

Mental Health when transitioning

The stress of experiencing a transition can cause a knock on affect on the athletes mental health, which could have further problems for the athletes.

Having inefficient mental health can lead to ineffective decisions being made

Some issues which can cause poor mental health when transitioning is:

- High Anxiety
- Physical injuries: Injury, long-term or short-term
- Social isolation or self enforced solitude
- Unemployment
- Financial problems

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What is transition?

Being an event or non-event , which results in a change happening. In a sporting context it typically relates to an athletes leaving sport, this could be at any age but it frequently takes place at a young age when they have reached their peak.

It can be evident that transitions are unavoidable and occasionally fluctuate when it happens.

Transitions do not just occur when athletes peak or age out, it can happen after a severe injury or no longer meeting the current standards within their sport that may be required.

How may it affect you?

All athletes are affected differently with the transitions, especially if athletes are leaving at an early age with no understanding how they will be affected.

Some of the ways it could affect athletes of any age:

- Individuality crisis
- Coping complications
- Trauma



DISABLED ATHLETES CAREER TRANSITION IN SWIMMING

Vicky Miller

How do you cope with transitioning?

When transitioning out of sport for any athlete it is helpful if they have preplanned their next step when surrounding their career, resulting in fewer complications and stress.

Knowing when or how long the transition will take will benefit the athlete greatly as timing is essential when distinguishing what is their next path in life will be.

Having a support system behind athletes is severely important to accommodate to their needs to ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing .

If the opportunity arises to remain within the sport support program it is highly recommend. Majority of these institutions prefer to ensure the athlete has enough of an educational background to go into work or other pathways.

Athletic Identity

‘The degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role’, this is one of the larger issues that can have an effect on may athletes during the career transition process.

The commitment and love for the sport can result in a strong athletic identity which can have both positives and negatives post-sport life.

It can cause for athletes to struggle with the emotional and social change if not pre-planned their career transition. There are links that can provide support for those who may find this difficult

Having the correct support in place

For the time athletes have participated in sport they have been surrounded by a variety of people providing them with the help they require e.g. getting in and out of the pool, getting changed, financially.



Support from family, friends or counselling are just few of the options that athletes can be put in place before the transition , allowing for stress to be lowered and the process as smooth as it possibly can be.

Support can be received from the English institute of sport, it gives the opportunity for support to be received from professionals on a one to one basis having expertise specifically in transitioning as. Disabled athletes may require additional help.

Dealing with discrimination

When trying to transition out of any sport can be difficult, especially with a disability. If athletes face discrimination it can prevent individuals from finding a career after sport.

- Take action, tell a manager
- Seek support

Life after sport: options and opportunities

There are a vast amount of directions to go when finishing an athletic career.

Opportunities can arise out with the sporting world or athletes can remain within sport pursuing a career in coaching, using their knowledge they have previously gained over the years to provide others with help and success.

Other possible routes if athletes chose not to continue being involved in sport are:

- Part time or full time education
- Volunteering
- Full time employment

Athletes with disabilities have many skills they have acquired over the years in which can be transferred into the career they choose to pursue, however not knowing this prevents individuals from progressing. Skills such as:

- Communication
- Team work
- Time management

Positives of transitioning out of sport

While there are negatives to leaving what has been a known lifestyle for years, it can bring multiple benefits.

- Allows for more time to be spent with friends and family
- Seek employment opportunities
- Pursue further education chances