

# RECOVER SMART AND RETURN MISSION-READY



Injuries happen—whether during training, sports, or everyday activities. Allowing the body to properly heal supports long-term readiness and reduces the risk of re-injury. Smart recovery helps Marines and athletes return to full performance safely and effectively.

## LET THE INJURY HEAL

- Rest the injured area.
- Use ice (best in the first 48-72 hours after injury), compression, and elevation to reduce pain and swelling.
- Gradually reintroduce exercises to strengthen the muscles and soft tissues around the injury.
- Avoid heavy lifting or intense movements until the injury is healed.

## EASE BACK IN

- Do some light stretching or walking.
- Be patient during the healing process.
- Increase reps or weight only if pain-free.

## HOLD OFF IF YOU

- Feel pain during or after movement.
- Notice increased swelling or bruising.
- Feel unstable or begin compensating in other muscles.



## POST-INJURY LOADING

Loading means putting stress on healing tissue through weight, repetitions, or intensity.

**Goal:** Promote healing without causing further injury.

## RECOVERY PHASES

- **Unload:** Reduce inflammation. Begin restoring pain-free ROM.
- **Reload:** Introduce light, controlled movements.
- **Strengthen:** Progress gradually—from isometrics to eccentric to concentric to dynamic exercises.

## WHO CAN HELP?

- [Warrior Athlete Readiness & Resilience Strength and Conditioning Coaches](#)
- Embedded [Sports Medicine Injury Prevention Athletic Trainers](#) at the unit level
- Medical staff if no progress