VIBEMOTION LABS · ATHLETE RECOVERY

PHASE 5 OF 5

Return to *Athletic Performance*

$75

Full sport-specific training, maximum strength benchmarks, and psychological readiness for competition. Timeline: Weeks 10–16+ · Pain target: 0/10 throughout and during return to full competition

PHASE GOALS

— Achieve LSI ≥ 95% across all performance benchmarks

— Complete full sport-specific training at 100% intensity without symptoms

— Surpass pre-injury strength and power benchmarks where possible

— Achieve ≥ 7/10 confidence to return to sport (self-rated)

— Implement a long-term injury prevention programme to prevent recurrence

PAIN MONITORING RULE

Before each session: record pain score (0–10). Do not exercise if pain > 4/10. During exercise: pain must stay ≤ 3/10. Stop if it exceeds this at any point. After session: pain must return to your pre-exercise baseline within 30 minutes.

PHASE 5 EXERCISES — 4 days per week + sport training

This phase runs concurrently with gradual return to team or sport training.

01 Barbell Back Squat

Max Strength / Bilateral Power

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
4	5 reps (heavy)	75–85% of 1 Rep Max · Build weekly	3 sec eccentric / 1 pause / 1 explosive up	3 min

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Set the barbell at upper chest height in a rack. Step under it and position it across your upper traps.
2. Unrack the bar and step back: feet shoulder-width, toes out 15–20°.
3. Take a big breath and create full-body tension (360° brace — not just abs).
4. Initiate the descent by simultaneously pushing your knees out and sitting your hips back and down.
5. Lower for 3 seconds — maintaining a neutral spine — until thighs are parallel or below.
6. Pause for 1 second at the bottom to eliminate the stretch-shortening reflex (increases difficulty).
7. Explode upward — think 'push the floor through the earth' — keeping the chest tall.
8. Breathe out at the top. Re-brace before the next rep.
9. Aim to add 2.5–5 kg every 1–2 weeks using a linear progression scheme.

COACHING CUES

→ *Belt is optional — learn to brace without it first.*

→ *If the bar drifts forward, your upper back may be weak — incorporate barbell rows.*

→ *Record your sessions: progressive overload requires knowing exactly where you were last week.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When injured leg LSI on single-leg leg press ≥ 95% and squat form is consistent at 80% 1RM.

■ *Always squat with a competent spotter or inside a power rack with safety pins set.*

02 Single-Leg Leg Press

Unilateral Strength / LSI Testing

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	10 reps per leg	Set load so injured leg can complete 10 reps with effort — match exactly to uninvolved side	3 sec / 1 hold / 2 up	90 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Set the leg press machine at a moderate weight. Sit with your back flat and fully supported.
2. Place only the injured foot on the platform, centred at shoulder width.
3. Lower the platform by bending your knee toward your chest — aim for 90° or deeper.
4. Press back to full extension (without locking the knee completely) over 2 seconds.
5. Record the weight. Immediately switch to the uninvolved leg at the same weight.
6. The test: can the injured leg complete 10 reps at the same load as the uninvolved side?
7. Track the ratio each week — this is your LSI benchmark for clearance.

COACHING CUES

→ *Equal weight does not always mean equal effort — pay attention to whether one side fatigues faster.*

→ *Speed of movement should be identical on both sides — slowdowns indicate weakness.*

→ *This is both a training exercise AND your primary LSI assessment tool in this phase.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When injured leg completes 10 reps at identical load to uninvolved side for 2 consecutive sessions.

03 Trap Bar Deadlift

Posterior Chain / Maximal Strength

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
4	5–6 reps	70–80% 1RM · Build weekly by 5 kg	3 sec / 1 pause at floor / 1 explosive up	3 min

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Stand inside the trap bar with feet hip-width, toes pointing forward or very slightly out.
2. Push your hips back and bend your knees until you can grip both handles.
3. Set your back: neutral spine, chest tall, shoulders packed down away from ears.
4. Take a full breath, brace your core completely (360°), and pull the slack out of the bar.
5. Drive your feet into the floor — think 'push the floor away' rather than 'pull the bar up'.
6. The bar should travel in a perfectly straight vertical line.
7. At the top: hips and knees fully locked out, glutes squeezed hard.
8. Lower with control over 3 seconds, maintain brace throughout descent.
9. Rest the plates on the floor for 1 second (dead-stop) — do not bounce reps.

COACHING CUES

→ *The trap bar reduces spinal loading vs. conventional deadlift — ideal for this phase.*

→ *Record your set-up: same foot position, same grip, same breathing pattern every session.*

→ *If your lower back rounds during the lift, reduce weight and rebuild from a box deadlift.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 4×5 at 80% 1RM is consistent — begin conventional deadlift if sport-appropriate.

04 Sport-Specific Agility Drill — 5-10-5 Shuttle

Speed / COD / Reactive Agility

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
4	6 reps	Bodyweight — timed	Max effort	Full recovery (2–3 min) between reps

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Mark three lines 5 yards apart on the ground using cones.
2. Start at the middle cone in an athletic stance.
3. Sprint to the right cone (5 yards) and touch the line with your right hand.
4. Change direction and sprint to the far left cone (10 yards) — touch with your left hand.
5. Sprint back through the starting middle line (5 yards).
6. Record your time with a stopwatch. Compare to your pre-injury baseline where known.
7. Progression: Add a reaction element — partner points left or right at the start.
8. Final progression: perform with a ball, racquet, or sport-specific equipment.

COACHING CUES

→ *The change of direction should come from the outside foot — not a rounded, jogging turn.*

→ *Plant hard, push hard — athletic deceleration is a skill that needs conscious practice.*

→ *Your injured side will likely be your dominant change-of-direction leg — monitor closely.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 6 reps are completed at pre-injury speed levels without pain or hesitation.

05 Plyometric Push-Off (Sprint Start)

Explosive Hip Extension / Sprint Mechanics

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
3	8 reps per leg	Bodyweight → resistance band at waist	Maximal intent	90 sec

HOW TO PERFORM

1. Stand in a split stance: injured leg in front, uninvolved leg back — like a sprint start position.
2. Bend the front knee to approximately 90° and lean your torso slightly forward.
3. Explosively drive the front foot into the ground, extending the hip and knee powerfully.
4. Drive the back knee forward and upward simultaneously — mimic the sprint drive phase.
5. Land on the front foot and immediately reset.
6. Focus on full hip extension at push-off — do not cut the movement short.

7. Advanced version: use a resistance band around the waist anchored behind you, increasing hip extension demand.

COACHING CUES

→ *Think 'punch the ground' with the front foot, not 'push back'.*

→ *The knee drive of the back leg should come up to at least hip height.*

→ *This is the movement that translates directly to first-step speed in your sport.*

PROGRESS WHEN

When 3×8 with resistance band is explosive and pain-free.

06 Long-Term Prehab — Injury Prevention Maintenance

Neuromuscular Prevention

SETS	REPS / TIME	LOAD	TEMPO	REST
2 days/wk (ongoing)	See protocol below	Various — as prescribed	As prescribed	As prescribed

HOW TO PERFORM

1. This is a permanent maintenance programme — not a phase to complete and discard.
2. Nordic Hamstring Curl: 2×6, once per week, throughout your sporting career.
3. Single-leg balance on unstable surface: 2×45 sec per side, 2× per week.
4. Lateral band walk: 2×20 steps each way, as part of every warm-up.
5. Hip 90/90 mobility: 2×60 sec each side, daily.
6. Ankle dorsiflexion wall stretch: 2×60 sec each side, daily.
7. Return to these exercises immediately after any period of inactivity or reduced training.

COACHING CUES

→ *Research shows that athletes who discontinue prehab after return to sport have 2–4x higher re-injury rates.*

→ *Build these into your warm-up — make them habitual, not optional.*

→ *Share this programme with your coach — the best prevention is a team approach.*

PROGRESS WHEN

This programme never ends — it evolves with your training demands.

FULL RETURN TO SPORT — FINAL CLEARANCE CHECKLIST

All items must be confirmed before unrestricted return to competition:

- ■ LSI ≥ 95% on triple hop for distance — tested on 2 separate days
- ■ LSI ≥ 95% on single-leg leg press — matched load for 10 reps
- ■ Completed 2 full sport-specific training sessions at 100% intensity — pain-free
- ■ No pain during or 24 hours after any session for a minimum of 3 consecutive weeks
- ■ Return-to-sport confidence score ≥ 7 out of 10 (self-rated Kinesiophobia scale)
- ■ Written clearance from physiotherapist or sports medicine physician obtained
- ■ Long-term prevention programme (Phase 5 prehab) integrated into weekly training
- ■ Coach and medical team are both aware of and agree with the return-to-play decision

A FINAL NOTE

You have worked through every phase of this programme. What you have built over this journey — the patience, the attention to form, the trust in the process — is a foundation that will serve you for your entire athletic career. Injury recurrence is not inevitable. With the maintenance programme in place, you now have the tools to stay on the field.