



SECOND SUMMIT

HEALTH & PERFORMANCE

Pain Recovery Companion

Our bodies are designed to withstand and adapt to the physical stresses we place on them. This adaptation is how we get stronger and are able to do more activity over time, as long as we give the body proper time to recover and adapt. Graded exposure over time is the best recipe for injury prevention and full body resiliency regardless of fitness level.

But knowing how much is too much and when to push versus when to back off is not always straightforward, especially when recovering from an injury. That's why we made this guide!



Use this guide to help you:

- ➔ **STAY ON TRACK.** Whether training for an event or recovering from an injury, the information in this guide will help you minimize setbacks and keep you moving forward.
- ➔ **CREATE A BUFFER ZONE.** Getting stronger is a great way to help our bodies withstand sudden increases in stress and activity while avoiding pain/injury.
- ➔ **MASTER GRADED EXPOSURE.** Graded exposure to any activity over time leads to maximal gains while minimizing the risks of pain and injury. This approach will keep you active and stronger, longer.

Pain Traffic Light

Some discomfort when starting a new activity or recovering from an injury is normal. Over time, that discomfort will decrease and the activity will get easier as you build tissue tolerance. But knowing the difference between “hurt vs harm” during activity can be challenging. This challenge is why some people stop activities too soon at the first sign of pain or decide to push through pain when they shouldn’t.

That’s where the “Pain Traffic Light” comes in. Use this system to monitor your progress while recovering from an injury or starting a new sport/hobby:



GREEN LIGHT = SAFE

- Zero pain or some discomfort during activity (**<4/10 pain**) BUT pain is no worse after activity OR back to baseline within 1 hour.
- NO loss of range of motion, strength, or function.
- What this means: Be confident in adding more activity! Add 1-5% more activity per day/session to continue progress.

YELLOW LIGHT = STILL SAFE BUT PROCEED WITH CAUTION

- Some increase in pain during activity (**4-7/10 pain**) AND symptoms persist after activity (2-24hrs)
- NO loss of range of motion, strength, or function.
- What this means: You're working on the outer edge of your limits. Give your body a chance to rest 1-2 days before retrying activity. Modify exercise intensity and/or duration until you get back to a green light.

RED LIGHT = TOO MUCH

- Pain worsens during activity (**>7/10 pain**) AND stops you from performing the activity any longer AND pain lasts longer than 24hrs.
- SIGNIFICANT decrease in range of motion, strength, and/or function .
- What this means: Too much too soon. Rest for at least 48hrs before returning to green light activities. If pain persists, get help from your chiropractor or physiotherapist.

Helpful Tips:

- ➔ **Monitor your symptoms** – pain, swelling, and movement – these should be noted DURING exercise, LATER that day, and the NEXT DAY.
- ➔ **Keep a training journal** to help you follow your progress and make note of any reoccurring patterns in your symptoms with certain exercises. Tracking sleep can help give insight to how rest affects your performance.
- ➔ **You don’t always have to be “in the green”.** It’s okay to dip your toes into the "yellow light" range every now and again, that’s how we get stronger! We usually recommend 1-2 days of lower load following a day of higher load to give the body time to rest and tissue to regenerate.
- ➔ **Ask your health care provider** if you are still having trouble achieving “green lights” with new activities or are not making progress with injury recovery.