C&A Athletes Strong for Mental Health

MINDURANCE

Youth Sports Burnout

How to prevent sports burnout:

Understanding the continuum of Interests and Passions

Recognizing where someone stands on the continuum of interests and passions can be challenging as preferences and priorities shift over time. It's important to acknowledge that what someone enjoys or feels passionate about can vary depending on their current circumstances, mindset, and other factors.

The monster Western culture created: Statistics

- **Athletics today is a 365-day cycle. Statistics reveal**
  - 39% of female athletes experience burnout.
  - 34% of male athletes experience burnout.
  - 45% of youth athletes quit a sport because of burnout.
  - 70% of kids quit sports by age 13 due to burnout.

- **More is better in Western society**

In Western culture, the maxim "more is better" has been adopted into sports. Simply playing high school volleyball isn't seen as enough; club volleyball is often expected as well. This culture of maximization pressures athletes to constantly progress and extract the most possible from their sport.





- **How to reverse the trend:**

Society must realistically assess whether "more is better" truly applies in athletics. Additional training may not always benefit athletes and could instead serve profit-driven agendas. While enhancing visibility, excessive time in sports risks burnout. Balancing growth and well-being is crucial amid pressures for increased participation.

- **Preventing burnout:**

Playing multiple sports can mitigate burnout in one sport. Being mindful of energy levels and recognizing burnout is crucial. Prioritizing self-awareness and balance helps prevent exhaustion, ensuring sustained enjoyment and performance across activities.

STIFEL

C&A Athletes Strong for Mental Health

Mindurance

Youth Sports Burnout

Intentionally working vacation time

Regardless of sports involvement, prioritizing family time and diverse activities fosters self-care and helps to prevent burnout. Taking breaks enables athletes to assess their psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Intentional scheduling promotes holistic health and sustained enjoyment in sports and other pursuits.

Listen to your child

Open conversations between athletes and parents about year-round sports are crucial. Parents should listen openly to their child's feelings. If a parent is overly invested and unable to be objective, athletes should consider confiding in trusted individuals such as coaches, mentors, or counselors to gain perspective and support.





Advocating for yourself

Athletes often struggle to advocate for themselves, especially when coaches vary in their understanding of self-care. When coaches fail to prioritize self-care, athletes face a decision: persist or seek a new sport or coach. Intentionality and self-assessment empower athletes to weigh the pros and cons. Ultimately, they control their choices, even amid perceived constraints. Communicating needs to coaches may be challenging, but it won't determine future familial or career success. Athletes must prioritize self-awareness and listen to their own needs to effectively navigate their athletic journey.

Information provided by Dr. Steve Graef, PhD. , a sports psychologist and performance coach based in Columbus. He is the owner of Mindurance – services to help athletes, performers and professionals. For more information, visit www.mindurance.org