



# GAA TOURNAMENT READY TOOLKIT



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## Introduction

Whether you are Irish or new to the game, participating in the GAA in your country of residence is a great opportunity to socialise and connect, learn new skills (or practice old ones) and be part of the authentic GAA Community.


There are several resources that have been created for and available to all GAA members. From Concussion awareness to mental fitness to nutrition, the GAA is about much more than just the playing of games, and that goes for our members anywhere in the world.

This resource is tailored as much as possible to those Gaelic Games players across Europe, Asia, Australasia, the Middle East, North America, and Great Britain, who are gathering together to play multi-game tournaments.

Further information on these topics is also available on [gaa.ie](http://gaa.ie), [learning.gaa.ie](http://learning.gaa.ie) and [gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/](http://gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/)

## GAA Clubs around the World



 Playing the game, playing our part...  
the power of participation

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# GAA 15 Warm Up

The GAA 15 Warm Up, developed by the GAA, has been scientifically proven to reduce injuries among GAA Players. It is important to use the correct technique for all exercises, in particular Parts B,C, D and E.

Instructional videos and information sheets are available on [www.learning.gaa.ie/GAA15](http://www.learning.gaa.ie/GAA15)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPSdtirRU2Q#action=share](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPSdtirRU2Q#action=share)

**SECTION 1 - Part A: Running [Max 5 mins]**

**PART A: RUNNING**



Slow Run

Heel Flicks

Run (80%)

Hip Out

Touch Toes

Hip In

Run (50%)



**SECTION 2 - Parts B, C, D & E: Improving the mechanics & limiting risk of injury [Max 7 mins]**

**PART B: STRENGTHENING**



Single Leg Bridge



Forward Lunge



Reverse Lunge



Squats



Core Drills

**PART C: BALANCING**



Single Leg Deadlift

**PART D: JUMPING**



Jumps

**PART E: HAMSTRINGS**



Nordic Hamstring Curls

**SECTION 3 - Part F: Sports Specific Movements [Max 3 mins]**

**PART F: SPORTS SPECIFIC**



Speed Run (80%)



Plyometric Bounding



Plant & Push

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## Diet & Nutrition

Any one participating in sport should care about what they put into their bodies. The old adage 'you are what you eat' rings even truer on the sporting field than it does in everyday life.

Gaelic Games are high intensity sports and demand a wide range of physical and mental attributes to maximise performance. Performance nutrition provides the body with the appropriate fuel and nutrient sources to train and recover.

Good nutrition is easy to achieve if you take the time to focus on making positive improvements to your eating habits. By following the simple steps below, you should be able to achieve a solid foundation which will underpin a strong personal plan for Gaelic Games.

We all want to maximise our health and our performance but with so many mixed messages out there about what we should eat and drink it's hard to know what's best. This **Recipes for Success** booklet – filled with tasty, healthy, performance enhancing recipes that are easy to make – aims to support GAA players and members in making the right choices. Link to **Recipes for success**: [http://www.gaa.ie/mm/Document/CommunityandHealth/General/13/57/89/RecipesforSuccess\\_English.pdf](http://www.gaa.ie/mm/Document/CommunityandHealth/General/13/57/89/RecipesforSuccess_English.pdf)

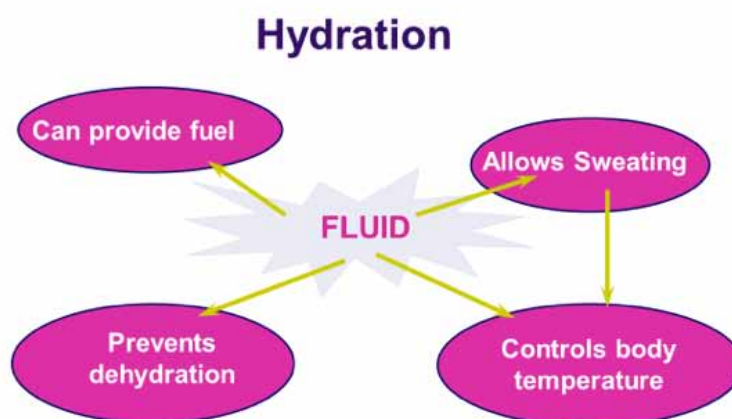
### Some Easy wins to get you started...

- Eating to optimise performance may empty your pockets a bit quicker in the short term but you will be rewarded with long term performance gains
- Start the day with a pint of water & lemon
- Try to eat oily fish at least 3 times weekly to boost recovery
- Bulk cook and freeze to save time
- Put 1-2 hours aside at the weekend for food preparation. Bulk cook dinners and snacks to get you through the week properly fuelled and recovered
- Once shown how to cook a dish prepare it soon after so you don't forget the steps. Keep a note book
- Some foods like beetroot or salmon are an acquired taste and you may need to taste them more than once or twice before you like them. Don't give up!
- Nutrition on a match day needs to be practiced. Everyone digests food at a different rate so practice eating your pre-match day meal on a training day to ensure it does not cause stomach upset on match day
- Aim to drink between 2-4L of fluid daily. How much fluid a player should drink to ensure they are hydrated is individual. However, every player should know how much fluid they need to drink in order to be hydrated for each exercise session
- Use the 'pee' chart to ensure you are hydrated before training sessions
- Start your match day hydration 24-36 hours before match day. If you are well hydrated the day before a match you should be optimally hydrated by drinking 500 ml-1 litre of fluid on match day

## Hydration

Adequate hydration is a crucial part of a player's health and performance. Even small fluid losses may impair both physical and mental function, which can be the difference between your team winning and losing a match.

With the many different climates across the world where GAA tournaments are played and trained for, extra caution must be taken when playing in higher temperatures. Adequate hydration is crucial. For example, the temperature for a game at Moscow GAA would significantly different to that in Dubai Celts.



As a GAA player, you are recommended to consume at least 2.5 litres of water from fluid or food per day and increase this when you exercise/play in warmer temperatures and humid conditions. If you lose one kilogram of weight from exercise, that's about one litre of fluid that you've lost.

Dehydration also increases the possibility you'll suffer muscle pulls and strains, or lose concentration and make poor game-play decision – your brain needs water too!

To ensure you don't become dehydrated, drink fluids often throughout the day, every day, in small amounts. Use a water bottle to help you monitor your fluid intake. You may also eat watery foods such as soups or fruit; drink herbal teas, water flavoured with a little fresh fruit juice, as well as sport drinks in and around training (being mindful of their sugar and caffeine content).

Remember that when training or playing a match, it's vital that you keep your body hydrated to keep your performance at its best.

1	Good
2	Good
3	Fair
4	Dehydrated
5	Dehydrated
6	Very dehydrated
7	Severe dehydration

Your urine is an excellent way to determine your levels of hydration. Your target is that your 'pee' should match the colour in numbers 1,2 or 3. If your 'pee' is the same colour as 4 or 5 you are dehydrated, whilst 6 or 7 indicates you are very, or severely, dehydrated.

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# Mouthguards & Helmets

## Mouthguard

All Gaelic footballers must wear a mouthguard in practice sessions and matches. (The introduction of this rule in 2014 has resulted in a drop of nearly 40% in dental injury claims made through the Player Injury Benefit Fund.)

It is the responsibility of each individual player to wear their mouthguard. A properly fitted mouthguard is the best available protective device for reducing the incidence and severity of sports-related dental injuries

Players can be sent-off in a game for not wearing a mouthguard - No Mouthguard? No Game!

## Helmets

It is mandatory for, and the responsibility of, each individual player during all games and practice sessions to wear a helmet with a facial guard that meets the approved standards. See <https://learning.gaa.ie/mouthguardshurlinghelmets> for more details.

Players can be sent-off in a game for not wearing a helmet with a facial guard.

A helmet or faceguard which is modified in any way (bars removed or replaced) increases the risk of injury. Remember: No Helmet? No Game!





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## Alcohol & Sport

- **Greater risk of muscle cramps:** During exercise, your muscles burn sugar thereby producing lactic acid. Too much lactic acid leads to muscle fatigue and cramps. If you drink in the 24-hour period before a match the alcohol contributes to a bigger build-up of lactic acid and dramatically increases your risk of cramping.
- **Greater risk for injuries and complications:** Alcohol increases the bleeding and swelling around soft tissue injuries (sprains, bruises, and cuts- the most common sports injuries) requiring a longer recovery period. Alcohol also masks pain, which may lead you to delay in getting treatment - rapid treatment can make all the difference in a speedy recovery. If you've been injured, avoid alcohol, as it will complicate your recovery.
- **Greater body heat loss:** Alcohol is a vasodilator (it causes the blood vessels near the surface of the skin to expand) and thereby promotes heat loss and a lowered body temperature.
- **Reduced endurance:** The blood sugar your body needs for energy is produced by the liver when it releases glucose into the blood stream. Drinking alcohol in the 48-hour period before a match reduces your body's ability to produce this sugar, so you have less energy and less endurance capacity.
- **Slower reactions:** Alcohol is a sedative and it can affect your performance during a game for up to 72 hours after you have finished drinking. Some players think they have less tension and increased relaxation as a result of alcohol. The actual result, however, is poorer hand-eye coordination and slower responses.
- **Dehydration:** Alcohol promotes water loss. It reduces the production of the anti-diuretic hormone, causing you to urinate more. This, in turn leads to dehydration.
- **Vitamin and Mineral Depletion:** Water loss caused by alcohol consumption involves the additional loss of important minerals such as magnesium, potassium, calcium, and zinc. These are vital to the maintenance of fluid balance and nerve and muscle action and coordination.
- **Reduced aerobic performance:** Alcohol reduces the body's ability to convert food to energy and also reduces carbohydrate/blood sugar levels. These effects, together with lactic acid build-up and dehydration, combine to reduce aerobic performance.
- **Muscle injury:** The usual treatment for injury (rest, ice, compression, elevation) can be negated due to the painkilling effect of alcohol. If you can't feel the pain of your injury you are less likely to take care of it and slow your recovery time or even cause further damage.

So, no matter how much training and conditioning you've put in, drinking up to 72 hours before a match will take the edge off your fitness. If you want to be the very best you can be at your sport, you'll have more of a chance of achieving that by not drinking alcohol.

However, if you do want to drink it's best to drink a little and not too often.

For more information visit <http://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/gambling-alcohol-drug-education/> or [www.askaboutalcohol.ie](http://www.askaboutalcohol.ie)

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# Injury Prevention

In conjunction with the GAA 15 warm up, the best immediate treatment for acute soft tissue injuries is PRICE protocol.

Most injuries can be dealt with at home but the more severe ones will need to be seen by a doctor. To reduce pain and swelling, remember the acronym PRICE - Protect, Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation.

## P-Protect

Protect the injured area e.g. use crutches, protective bracing if appropriate.

## R-Rest

You should rest the injured area for 24-48 hours. Crutches may be needed to take the weight off an injured knee or ankle. Make sure that you know how to use the crutches properly. Use them on the uninjured side to relieve pressure from the injured side. Support a strained elbow or shoulder with a sling.

## I-Ice

Apply an ice pack (e.g. pack of frozen peas or a bag filled with crushed ice wrapped in a towel) as soon as the injury occurs. Repeat up to three times a day. Remember to place a damp cloth between the skin and ice. Do not apply the ice pack for longer than 20 minutes.

## C-Compression

Wrap the affected area in an elastic bandage tightly - but not so tight as to cause compromise of the blood supply to the affected area.

## E-Elevation

To reduce swelling, elevate the affected area above the level of the heart.

Other injury specific information can be found at [www.learning.gaa.ie/Injuryprevention](http://www.learning.gaa.ie/Injuryprevention)



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## Concussion

Concussion is a brain injury that is associated with a temporary loss of brain function. The injury must be taken seriously to protect the long-term welfare of all players. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth.

### Action Plan for Players:

- Recognise the signs and symptoms
- Report if suspicious, don't hide it
- Rehab with rest and medical guidance
- Return after following Return To Play Protocol and getting medical clearance

### Signs & Symptoms:


Contrary to popular belief, most concussion injuries occur without a loss of consciousness and so it is important to recognise the other signs and symptoms of concussion in yourself and in your team mates. A symptom is something a player will feel whilst a sign is something a team-mate or coach will notice. Symptoms can take hours and even days to develop following an impact so it is important that players in high impact collisions are monitored.

If a player is showing any symptoms such as the above after a collision/impact/fall and there is any suspicion of a potential concussion the player should be removed from play immediately and not allowed return to play on the same day. Under any circumstances. They should be accessed by a doctor when possible and urgently if the symptoms are severe such as loss of consciousness, vomiting, severe headache and not allowed to return to contact drills/matches until medically cleared to do so.

If a player has sustained a concussion they should follow the Return to Player protocols as detailed on <http://learning.gaa.ie/Concussion>

A player may experience:	A coach/parent/team-mate/referee may notice a player:
Headache or Pressure	Appears Dazed or Stunned
Nausea	Is Confused about Position
Balance or Dizziness problems	Forgets an Instruction
Double or Blurry Vision	Unsure of Game Details
Sensitivity to Light/Noise	Moves Clumsily
Feeling Sluggish/Hazy/Groggy	Answers Questions Slowly
Concentration/Memory Problems	Loses Consciousness (even briefly)
Confusion	Shows Mood/Behaviour/Personality Change
Does not 'Feel Right' or 'Feeling "Down"'	Forgets Events 'Prior' to or 'After' Hit or Fall
Nothing!!	

# CONCUSSION



## NOT ALWAYS A KNOCK-OUT!

### ACTION PLAN

**R**ecognise *the signs and symptoms*

**R**eport *if suspicious, don't hide it*

**R**ehab *with rest and medical guidance*

**R**eturn *after following Return To Play Protocol and getting medical clearance*

### SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Double/Blurry Vision
- Sensitivity to Light
- Feeling Hazy or Groggy
- Just not 'feeling right'
- Memory Problems
- Pressure in Head

For the Return to Play Protocol and further information on Concussion see [learning.gaa.ie/Concussion](http://learning.gaa.ie/Concussion)

## IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!!!

## Mental Fitness

Irish people who travel abroad for an extended period of time, whether by choice or through necessity, will be presented with great opportunities but also many challenges. From obtaining accommodation and employment to maintaining your health & wellbeing and your connection to home, there is a lot to keep you up at night. Finding a little piece of home from home always helps, and your local GAA club, whether in Paris, Dubai, Hong Kong or Moscow, can support you on your journey.

It's important to remember that like your body requires training to stay physically fit, your mind also requires training to have strong mental fitness.

Factors that can affect your Mental Fitness:

1. Relationship stress
2. The loss of something important
3. Bullying: in school, in college, in work, in the community, in your club or online
4. Financial strain or hardship
5. Unhealthy lifestyle choices e.g. use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances, poor diet
6. Too many commitments
7. Exposure to violence, such as witnessing or being a victim of physical or sexual abuse/ assault

**The key to mental fitness for anyone is being aware of 'when' you need to ask for help and knowing what positive choices are available to you.**

Benefits of team sports to mental fitness:

1. Reduced feelings of anxiety & increased well-being
2. Reduced stress and depression
3. Improved mood and concentration
4. Improved self-esteem, self-efficacy and confidence
5. Opportunity for making new friends
6. Developing your social skills such as communicating with others and self-confidence



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If you think someone on your team might be having difficulties with their mental fitness you can help by:

- Asking them if they are ok
- Really listening to their response – don't try to provide the answer to this problem
- Making sure they know they are not alone and help is out there
- Making sure they don't isolate themselves
- Taking time to be there for them off the field
- Telling your coach
- Encouraging them during training sessions/matches
- Encouraging them to seek help

For someone who is living in a country where their direct support networks may be small, if any at all, having a person you can turn to when you need them is important. You being here for someone to turn to should they need to talk is also just as important. The GAA Club can act as a vehicle for providing this opportunity to talk.

The social outlet a GAA Club can provide can prevent symptoms like loneliness, and being isolated from natural support network like home.

Checkout <http://www.gaa.ie/my-gaa/community-and-health/mental-fitness/>

## Sun Care

For those playing GAA Tournaments in warmer temperatures, please take the steps below to avoid damage to skin.

**Avoid Hours of Maximum Risk** - Limit the amount of time you spend in the sun and avoid exposure between late morning and early afternoon, when the radiation is most direct and intense. If playing in a tournament between these times, try to find shelter at rest intervals

**Apply Sun screen properly** - Apply sun care product generously half an hour before going out in the sun on clean, dry skin. Repeat every two hours. Waterproof sun care is more appropriate if perspiration is likely while playing. Reapply at any interval between games.

**EVERYWHERE!** - Don't forget ears, hands and feet, as well as sensitive areas like nose, lips, and insteps.

**On Cloudy Days Too** - Even if you don't feel hot, the clouds only block 10% of UVA rays, so most still reach your skin.

**After Sun** - After being out in the sun, don't forget to moisturise and calm your skin with an appropriate after-sun product.

**Check Your Skin Regularly** - Besides a daily sun protection, checking your skin for changes is very important for disease prevention and early detection.



## Cardiac Screening

The GAA advise that the most effective way to identify risk is for players over the age of 14 to undergo cardiac screening on one occasion. It is also advised that this process be repeated before the age of 25. Players should consult their family doctor if they wish to get screened and screening should consist of completion of:

- the GAA's Cardiac Screening Questionnaire (see link below)
- a Physical Examination and;
- an ECG.

For more information on this go to [www.learning.gaa.ie/node/110300/](http://www.learning.gaa.ie/node/110300/)

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# Transfers

## What is a transfer?

A transfer is a process by which a player transfers from one Club to another on a permanent basis. All transfers require that an appropriate transfer form be filled out. Please contact your Club or County Secretary for the appropriate transfer form. Generally, the player must be permanently resident in the area of the club he wishes to join, although there are some exceptions.

## Can I play in Championship with two different Clubs in the one calendar year?

Generally, no, as it is prohibited by Rule 6.8. A player may not play in any Championship with two clubs in a given year's Championship, either within a County or in different counties. However, exceptions are provided for in Rule 6.8 (B) of the Official Guide. For example, players with a 'student permit' or who transfer to/from Europe are allowed play in a Championship with both clubs in the same year.

## I have played in competitions in Europe/Middle East/Any other county this year – I now wish to play with my First (Home) Club and travel back and forth to Ireland. Is this possible?

No – once you have played in a competition in the current year you are not eligible to transfer to your First Club unless you are moving back permanently as a resident.

## What is a European student permit?

A European Student permit allows a player who is pursuing a full-time course of study in a country under the jurisdiction of Gaelic Games Europe to play with a club in their EU Country of study and with their own club in Ireland, provided he/she is participating in a recognised course of study of a minimum of 12 weeks duration, and obtains a permit from their Association's Central Council.



See the following links for more details:

<http://www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/rules-regulations/transfers-and-sanctions>

<http://ladiesgaelic.ie/lgfa-hub/clubs/player-transfers/>

<http://www.camogie.ie/forms-&-documents.asp>

<https://gaelicgameseurope.com/player-registration-transfer-rules-gaa-lgfa-camogie/>

## Player Match Day Checklist

**Kitbag** – before travelling to a tournament, check the weather forecast for the day and pack your gear accordingly. Make sure to pack:

- Socks
- Shorts
- Football boots / Skort
- Mouthguard / hurling helmet
- Training top, windcheater, t-shirt
- Tracksuit bottoms
- Football gloves (if appropriate)
- Sunscreen

**Travelling** – In preparation for travelling to a tournament, there are several important documents you must prepare and take with you. They include:

- Passport
- Identification card
- Travel insurance / Health insurance
- Tickets, boarding passes, etc.

If you are driving more than several hours to a host city:

- Check relevant sites for travel updates
- Take regular breaks to stretch
- Ensure you have enough food, water and rest for the journey to maintain energy levels and stayed hydrated for the games ahead

**First Aid Kit** – Ensure 1 per team is brought to the venue. Included should be:

- Plasters
- Strapping
- Clean wound care packs
- Sterile gloves
- Alcohol based disinfectant
- Sterile water
- Insect bite cream



**[www.gaa.ie/community](http://www.gaa.ie/community)**  
**[community.health@gaa.ie](mailto:community.health@gaa.ie)**  
**#GAAhealth**

 [www.facebook.com/officialgaa](http://www.facebook.com/officialgaa)

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