

RETURN TO SPORT PROGRESSION: WRESTLING

The athlete must pass all functional tests and/or be cleared by sports medicine medical provider before beginning Return to Football Protocol. Recommend pursuing Transitional Therapy for return to sport activities during this phase. Transitional Therapy is a strength and conditioning program that is led by medical professionals with a sports medicine background with the goal of transitioning from therapy back to sport. The athlete may progress through the phases as tolerated. Cross-training can be performed on off days. (Cross training can be done by performing non sport specific activities i.e. swimming, biking, yoga, and/or PT home exercises, see attached instructions). The home exercises and training activities in each phase are a comprehensive guideline, it is not necessary to complete every activity and/or exercise on the day you are training. The athlete should pick 1-2 activities or exercises per section to avoid over training. Each phase should be performed 2-3 times with **one rest day between each session**, the athlete should progress to the next phase once he/she is able to complete the current phase without pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or difficulty. If the athlete experiences pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or difficulty during a phase, he/she should take a day off and go back to the prior phase where they were not experiencing pain and or difficulty completing activities. Do not keep moving through phases if you are having pain or difficulty. Seek medical attention if necessary. The athlete should ice the affected area for 15-20 minutes following the activity.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Physical therapy, Strengthening Exercises	•	•	•	•	•
Sport-Specific Exercises		•	•	•	•
Non-Contact Training Drills			•	•	•
Full Contact Practice				•	•
Return to Competition, Matches					•
Competition Details	Wrestler needs to be cleared by medical provider to return to wrestling competition after surgical procedures				

Warm Up to be performed before each session:

- **Foam rolling:** large lower extremity and upper extremity muscle groups or specific areas of focus as instructed by Physical Therapist.
- **Dynamic Warm up:** Walking quadriceps stretch, walking hamstring stretch, inchworm walkouts, ½ kneel ankle rocking, forward lunges to 20 yard line, lateral lunge to 20 yard line, high knees, power skips, lateral shuffles to 20 yard line
- **Upper body warm up:** see PT home exercises for upper extremity

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Phase 1: Begin on Light Aerobic Activity and Continue Strengthening Exercises :

- Continue with Physical Therapy (if applicable) and Physical Therapy Home Exercise Program
- Begin Light Aerobic Activities
 - Jogging
 - Stationary Cycling
- Isometric Strengthening
 - Isometric Neck Presses: 3 x 10 in each direction
 - Isometric Shoulder Presses: 3 x 10 in each direction

Phase 2 – Sport-Specific Exercises

- Introduce Warm-Up Exercises
- Mobility Work
 - Foam rolling: 2 minutes focusing on each muscle
 - Stick / Rope Rotations
 - Up and Overs
- Progressively Begin Resistance Training
 - Internal / External Rotations
 - Bench Press
 - Bent Over Rows
 - Lunges
 - Deadlifts
- Basic Combinations On Floor with Weight Changes
 - Front Rolls, Back Rolls, Bear Crawl, Drops
- Sports-Specific Drills
 - Shadow Wrestling: 10-15 minutes, focusing on technique
 - Controlled Ground Defense Drills
- Core Strengthening Exercises
 - Planks, Side Planks, Quad Hovers, Bird Dogs

Phase 3: Non- Contact Training Drills

- Shoulder Warm-Up Drills
- Agility and Speed Drills
 - Ladder Drills: 3 sets of various patterns (in and out, lateral)
 - Cone Drills: 3 sets of 5-10 reps focusing on direction changes
- Low Impact Drills
 - Shuffling, Sprawls, Crawls, High Knees, Hops
- Plyometrics

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- Box Jumps
- Med Ball Slams
- Continue to Progress with Resistance Training
 - Bench Press, Squats, Pull-Ups
- No Body Blows, Head Impacts, Take-Downs, or Grappling

Phase 4: Return to Contact Drill and Contact During Practice

- Warm-up with team as normal
- Return to Contact Drills
 - Pummeling, Standing Wrestle, Tackling Drills with Pads
 - Wrestling Sparring: 2-3 sessions per week, increasing intensity
- Simulation of Sport
 - Mock Matches
- Progress practice participation to 100% effort: Return to normal contact with training, full speed, full volume

Phase 5: Progression to Competition :

- Return to full competition after medical clearance from provider without any activity restriction

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Lower Extremity PT Exercises for Home:

<i>Disclaimer: the athlete should pick 1-2 exercises from each section to avoid over training.</i>				
	Exercises	Sets	Repetitions	Comments/ Modifications:
	Jumping/ Landing:			
	• Double/single leg toe drop			
	• Double leg jump prep			
	Power:			
	• Squat jump			
	• Broad jump			
	• Box jump			
	• Forward leaps			
	• Bounding			
	• Scissor jumps			
	• Hurdle hops			
	Strength:			
	Core			
	• Quad hover			
	• Plank			
	• Side plank			
	• Bear crawls			
	Hip/ Glutes			
	• Bridge			
	• Clamshells			
	• Band walks			

	• Squats			
	• Lateral lunge			
	Quadriceps			
	• Squats			
	• Split squats			
	• Lunges			
	• Leg Press			
	Hamstrings			
	• Bridge walkouts			
	• Nordic Hamstring exercise			
	• RDL			

	Balance/ Proprioception			
	Double leg (DL), Single leg (SL)			
	Eyes open (EO), Eyes closed (EC)			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DL squat EO/EC 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DL squat to SL hold EO/EC 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SL balance EO/EC 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SL balance 3 way cone reach 			

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Upper Extremity PT Exercises for Home:

- Warm Up:
 - **Muscle release/ Ball Rolling:** shoulder blade muscles ball against wall as needed
 - **Stretches:** Shoulder stretches as needed (Kneeling Latissimus Doris stretch on box; Wall cross body stretch; Side lying sleeper stretch)

<i>Disclaimer: the athlete should pick 1-2 exercises from each section to avoid over training.</i>				
	Exercises	Sets	Repetitions	Comments/ Modifications:
	Power:			
	• Med Ball slams			
	• Med Ball wall throws			
	• Rope slams			
	Push up progression: elevated push-ups on box → push up on the floor → plyo push ups			

	Bench press progression: 1 Arm dumbbell floor press → 2 Arm dumbbell floor press → incline dumbbell bench press → flat dumbbell press → barbell bench press			
	Core Strength:			
	Core			
	• Quad hover			
	• Plank			
	• Side plank			
	• Bear crawls			
	Scapular Strength:			
	• Prone I, T, W			
	• ½ kneel "gators"			
	Row progression: Standing row → Inverted row → progressively lowering bar → assisted band pull ups → full pull ups from bar			
	Shoulder Strength:			
	• Thera Band ER/ IR			
	• Arm Bar exercise			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farmers carry			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rack carry			