

THE ORGANISATION OF REHABILITATION AT TOP EUROPEANS CLUBS: FC BAYERN MUNICH

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Key principles for a successful rehabilitation, especially for elite athletes, are:

1. A precise diagnosis as well as an adequate treatment.
2. An individual rehabilitation plan based on the diagnosis.
3. A professional interdisciplinary team consisting of medical doctor(s), physiotherapist(s), rehabilitation and fitness trainer(s).
4. Excellent communication within the team.

The medical and fitness team of the FC Bayern Munich consists of:

- Orthopedic and internal medical doctors.
- Physiotherapists, some of them especially trained for rehabilitation.
- Fitness and rehabilitation coaches.

Traditionally, the medical doctors work in a private practice which is located outside the training ground in the city center of Munich. Any imaging and other diagnostic modalities needed for injury assessment are available there. Every injured player is sent to the medical practice. After the player's presentation, every therapist at the training ground involved in the treatment is informed by telephone. In addition to this, a report including an individual rehab plan and the description of any specific treatment is generated on a web-based player management system. Only the coaching team, the physiotherapists as well as the fitness and rehab trainers have access to this platform.

The first step is always a precise medical history as well as a thorough clinical examination to obtain an accurate diagnosis since this is the basis for a successful treatment and rehabilitation. Any treatment is based on this diagnosis and on close follow-up examinations. A well-structured individual rehabilitation plan is developed for every injury including recommendations for sport-specific training with increasing intensity.

Physiotherapy, rehabilitative exercises and training therapy as essential components of the reconditioning of an injured structure, the restoration of coordination and proprioception, the normalization of movement patterns, the prevention of muscular atrophy and the return to normal force development are used, if necessary. However physiotherapy, physical medicine and progressive training regimens are never conducted on a trial and error basis and are never self-directed by the athlete. Instead they follow a well-structured timetable that is appropriate for the specific injury.

Almost every Bayern Munich player's rehabilitation is performed at the training ground since very experienced therapists as well as every equipment needed for a successful return-to-play (e.g. devices for physical therapy, anti-gravity treadmills, fitness facilities, etc...) is available there.

Regular follow-ups with an up-to-date assessment of the healing process are in our opinion critically important in order to evaluate the progress made in terms of healing and to make any adjustments that are needed in terms of the timing and nature of proposed therapies.

In any rehabilitation programme, the injured tissue must gradually regain a normal ability to function under load. Thus, we always recommend a progressive exercising of the injured area in incremental stages since it retrains not only the injured tissue (especially muscles) in complex movement patterns, but also provides valuable feedback for all therapists. The player is ready to advance to the next stage only when he is free of complaints/pain.