

Understand what retirement means



Retirement from sport is when an athlete stops competing.

As an elite gymnast you probably have devoted your formative years to gymnastics, shaping your identity around intense training, perfectionism and structured routine. When you retire, you can express a profound sense of loss, as the freedom that follows retirement forces you to redefine your goals and aspirations, leading you to create a new identity. Many retired athletes see their self-definition and daily actions change when they adopt a lifestyle outside of gymnastics.

This poster is designed to help you through the difficult time that retirement can be.

Identify why you are retiring



Reasons for retirement can be put into 2 categories:

Planned retirement: when you are ready to embark on a new stage of your life, for a variety of reasons, and have anticipated retirement.

Unplanned retirement: when you did not plan to retire and the decision is unexpected or involuntary. The decision is often taken following injury or major changes in the athlete's life.

Don't forget that the reasons for retirement are always the result of many factors, and although it may be a planned retirement, this does not make it any easier and should always be the subject of deep understanding and reflection on your part.

Identify the challenges you might be facing

Retirement can be a real challenge for some athletes, although each experience is unique and different.

One challenge you may face is a lack of self-confidence or difficulty defining your new identity. Being a retired elite athlete means that most of your life has been spent doing gymnastics and that you invested a large part of your life in training and competing, so you may feel that all you know is related to gymnastics and that you have no identity other than that of being a gymnast. You may also feel isolated because those around you don't feel the same changes.

Try to find a safe space and to think and act positive

Even if you find it difficult to retire, remember that **you are not alone**.

Find a safe space with your family, friends, coaches, team members, and sports psychologists, who will support and help you.

Think positively: retirement is the start of a new chapter of your life. It means you will have more time to discover your new identity, to enjoy family and friends, to relax and leave injury and stress-free...

Be positive: retirement isn't a total and instant end to practice, you can always exercise. You can discuss your options with your coach and your safe space and see what the best course of action is.

Keep training to stay fit and healthy, or because you enjoy it. You can discuss your plans for the future with your safe space, which will help you plan your new life and discover new hobbies.

Don't forget to rely on your family, friends, team members coaches, therapists

Don't hesitate to consult all the help available on the BG website for more information on retirement:

<https://www.british-gymnastics.org/club-roles>

<https://www.british-gymnastics.org/welfare-safeguarding-officers>

Read the article *Life After Gymnastics: A Comprehensive Guide on Retirement about Simone Biles* at:

<https://gymnasticsbar.net/life-after-gymnastics-a-comprehensive-guide-on-retirement/>

Watch the videos from Nile Wilson about his retirement: <https://youtu.be/eFCocXfTBbM?si=JHX2sCaSAoNK4XVk>



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5 tips to transition and retire for elite-level gymnast

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