain calm*
- *Have the moral courage to take decisions which are correct*

HOW DO I BECOME A REFEREE?

The first thing to do, is to contact your local Referee Administrator or Recruitment Officer who will give you details on upcoming GAA Referee Foundation Course in your local area, which you will have to complete before you can referee games. GAA Club Referee Course will take 3 nights to complete and will be delivered by GAA Referee Instructors.

GAA HANDBALL LAUNCH A TOP QUALITY COACHING VIDEO SERIES



After months of planning and production, the first two sections (of six) is now live and available on the Coaching section of www.gaahandball.ie, with a new section being released every week for the next month.

The two current sections focus on the 'Fundamentals' of striking a Handball, and the 'Technique' of executing the various Handball strokes.

WHAT IS THE COACHING VIDEO SERIES?

- 30 short Handball Coaching Videos
- 60-90 secs duration
- Covering topics; Fundamentals, Technique, Shots, Serves, Serve Return Options, Tactics
- Free for all to avail of on GAAGHandball.ie

GAA Handball's National Development Officer Darragh Daly oversaw the content and production of the new Coaching Series and was chuffed to finally see their efforts come to fruition: "This project was started back in May of last year and involved an awful lot of planning, scripting, and editing, so to finally see the high quality finished article is fantastic! This new Series has

been developed for the benefit of all our GAA Handball Members, both players and coaches, and I have no doubt it will also be of benefit to Handball players worldwide."

At the launch, GAA Handball President Joe Masterson commented: "This Series of Videos will serve as a first class, and high quality resource to all our coaches throughout the country. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Paul Brady who displays all the skills in these series of videos."

To view the videos check out www.gaahandball.ie/coaching/coaching-videos



WHAT IS GAA PLAY IN MY BOOTS?

Play in My Boots is a mental health resource for players, coaches, clubs and communities developed by the GAA Community team in conjunction with St.Patrick's Mental Health Foundation.

Sport and the GAA have a great contribution to make to the health and mental wellbeing of Irish society. The old adage of a healthy body and a healthy mind still rings true today. Unfortunately, the concept of mental health has been stigmatised, despite the fact that it plays a part in all of our daily lives – from how we think, relate to people, handle pressure or stress, and view the world we live in. These packs shine a positive light on the concept of mental health and align it with the world of GAA sports people. That is why we are using the term 'mental fitness' throughout the Play in My Boots Resource. Approaches to developing and maintaining our physical fitness and our mental fitness are very similar – we need to exercise our minds and bodies regularly, watch our diet and hydration levels, get plenty of sleep, and enjoy appropriate down time. But even if we do all this, injuries can happen through no fault of our own.

If you pull a hamstring you get a physiotherapist to assist you in your recovery. Getting help to overcome a 'mental injury' is no different.

The earlier you do so, the earlier you will get back doing what you love!



FOCUS ON MENTAL FITNESS

The key to mental fitness for anyone is being aware of 'WHEN' you need to ask for help and knowing what positive choices are available to you. There is a "super athlete" perception out there that leads to players feeling like they shouldn't have to seek help.

SPORT SPECIFIC FACTORS AFFECTING MENTAL FITNESS

- *Players can be criticised in ways that the average person doesn't experience*
- *Struggling with recurring or long-term injury*
- *Retirement from competitive sport*
- *Implications for self-esteem and coping with stress is a major contributor to athletes' mental ill health and loss of form*
- *Sideline negativity that reflects on a player's sports ability, temperament and fitness for purpose*
- *Social Media – players face being ridiculed on social media through comments and photos which many people see*
- *Body image – added pressures of having a perfect body image*

To download the full Play in My Boots Pack visit www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/mental-fitness/play-in-my-boots

2017/18 CAMOGIE PLAYER WELFARE RESEARCH



In October 2017, the Camogie Association launched its Player Welfare Questionnaire online. This questionnaire was the first element of a project aimed at committing to the promise, outlined in the National Development Plan (2016-2019), to have the club player “at the heart of everything the Association does”. This latest questionnaire was a follow-on from previous research. The Association released its first Player Welfare Report in 2012 as part of the previous Development Plan (2010-2015).

In total 664 respondents fully completed the questionnaire:

- 58.3% of the respondents to the survey were aged 18-24
- 30.4% were aged 25-34
- 11.3% were aged 35 or older.

Most of the respondents were from Tier 1 Counties. The Tiers that counties are categorized into is outlined in the National Development Plan (2016-2019).

- 68.1% Tier 1
- 23% Tier 2
- 8.9% Tier 3 (or played Camogie internationally).

Of the 664 responses, 68.5% rated their satisfaction with club Camogie during the 2017 season as 7/10 or greater. 17% rated their satisfaction as 10/10 while only 9% rated their experience as less than 5/10.

From the analysis to date, over one third (34.6%) of players felt that they often or always had three or more symptoms of burnout. These symptoms included, “feelings of intense fatigue” and “felt detached from family and friends”. Also, a higher burnout risk was associated with the number of teams girls played for. 71.4% of those playing with more than three teams often or always experienced three or more symptoms of burnout.

Data analysis from the questionnaire is ongoing and a full report will be ready in time to potentially present at Congress in April.

For further information contact Paul O’Donovan, Player Welfare Coordinator of The Camogie Association paul.odonovan@camogie.ie or see www.camogie.ie

SHARON COURTNEY'S MATCH DAY ROUTINE

Monaghan Ladies senior football team captain and Lidl Ladies Gaelic Football Ambassador Sharon Courtney has been working as a nutritionist since 2012.

Ensuring that she's getting the right fuel into her body is of paramount importance to the Donaghmoynce player, who's renowned as one of the country's finest defenders.

Courtney explains how food plays a huge role in her preparation, performance and recovery.

"If we have a match, which is normally at 2pm, I'm counting back three hours for my last big meal before the game. As a player, you want to be able to get up and down the field, no matter where you're playing, getting back to defend and forward to attack. To do that, you need the fuel in your tank and for us, that fuel is carbohydrates.

So, you're ensuring that the food you're eating on that day is loaded with carbs, and the day before.

"It's no longer just about the day of the match – it's the days leading into it as well."

To prepare, Courtney would ideally like to rise early and have some porridge but the food of choice three hours before throw-in is scrambled eggs and toast, with the desired mix of carbs and protein.

She adds: "After a game, it's just about trying to get something in straight away.

"In a lot of cases, we would get food with the county team, carbs again and protein, typically rice-based dishes and some lean meat as well."

You can find more of Sharon's top tips for eating well and ensuring your body gets enough of what it needs by visiting the Lidl website: www.lidl.ie

