



# Town Center

## ORTHOPAEDICS

ASHBURN • CENTREVILLE • FAIRFAX • RESTON  
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### Return To Play Guidelines

Our goal is to get you back as soon as safely possible, so that you may compete at a full or near full level of participation without an increased risk of reinjury. Returning too soon may unfortunately often lead to recurrent or related injuries.

Athletes will often question why professional or elite level athletes are able to recover so quickly. Many factors contribute to this. These athletes are in optimal physical conditioning prior to their injury. This level of conditioning can not only prevent injuries but also may lessen their severity and hasten the athletes' recovery as well. Additionally, most injuries in these athletes are diagnosed at the time of injury and therefore treatment is initiated very early, thus minimizing the degree of swelling, stiffness and weakness that may develop. In addition, these athletes are highly motivated (financially, socially, and personally). This often leads to a strong work ethic and a focused, positive frame of mind, which are critical to a successful result following an orthopaedic injury. Finally, these athletes have personal therapists and athletic trainers as well as unlimited access to any necessary equipment or training aids, all of which is available for their use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Although the scholastic or recreational athlete may not have access to the resources that an elite athlete does, the recreational athlete can improve their rate of recovery by working hard, maintaining a positive outlook and following my instructions as well as those of their physical therapist.

The recovery from an injury and the return to full function and a competitive level of activity can be a seemingly lengthy and frustrating experience for the athlete. However, the athlete needs to understand that their recovery requires a systematic recovery plan encompassing a series of logical steps from the time of injury until the athlete returns to competition. These steps are critical in enabling the goals of early return at near full or full level of competition while reducing the risk of reinjury or related injuries.

